



**OFFICIAL FEEDBACK PRESENTED BY THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE ON  
THE PROPOSED BILL ON *CONSERVING ECOSYSTEMS BY CEASING THE  
IMPORTATION OF LARGE ANIMAL TROPHIES OR CECIL ACT (H.R 2245)***

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL  
RESOURCES, THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE**

**1 AUGUST 2019**

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***1.0 Acknowledgement***

Zimbabwe acknowledges receipt of your letter dated July 24 2019 from United States Government with follow up additional questions on the testimony submitted by members of the subcommittee for inclusion in the final hearing record. Zimbabwe remains very concerned about the retrogressive nature of the proposed Bill H.R. 2245 on *Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large Animal Trophies or Cecil Act*

We present our feedback to the questions from Rep. Rob Bishop (UT01)

***2.0 Question 1: Was the hunting of Cecil the lion legal?***

The hunting of Cecil the Lion was legal as the hunting party had all the paperwork and permissions required for a legal hunt.

Nevertheless, forensic reconstruction of events using GPS data from the collar that was fitted to the lion for research purposes had irregularities which Zimparks dealt with as a precautionary measure (see ANNEX 1 Being a communication send out to stakeholders in the conservation industry by ZimParks)

Various media reported the lion suffered in agony for 40 hours which was a false and exaggerated claim. The outrage that followed on various media platforms did not necessarily make the hunting of Cecil the lion illegal. An inquiry was done and the matter was handled professionally to examine the circumstances surrounding the hunt. Hwange Magistrate Court dropped charges against the professional hunter who harvested the lion with a bow and arrow on a farm outside Hwange National Park, which was part of the home range for the lion.

As a second part to Question 1

**2.1 How does lion hunting contribute to the conservation of the lion species in Zimbabwe?**

Lion hunting contributes to conservation of lions as it funds the implementation of the lion conservation strategy at national level and supports community-based conservation initiatives.

Recognising the distinction between strictly governed sustainable use of the lion species and illegal exploitation of the same which is linked to international organised crime is important. Responsible hunting of lions is good for lion conservation as it removes the nomadic male lions that are often associated with infanticide.

SEE ATTACHED LION NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS FOR MORE DETAILS DEMONSTRATING THE VALUE OF LION HUNTING IN ZIMBABWE

**3.0 Question 2: What is the potential Impact of the proposed Bill H.R 2245 introduced by Congressman Grijalva on local communities living with elephants and lion**

Wildlife conservation requires funding and identification of priorities that go beyond the simple protection of wildlife for the sake of just protection. If legal harvesting of elephant and lion is banned by our most important source market, that does not drive away the demand, it may give rise to more sophisticated illegal markets, which primarily rely on the indiscriminate killing of the same animals by poachers (*See fact sheet on trophy hunting and references attached*)

Setting aside large areas of natural habitats and protecting their wildlife by both governmental and communities (and some private players) has extensive and crippling costs which need to be offset and this Bill will reverse such efforts due to lack of a convincing economic case for conservation beyond protected areas. Some areas do not have all the apparatus to develop viable non-consumptive tourism initiatives that can yield competitive returns against legal hunting that is done by our American hunters.

In Zimbabwe, just like several other countries in southern Africa, Trophy hunting is a significant incentive to secure wildlife land outside protected areas making it a more competitive landuse option versus other alternative landuses which can result in habitat losses. HR2245, if adopted, will have severe negative consequences as it will become much more difficult for range states (which are also the strongholds for the same species) to protect habitat of such species beyond protected areas without significant economic incentives

When the viability of Trophy hunting is compromised or eliminated completely, prejudicing people from benefitting from their wildlife resources, addressing human wildlife conflicts becomes a big challenge due to less tolerance that is associated with lack of benefits from the problematic wide-ranging species

The livelihoods of communities will be significantly compromised as they have limited options.

Range States are and should be recognised as the best protectors of their own wildlife and hunting is a cultural heritage. When one evaluates the current priorities for elephant and lion conservation in Zimbabwe, HR2245 is not the solution. If the American Government is desirous to contribute positively to the conservation of Lion and Elephant species in Zimbabwe, the Government of Zimbabwe has approved National Management Plans for the species concerned, which are already under implementation and we welcome those interested to work with us to achieve our conservation targets (at local, regional and global level). In our blue prints for the conservation of lion and also elephant there is no indication that sustainable utilisation of such wildlife resources is a threat to their survival. It is very important for the US Congress to understand the potential socio-ecological disaster that can be triggered by HR2245 as well as other far-reaching and unintended consequences of such a legal instrument.

There is no objectivity in targeting Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, penalising the conservation giants for their successful conservation initiatives with HR2245 legal instrument. Such legislation will NOT incentivise our commitment to the conservation of these iconic species. It is our humble submission that the US Government decision making processes should be informed by science and not emotion

*A document detailing the contribution of the African Elephant to CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe is attached for reference on the potential impact and what will be forfeited.*

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT CITATIONS**

Crosmary, W.-G & Côté, Steeve & Fritz, Hervé. (2015). The assessment of the role of trophy hunting in wildlife conservation: The role of trophy hunting in wildlife conservation. *Animal Conservation*. 18. 10.1111/acv.12205.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2019-02-06-why-trophy-hunting-helps-conservation-and-local-communities/>

Lindsey, P.A., Roulet, P.A. and Romanach, S.S., 2007. Economic and conservation significance of the trophy hunting industry in sub-Saharan Africa. *Biological conservation*, 134(4), pp.455-469.

Naidoo, R., Weaver, L.C., Diggle, R.W., Matongo, G., Stuart-Hill, G. and Thouless, C., 2016. Complementary benefits of tourism and hunting to communal conservancies in Namibia. *Conservation Biology*, 30(3), pp.628-638.

# **ANNEX 1: SOME MEASURES TAKEN BY ZIMPARKS FOLLOWING THE CECIL DEBACLE**

## **MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF HUNTING IN THE COUNTRY**

Following the hunting of a lion that was named Cecil, outside the Hwange National Park on Antoinette farm in Gwayi River Conservancy and some irregularities that surrounded that hunt on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2015, it has become necessary that the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority further tightens hunting regulations in all areas outside the Parks Estate. The Authority working with other law enforcement agencies and has launched a crackdown to weed out any undesirable elements. To date our law enforcement agencies are following up on all reported cases and will be arresting all suspected on allegations of breaching hunting regulations. Some individual in the hunting industry are already assisting Police with investigations.

Further to that crackdown the following measures are going to be implemented immediately;

1. Hunting of lions, leopards and elephant in areas outside of Hwange National Park has been suspended with immediate effect as the Authority is tightening the current systems. All such hunts will only be conducted if confirmed and authorized in writing by the Director-General of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, and only if accompanied by parks staff whose costs will be met by the landowner.
2. Bow hunting has been suspended with immediate effect and no such hunting will be conducted unless it has been confirmed and authorized in writing by the Director-General of the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.
3. Members of the hunting fraternity are being reminded that it is illegal for quotas to be transferred from one hunting area to another. Any case of quota transfer is regarded as poaching. The Authority will not hesitate to arrest, prosecute, and ban for life any persons including professional hunters, clients and land owners who are caught on the wrong side of the law.

All players in the hunting industry are being reminded to re-familiarize themselves with the relevant statutes governing the wildlife industry in Zimbabwe. Further, the Authority would like to appeal to all members of the public that they should report any SUSPECTED illegal WILDLIFE activities to the nearest offices of Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Zimbabwe Republic Police and other Government law enforcement agencies.

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**