

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee
Online, 31 May, 1, 4, 21 and 22 June 2021

CONSULTATION BY THE ANIMALS COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 29.2
QUOTAS FOR LEOPARD HUNTING TROPHIES

This document has been submitted by the Chair of the Animals Committee in relation to agenda item 29.2 on *Quotas for leopard hunting trophies*.*

On 15 January 2020, the Secretariat wrote to Botswana, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia, the three Parties identified in Decision 18.165, requesting them to review their leopard hunting quotas as contained in Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP16) on Quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use, and to consider whether they are set at levels which are non-detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

In 2020, Botswana and Ethiopia provided relevant information for consideration by the Animals Committee and in February 2021, the Central African Republic also submitted relevant information.

Due to the fact that the planned meeting for AC31 could not take place in 2020, the AC decided to consider the three submissions and provide a preliminary review. The following is the result of the deliberation within the Animals Committee and can be used for further discussions at AC31.

Concerning the proposed reduction of the quota for leopards from Ethiopia:

The Animals Committee considered that the proposed reduction of the quota from 200 to a quota of 20 leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use is reasonable and not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild and therefore can be supported.

Concerning the proposed retention of the quota for leopards from Central African Republic:

The Animals Committee considered that the quota of 40 leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use seems to be high but still not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild and can therefore be supported. One member would have liked to see a lowering of the quota.

Concerning the proposed retention of the quota for leopards from Botswana:

The Animals Committee could not come to a unanimous conclusion. Some members considered that the documentation submitted by Botswana requesting the retention of the quota of 130 leopards raises several questions that would have to be addressed by Botswana before they could recommend the retention of that quota at this level.

The concerns raised can be summarized as follows:

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

- In reference to the most recent national population estimate of 4,295 leopards, the quota of 130 animals represents nearly 3% of the total population.
- This most recent estimate is based on available habitat rather than on actual counts of animals.
- It is unclear from the proposal what considerations were taken into account to determine what constitutes “good habitat” for leopards.
- The planned leopard census in 2020 could not be conducted so recent population estimates based on counting of animals are not available.
- The lack of population estimates and no information on prey base, both objectives of the Roadmap for the Conservation of the Leopard in Africa, make it difficult to reach conclusions on cause and effect of some of the points raised in the proposal.
- It is unclear from Botswana’s review whether age and sex restrictions on leopards killed will be imposed, which is known to have an important impact on population dynamics.
- It remains unclear, how far the current hunting quotas (the number of specimens allowed to be hunted during a certain hunting season) differ from the proposed export quota. Specifically, information is not provided on spatial allocation of the quotas and on the total hunting quotas, as well as on how frequently and on which basis they are being set and adjusted.
- It is unclear if skulls of trophies are still being measured as further monitoring tool, as the report only shows data until 2007.

At the same time, it has been pointed out that with a maximum of 36 exported hunting trophies per year in last 10 years, Botswana has never used more than 28% of the quota (with no trade in the last four years). A further reduction of the quota would therefore not lead to further reduction in trade, but would reduce the revenues for conservation originating from hunting permits issued (as it is not possible to grant more permits than is the actual quota).

The Animals Committee therefore considers that the information that is provided to justify the retention of the quota lacks scientific rigor. Botswana is invited to address the concerns raised above, to explain the way how they manage the quota and whether they expect their quota to be fully used, and to provide more reliable population data.