



## AFRICAN INDABA

DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE  
AND WILDLIFE OF AFRICA  
Sponsored by the CIC



**Conservation Through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife**  
*Conseil International de la Chasse et de la Conservation du Gibier*  
*Internationaler Rat zur Erhaltung des Wildes und der Jagd*  
*International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation*  
*Международный Совет по Охоте и Охране Животного Мира*

### **ARTICLES ON CANNED LION SHOOTING IN AFRICAN INDABA 2003-2017**

AFRICAN INDABA – an electronic bi-monthly newsletter for hunter-conservationists and all people who are interested in the conservation, management and sustainable use of Africa’s wild natural resources. African Indaba, founded by Gerhard R Damm in 2003, is now the official CIC Newsletter on African affairs, with editorial independence. For more information about the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation CIC go to [www.cic-wildlife.org](http://www.cic-wildlife.org) or access the African Indaba webpage at [www.africanindaba.com](http://www.africanindaba.com) to download the entire archive

## **Vol 1/1 (2003)**

### **AFRICA GEOGRAPHIC'S IAN MICHLER - AN ANTI-HUNTER?**

Gerhard Damm

Ian Michler's regular column called "Diary" and his ubiquitous articles like "To snap or snipe" or "Hunting –The rotten business" as published by the glossy magazine Africa Geographic indicate at least certain anti-hunting sentiments. His recent comments to a letter from Graeme Pollock are falling in the accustomed line. What astonishes me, however, is the fact that Michler states "...the magazine is comfortable with the role it plays regarding the relevant issues concerning Africa's wildlife and its conservation and it will continue to promote ecotourism".

I do not find Michler's name in the impressum of Africa Geographic – mentioned there is Peter Borchert as publisher and Editor-in-Chief. So why is Michler speaking for the "magazine"? I had the pleasure to meet and discuss the issues with Mr. Borchert some months ago in company of Peter Flack and Gary Davies. Although it seemed that we did not succeed in convincing Mr. Borchert that hunting is indeed significantly contributing to conservation, we detected an open mind and willingness to explore the subject further with us and people (like Dr. Rob Little of WWF-SA and Prof. Gerhard Verdoorn of EWT) who know the facts and whose objectiveness leaves little room for doubt.

Michler does not seem to have that objectiveness –at least he is NOT taking any positive arguments in favor of hunting into account, and if he – on rare occasions –lists some, he always finds a way to use a sarcastic comment. Michler should openly state his objective – and I suspect it will be quite in line with animal rights organizations like PETA, FALCON, HSUS, etc. It seems to me that the duty of a journalist is to inform the reader and not to disguise a personal opinion or preference as irrefutable fact. If Michler is dead against any hunting, he should say so, without resorting to pseudo-scientific arguments. At least his readers would know clearly where he stands! That knowledge moves ahead is recognized by all who have relinquished their membership in the "Flat Earth Society". To sarcastically reject an economically important, culturally significant and scientifically appropriate wildlife management tool such as hunting on emotive and/or prejudicial grounds is as wrong as the unethical and anti-conservation practices of some people who rather should not be called hunters.

In case Michler would accept the role of hunting as recognized by conservation organizations like WWF-SA and EWT, he should enter into a qualified dialogue with the hunters. We would welcome such a dialogue, since civil society requires open communication.

Maybe Michler should be also be afforded the opportunity to read the various statements of WWF-SA and EWT regarding hunting. I could also give him a copy of a significant letter of Dr. Ian Player. If he then continues to insist writing loop-sided attacks on hunting he is putting himself clearly into the corner of animal rights organizations, which certainly have nothing in common with serious conservation organizations like WWF and EWT.

## **Vol 1/3 (2003)**

### **PHASA PUTS PRESSURE ON CANNED LION SHOOTERS**

The PHASA Executive Council published its position on "canned lion shooting" and its total opposition against this kind of "pseudo-hunting" long ago. The South African professional hunting organization actively pursues a policy of banning this nefarious activity, which the uninformed confound with hunting. In this context PHASA has contacted the responsible MECs of all 9 provinces requesting meetings to discuss the issues as well as a perceived lack of uniformity in the provincial nature conservation applicable to hunting. Meetings with the MECs from KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Western and Northern Cape have already taken place. The MECs respected and supported the

PHASA views; of particular importance, they supported the PHASA initiative for a national policy in that issue! Meetings with the representatives of the other provinces are scheduled.

Since the initial meetings the formulation of a national policy for the keeping, hunting and trade of large predators has progressed considerably and was tabled at national government meetings for discussion.

