



**forestry, fisheries  
& the environment**

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 1113 {NW1365E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12 of 2022**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 25 March 2022**

**Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

What are the relevant details of how the concerns that were raised in the 2017 Leopard Non-Detriment Findings of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (details furnished) have been addressed in the setting of the 2022 leopard hunting quota?

**1113. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

**There is no rigorous estimate for the size and extent of the leopard population in South Africa, but recent research has shown that several subpopulations in Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal are declining with others being stable, but no populations are increasing.**

The South African Leopard Monitoring Project was initiated in 2016 when the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) entered into a collaboration with Panthera (a non-governmental organisation focused on the conservation of large cat species) and relevant provincial conservation agencies. Camera trap surveys for leopards are now conducted in monitoring sites across South Africa, with a predominant focus in the provinces where hunting occurs (KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the North-West). Leopard densities range from  $0,3 \pm 0,1$  leopards per 100 km<sup>2</sup> to  $10,0 \pm 1,7$  leopards per 100 km<sup>2</sup> at the last estimate. A

total number of 19 sites have been surveyed in 2019 and of the 19 sites, leopard populations at six (6) survey sites are stable. There are 6 sites that show declining trends, while populations at three (3) sites show positive trends with the remainder of four (4) sites with less than 3 years data points. There has, therefore, been some improvement in the status of the leopard population since the non-detriment finding of 2015.

**The research further suggests that trophy hunting may be unsustainable in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and possibly the North-West due to excessive quotas, a poor distribution of hunts in the province, poor trophy selection, and the additional impact of damage causing leopards being killed, together with other forms of illegal offtake.**

Trophy hunting has been improved through the adaptive management of the leopard hunting quota. Quotas are now extremely small, cautious and risk averse, with the quota for 2022 having been set at 10 male leopards, yet South Africa is permitted under CITES to export 150 leopard trophies annually. The Norms and Standards for the Trophy Hunting of Leopard in South Africa have been developed to 1) distribute the hunting effort evenly across the leopard range in South Africa; 2) limit hunting to male leopards of at least seven years of age; and 3) ensure the mandatory submission of hunt return data and trophy photographs following all leopard hunts (both successful and unsuccessful).

**Data also suggests that levels of illegal offtake (animals taken out of the system illegally) exceeds the levels of legal offtake.**

According to our CITES illegal trade reports, the following illegal leopard incidents were reported:

- 2016 = 2
- 2017 = 3
- 2018 = 1
- 2019 = 7
- 2020 = 3

Information and records at the disposal of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) do not suggest that the levels of illegal offtake exceed the levels of legal offtake.

**The harvest of leopards is not managed consistently throughout the country and only some provinces implement effective controls and legal offtakes?**

The hunting quota is now set at the national level and has been allocated to the provinces in accordance with the status of local leopard populations, as determined through the South African Leopard Monitoring Project. The Norms and Standards for the Trophy Hunting of Leopard in South Africa standardise harvest controls across the country.

**Regards**



**MS B D CREECY, MP  
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**DATE: 7/4/2022**