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RECENT DATA AND SURVEY RESULTS ON TROPHY HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Wildlife Animal Protection Forum South Africa (WAPFSA), is a network of diverse South African NGOs that share certain values, knowledge and objectives and that collectively comprise a body of expertise in various fields in South Africa, from scientific, conservation, welfare, rights, tourism, social justice, indigenous rights, public advocacy sectors and the law.

The undersigned members of WAPFSA are aware of and appreciate the concerns of European politicians and decision-makers, looking at implementing policies that will not negatively affect developing countries such as South Africa.

WAPFSA members would like to share some updated surveys reflecting the view of South Africans on trophy hunting in South Africa, and the way trophy hunting impacts livelihoods in the country.

A recently published [survey](#) conducted by Ipsos for the Humane Society International indicated that the [opposition to trophy hunting in South Africa](#) increased from 64% in 2020 to 68% in 2022. The survey reported only on local data sourced from a diverse South African demographic across all provinces. The key findings from the IPSOS survey include:

- 68% of South Africans fully oppose or oppose to some extent the practice of trophy hunting—an increase from 56% in a similar 2018 survey.
- 65% of South Africans fully oppose or oppose to some extent the practice of canned lion hunting—an increase from 60% in a similar 2018 survey.
- 64% of South Africans disagree with the trophy hunting of elephants, rhinos, and leopards.
- 63% of South Africans disagree with the trophy hunting of lions.
- 66% of South Africans disagree with the trophy hunting of hippos.
- 60% of South Africans disagree with the trophy hunting of giraffes.
- Regarding the 2022 hunting and export [quotas](#) announced by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) in February 2022, 63% oppose the quota for 150 elephants, 62% oppose the quota for 10 black rhinos, and 61% oppose the quota for 10 leopards.

World Animal Protection recently commissioned [research](#) into public attitudes towards trophy hunting, surveying 10,900 people from around the world, including international tourists from countries who most frequently visit South Africa and South African citizens. The research confirmed that South African citizens and international tourists want to see wildlife-friendly experiences and an end to trophy hunting. Tourists want to see wildlife alive and thriving and protected in a humane and ethical manner – this will enhance South Africa’s international reputation as a global leader for wildlife-friendly experiences and reposition its destination of choice for responsible travellers and tour operators.

The key findings from the research revealed:

- 84% of international tourists agree that the South African government should prioritise wildlife-friendly tourism over trophy hunting
- 74% of international tourists agreed that making trophy hunting a key pillar of policy will damage South Africa’s reputation, and 72% would be put off from visiting the country altogether
- 7 in 10 South African citizens agree their country would be a more attractive tourist destination if trophy hunting was banned
- 74% of South African citizens agree that trophy hunting is unacceptable when wildlife-friendly tourism alternatives have not been fully utilised.

As you are aware, [trophy hunting is rooted in colonial modes of extraction](#) that perpetuate notions of abuse, subjugation, control and inequality, including gender inequality. According to Dr Muchazondida Mkono, existing [studies](#) on the trophy hunting controversy in recent years have largely represented the anti-hunting views of the Western public, while overlooking the opinions of African people. Her research found that trophy hunting was objectionable as a consequence of its complex historical and postcolonial associations—the dominant pattern was resentment towards what was viewed as the neo-colonial character of trophy hunting, in the way it privileges Western elites in accessing Africa’s wildlife.

The growing concerns in relation to trophy hunting include its social, environmental and economic impacts. Trophy hunting artificially selects the biggest and strongest animals (largest tusks and thickest manes), [weakening](#) populations’ genetic health and variation. Research also suggests that increasing selectivity of trophy hunting is strongly associated with an [increasing risk of extinction](#). Trophy hunters target the largest, strongest individuals. Killing the lion pride male, the matriarch of the elephant herd, big males or irreplaceable tuskers results in social dislocation in the surviving members of the group, disrupting social bonds and behaviours. [Trophy hunting](#) undeniably damages the structure and viability of wild populations of animals.

A 2022 [report](#) by [Good Governance Africa](#) (GGA), a South African not-for-profit organization whose mandate focuses on research and advocacy to improve governance across Africa, [questioned](#) whether the South African government had grounds to determine trophy hunting quotas and whether they should promote trophy hunting as a conservation tool on economic grounds. In addition to [Economists at Large](#), [Paksi and Pyhälä](#) and [Koot](#), the Report argues that trophy hunting does not play an important role in the economic development of African communities.

A [study](#) by the World Travel & Tourism Council confirmed that wildlife is [worth more alive than dead](#). Another [study](#) of eight African countries by economists concluded that overall, tourism which relies heavily on wildlife contributed between 2.8% and 5.1% of GDP, and foreign trophy hunters made up less than 0.03% of the same

GDP on average. Similarly, photo safaris, in comparison, allowed for sustainable, lucrative tourism activities without killing wildlife.

Alternative conservation activities that reject and avoid a colonial practice of extraction in favour of more ecologically sustainable and dignifying activities do exist in South Africa.

Please contact us if you require any additional information.

As members of WAPFSA, we appreciate your continued efforts and hope that we have been of assistance.

Yours sincerely,



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