

## THE TROPHY HUNTING DEBATE

Trophy hunters claim that trophy hunting aids in wildlife conservation efforts, contributes greatly to national economies, and helps support local communities. These claims are ***extremely controversial***. In truth, **trophy hunting does little to nothing in terms of wildlife conservation, contributing to national economies or supporting local communities.**

## IS TROPHY HUNTING GOOD FOR WILDLIFE?

### Trophy Hunting Kills Numerous Species, Many Threatened or Endangered.

#### The Big Five

The most iconic and expensive species to hunt are known as the Big Five: the lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros (both black and white), and Cape buffalo. However, *numerous* other species are targeted, including giraffes, zebras, and various species with antlers. Click [here](#) for more information by ElephantsDC.org.

#### TROPHY HUNTERS TYPICALLY TARGET "THE BIG FIVE"



LION

ELEPHANT

WHITE RHINO

BLACK RHINO

CAPE BUFFALO

#### Lions

It is estimated that as few as 20,000 wild lions remain in Africa, down from 100,000 only 50 years ago. The U.S. is the world's largest importer of African lion trophies and parts. Between 1999 and 2008, 7,090 lion specimens, reported to be from a wild source, were traded internationally for recreational trophy hunting purposes. And, in July 2015, the trophy hunt of Cecil the lion sparked international outrage.

Learn more about the plight of lions on Born Free USA's websites [here](#) and [here](#).

#### Elephants

Despite being listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, African elephants are targeted in trophy hunts. Elephant populations are plummeting drastically due to poaching, the ivory trade, and habitat loss. Trophy hunting is just one more pressure.

Learn more about the threats facing elephants.

## Trophy Hunting Does Not Benefit Elephant Conservation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) argues that trophy hunting helps increase elephant populations. However, on the contrary, elephant populations are decreasing rapidly.

Since 1979, African elephants have lost over 50% of their range. Poaching and habitat loss have contributed to population declines. In the early 20th century, approximately 3-5 million African elephants roamed freely. Today, that number is closer to 415,000. Elephant populations in Zimbabwe dropped 11% since 2005, and as much as 74% in some parts of the country—largely due to poaching. In fact, since January 2012 alone, an estimated 201,288 elephants have been poached: **approximately 92 elephants per day**. Key facts:

FROM 2009 TO 2014...

ELEPHANT POPULATIONS IN **TANZANIA** EXPERIENCED A **60% DECLINE**

ELEPHANT POPULATIONS IN **MOZAMBIQUE** EXPERIENCED A **50% DECLINE**

- Tanzania: 110,000 elephants in 2009 → 43,000 in 2014 (60% drop)
- Mozambique: 20,000 elephants in 2009 → 10,300 in 2014 (nearly 50% drop)

In Tanzania and Mozambique, both countries that permit the trophy hunting of elephants (and lions), numbers are now considered at risk of significant future depletion. Many would argue that elephant numbers simply aren't sufficient to permit the additional pressure of trophy hunting.

Read this [rebuttal of common trophy hunting conservation claims](#) by Born Free's Dr. Mark Jones.

## Trophy Hunters Target Big, Healthy Animals.

Trophy hunters often claim that they only kill animals who are old, sick, or close to death anyway. However, there is a great deal of evidence to show that [trophy hunters target animals in prime condition](#)—often large males—because their heads, tusks, antlers, and horns make the most 'impressive' trophies.

## IS TROPHY HUNTING GOOD FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES?

### Trophy Hunting Does Not Financially Benefit Local Communities.

A prevalent pro-trophy hunting argument is that these hunting revenues are returned back into local economies and into conservation efforts. However, this argument is unsupported.

The money from trophy hunting fees that trickles down to the local villagers is minimal. Research published by the pro-hunting International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation and the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and supported by other authors, finds that hunting companies contribute only **3% of their revenue** to communities living in hunting areas.

Rather, the overwhelming majority of the money goes to:

- government agencies, firms, and people in national capitals or who are located internationally;
- administration costs rather than directly to conservation; and
- corrupt government officials who often take the money.

TROPHY HUNTING  
COMPANIES  
CONTRIBUTE ONLY  
**3% OF THEIR  
REVENUE**  
TO LOCAL  
COMMUNITIES

### **Trophy Hunting Does Not Create Vast Job Opportunities.**

Trophy hunting creates far fewer jobs than pro-hunters have claimed. In a study of eight African countries, a 2015 report commissioned by Safari Club International (a pro-hunting group) claims that trophy hunting creates 53,000 jobs. However, **a 2017 analysis by Economists at Large** found that it's actually closer to only 7,500-15,500 jobs.

### **Trophy Hunting Does Not Produce Much Tourism Revenue.**

Trophy hunting typically only accounts for approximately 1 - 2% of a country's tourism industry revenues. In eight African countries studied, foreign trophy hunting only contributed, at most, approximately 0.03% to the GDP and comprised less than 0.1% of tourists on average.

Even taking a purely hedonistic approach, focusing only on finances, it makes more sense to keep elephants alive. It costs \$50,000 to hunt and kill an elephant—but the "estimated tourism value" of a living elephant over his/her lifetime is approximately \$1,607,624.83, 30 times more.

Through opportunities for tourists to view and photograph wildlife in their natural habitats, revenue would go back to travel companies, airlines, and local economies. Sustainable tourism is where we should focus our efforts.

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