**Editor's comment:** *PHASA has to be congratulated to their pro-active stance in pursuing the eradication of canned lion shooting in South Africa. Instead of waging a war of words in the media, PHASA has in true professionalism quietly analyzed the problem, talked to the key persons and put forward sensible proposals for solutions. The imminent departure of "canned lion shooting" will be an achievement, PHASA and its members have initiated and can be justifiably proud of.*

## Vol 1/6 (2003)

### STRANGE LIONS

Gerhard Damm

Sarel Derman, the owner of a reserve about 150 kilometers north-east of Cape Town into which – according to his statement - six lions will be released shortly, claimed in a SAPA/AFP report that these lion are the closest relative to the extinct "black mane" Cape lion. "A hunter shot the last Cape lion in the 1850s," Derman said. **African Indaba** would like to ask Mr Derman where these so-called "close relatives of the extinct Cape Lion" originated from. In the Lowveld at least one predator center claims to house specimens of the so-called Barbary lion and the various groups of white lion continuously catch media attention.

**African Indaba** contacted Sarel van der Merwe of the University of the Free State and Chairman of IUCN African Lion Working Group (ALWG) regarding these "lion subspecies" and received the following statement:

"ALWG recognizes that the Barbary lion and Cape lion are both extinct. We are aware of claims that some private people and also some institutions have one or both of the sub-species in their collection, but we doubt that very much. We do recognize, though, that one will find cross-breed remains in zoos and circuses all over the world, and unfortunately, until fairly recently, very few zoos kept proper record of their lions' origins. I do not believe that there still lives a single pure specimen of both extinct species [of the Cape and Barbary lion]. I am [also] very much against the importation of lions from overseas, especially from Spain and Brazil, because our ex situ populations can very easily get contaminated with corrupt gene pools from remnants of Barbary, Cape and even Asiatic sub-species. Some [people] from Holland wanted to import circus lions to 'release them into the wild' in SA. What kind of lions are they importing? And if such lions would survive in large nature reserves, what will happen to the cubs? Then we'll have our wild lion populations contaminated with corrupt gene pools also. The white lions are also a headache by themselves, because nobody cares about keeping proper record of breeding history."

## Vol 4/1 (2003)

### EXTRACT FROM EDITORIAL

During November last year I was privileged to participate at the annual general meeting of the [Professional Hunters' Association of South Africa](#) and at the meeting of the regional professional hunters' associations immediately thereafter. The message there was loud and clear – as PHASA's president, Dieter Ochsenein, said in his annual report "... to take a stand against unethical hunting practices like the canned shooting of animals and ... to make the public aware of the benefits of hunting to wildlife and the nation". Neither he nor I had by then seen the infamous lion video

discussed on page 10 – but incidents like that reinforce us to continue with the lobbying efforts to outlaw any of these practices, be it lion or any other game animal. The proponents of unsavoury practices like canned shooting use all kind of distorted arguments to justify their activity. The most perverse ones I have heard are “that canned shooting protects the wild specimens from the hunters’ bullets and is therefore conservation relevant” and that “chasing a canned lion in a small enclosure levels the playing field between shooter and lion”. Let’s face the truth please – for the lion breeders and their associates canned lion shooting is an unsavoury, but economically attractive activity with high profit margins.

It has nothing to do with conservation and with hunting.

## **Vol 4/1 (2003)**

### **LION CHARGE VIDEO**

Gerhard Damm

During the last month of 2003 hunters (and anti-hunters) were “treated” on the internet to a video of a lion “hunt” with some footage of a male lion charging into a group of hunters. On closer examination one can clearly see that this lion safari was one of the infamous “canned hunts” or, to name the case correctly, canned shootings or killings.

At the first glance the footage is exciting but closer examination will show a number of things which set this so-called “lion hunt” apart from a real hunt, irrespective of the danger some of the participants put themselves in. The ingredients of a real hunt are definitely missing – i. e. the realistic chance for the hunted animal to escape (fence posts and fence are visible on the frames and the lion – obviously not used to be free to roam - makes no attempt to escape the hunters although he was clearly aware of them even at the earliest stages of the video).

One can note furthermore the inadequate shooting abilities of the client and the professional hunter (and of the numerous bystanders to boot); none of them kept their nerve under pressure, with the exception of the cameraman/women. The lives of all persons were obviously more in danger by the quantity of lead flying around than by the lion charge. Sort of reminded me of the “famous” Mark Sullivan videos – with the sole difference, that Sullivan is a better shot!

It is such videos – obviously taken to impress friends and clients – and more though the practice of such killing sprees that have given dangerous game hunting in South Africa a bad name – not only within the hunting fraternity, but most importantly with the general public. This video was discussed extensively by members of the [Accurate Reloading Forum](#). Follow the link to African Big Game hunting and read the recent threads with lion video in the subject lines.

## **VOL 3/3 (2005)**

### **EXTRACT FROM THE EDITOR’S NOTES**

We must obviously not limit our discussions to Africa’s open rangelands of savannas and forests, but include also game ranching and hunting behind escape proof fences as practiced in South Africa and some of its neighbors. Hunting behind fences can be as rewarding as hunting on the open ranges, as long as the parameters of Fair Chase are adhered to. Fair Chase means in my opinion *“the pursuit of a free ranging animal or enclosed ranging (i. e. fenced) animal, possessed of the natural behavioral inclination and possibility to escape from the hunter. These animals should exist as naturally interacting individuals of wild sustainable populations, located in ecologically functional systems that meet the spatial (territory and home range) and temporal (food, breeding and basic needs) requirements of the population of which that individual is a member”*.

