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NAPHA PRESS RELEASE: LION HUNT CAMPAIGN

NAPHA would like to express its disappointment with the ill-informed public outcry towards a NAPHA member and outfitter regarding the marketing of a trophy lion as per letter issued to Sesfontein Conservancy by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) for a human wildlife conflict lion. This last resort effort was made by the MET in order to manage human wildlife conflict and, in part, reimburse those affected by this conflict.

This seems to strike at the heart of the general misunderstanding about the role of conservancies as well as protected areas and a general ignorance of landscape ecology overall. It seems that the public thinks of these areas as something akin to large zoos, offering absolute protection to every single individual animal, rather than conserving populations and balancing land use for all Namibians.

Due to these ill-informed and unfounded facts being distributed widely through various social and media platforms, blame is being placed on all the wrong parties.

NAPHA holds a very good relationship with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, justifiably by being an organization which stands on firm principles and beliefs and by actively participating in strategic planning and mitigation.

The Ministry of Environment has justly followed its mandate and instructions as per our National Constitution in trying to manage human wildlife conflict in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities, recognizes the need to promote biodiversity conservation, promoting self-reliance and ensuring that decision-making is quick, efficient and based on the best available information.

The Ministry and NAPHA also recognize that it will never be possible to eradicate all human wildlife conflict, but that conflict has to be managed in the most effective and efficient way possible. It should also be recognized that people and wildlife live in an interconnected and dynamic environment, that land use patterns are changing and that wildlife distribution patterns equally are changing, as animal populations recover and recolonize former parts of their distribution areas.

The claims that this specific male lion is the 'last male desert lion', is factually not correct. Furthermore various communities have been threatening to poison or shoot the remaining lions in the affected areas, should actions not be taken to interrupt this problem.

As is stipulated in the letter issued to the Conservancy, all possible measures were taken to prevent conflict. MET was however requested to deliberate again regarding this matter and will revert back to NAPHA shortly.



It is rather a shame that the Namibian public, by choice, would preferably support one animal instead of its National Policy in encouraging balanced land use for ALL Namibians.

It is in nobody's interest to eradicate any species in Namibia and ultimately we all have the same goal at heart – conserving our valuable wildlife, through sustainable use.

In this case, please blame the donkey.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danene van der Westhuyzen'.

Danene van der Westhuyzen
NAPHA President