

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

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IUCN SSC CAT SPECIALIST GROUP POSITION STATEMENT  
ON LEOPARD QUOTAS AND NON-DETRIMENT FINDINGS

This document has been submitted by the Secretariat on behalf of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group in relation to agenda item 55.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *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.*

## IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group position statement on leopard quotas and non-detriment findings

At the 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (Geneva, 16-21 July 2018), a Working Group discussed the non-detriment finding reports submitted by the Parties, based on CoP17 Decision 17.114. As the time for the review of the reports and the discussion at AC30 was very short, we here summarise some considerations with regard to the leopard quotas and the NDF system.

The IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group considers the quota system for *Panthera pardus*, an Appendix I listed species, a relatively unbureaucratic way for exporting hunting trophies. We welcome this system as long as the quotas are subject to periodic review based on robust NDF reports. Any harvest should be related to the conservation status of the respective population to assure its sustainability. Not only the present level of the quotas, but also the effective offtake (number of licences issued per year compared to the quota) differ strongly between the range countries. However, possible consequences for the populations are presently difficult to assess, because there is no common standard for NDF reports. Some frequent shortcomings observed in the NDF reports were:

1. Robust information on distribution, abundance and population trends at national level and in hunting areas are largely missing;
2. Reliable information e.g. on densities are typically available from prime habitat in protected areas. Extrapolation across large areas based on such figures and on wrong assumptions results in overestimating the total abundance, even if based e.g. on a habitat modelling approach;
3. Distribution (e.g. area of occupancy) is often based on sporadic data, whereas the area with reproducing females – and hence the functional population – might be much smaller;
4. Management measures and offtake per unit and year are often not considering the trend of the population.

We think that NDF bears a high potential for sustainable leopard management and that it should be strengthened. We hence recommend considering

1. Developing a template and guidelines for NDF reports to allow better comparison of the situation in different countries. This would be especially useful for transboundary populations;
2. To base NDF more on robust data and hence to improve the monitoring system for leopards. As it will be impossible to establish robust monitoring methods across very large areas, a “stratified monitoring system” should be considered, allowing for more consistent extrapolations;
3. Quotas based on standardised NDF reports should be reviewed at regular intervals and be adjusted considering the actual status of the populations, and especially their trend.

Many leopard populations are presently declining fast. This is not a consequence of the trophy hunting, but it must be considered in the legal offtake. The quota system combined with consistent NDF should and could provide an incentive for leopard conservation and maintenance of their habitats, if more persuasively coupled with the conservation status of the respective population.

*Muri/Bern, 25.09.2018*