Excesses like canned lion shooting, or any canned or put & take shooting must not be tolerated at all! National and international hunting organizations have a huge responsibility to exert peer pressure amongst their members, no matter whether the respective country's legislation has shortcomings in this respect.

## **VOL 3/3 (2005)**

### **CIRCUS LIONS FROM BRAZIL**

**Fiona Mcleod, Mail & Guardian**

A Gauteng zoo owner is suspected of laundering permits to import 9 old circus and zoo lions from Brazil in the face of an import ban. Conservation authorities are investigating whether Pablo Urban, owner of the Animal and Reptile Zoo in Muldersdrift, fooled Free State permit officials into facilitating the deal after Gauteng officials refused to give him permits to import the lions. The investigation came at a time when the national government is reviewing legislation regulating the controversial "canned" lion hunting industry. Critics say the incident highlights loopholes in the system that can be exploited by unscrupulous wildlife dealers.

Early last year the Gauteng department of agriculture, conservation, environment and land affairs rejected an application by Urban for permits to import 16 Brazilian lions. Mail & Guardian reported at the time that about 60 "abandoned" lions, casualties of an uncontrolled wildlife trade in South America, were up for sale.

Urban used a Free State connection to get CITES permits to import the 10 lions. When the cats arrived at Johannesburg International, however, only one was sent to the Free State and the other nine allegedly went straight to Urban's zoo in Muldersdrift. Lourens Badenhorst, Gauteng's director of conservation said the original reasons for the rejection of Urban's permits remain. "One of the many reasons is that he will contaminate the local gene pool." Another reason given at the time was that there is "overproduction" of lions in South Africa, because of the large number of lion-breeding facilities in the country. The Free State is home to some of the largest of South Africa's 50-plus lion-breeding facilities. Urban used permits granted to Sarel Wessels, owner of Lechwe Lodge near Kroonstad, to import the lions. Urban is said to have signed an agreement stating that the animals will not be used for hunting. "He said they will be used for reproduction in a conservation program". Urban slammed the phone down when the M&G contacted him.

Critics of the government's proposed new regulations on "canned" hunting point out that the industry depends on captive breeding of predators. Even if the Brazilian lions are not hunted, their offspring would almost certainly fuel the industry in time.

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## **VOL 3/3 (2005)**

### **LARGE PREDATOR HUNTING & HUNTING IN KNP BUFFER ZONES**

**Gerhard R Damm**

In a speech in parliament on April 6<sup>th</sup> DEAT minister van Schalkwyk stated: "In order to decisively address both of these issues [*the Draft for the Norms and Standards Relating to the Management of Large Predators and Hunting in Buffer Zones*

*Bordering KNP*, editor] I am appointing a panel of experts which will include, amongst others, conservation and environmental ethics experts, to be chaired by Dr. Crispian Olver and including Kungeka Njobe (CSIR), Tony Frost (WWF), Nick King (Endangered Wildlife Trust), Stewart Dorrington (PHASA), Marcelle Meredith (NSPCA), Dr Shibu Rampedi

(Limpopo), Prof. Koos Bothma (Centre for Wildlife Management at the University of Pretoria) Dr Holly Dublin (Chair Species Survival Commission of the IUCN), Lambson Makuleke (Community Representative), and Mlünleli Pukwana (legal advisor). The panel will be requested to report back within four months on both hunting in buffer zones and canned hunting of large predators." The first panel meeting is planned for May.

In light of this announcement, the three workshops that were planned for April as a continuation of the public consultation process for the draft Norms and Standards and Regulations for the Sustainable Utilization of Large Predators relating to the keeping and hunting of *Acinonyx jubatus* (cheetah), *Hyaena brunnea* (brown hyaena), *Crocuta crocuta* (spotted hyaena), *Lycaon pictus* (wild dog), *Panthera leo* (lion) and *Panthera pardus* (leopard) were cancelled. The written comments on the draft documents received from the public are being processed and forwarded to the panel of experts for consideration.

The second issue – hunting in buffer zones – was brought about by a March letter of UDM leader Bantu Holomisa to MEC Chabane of Limpopo Province, copied to minister van Schalkwyk and the media, complaining about hunting in the Timbavati Private Nature Reserve (TPNR). Holomisa's allegations were strongly contested by TPNR Chair Tom Hancock and a spokesperson of SANParks. Limpopo Province reacted by invoking a moratorium on all the hunts within the Associated Private Nature Reserves (APNR). TPNR instituted a high court action, but before the matter went to court, the province lifted the moratorium, however, without issuing permits.

## **VOL 3/4 (2005)**

### **THE PROFESSIONAL HUNTING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA: HISTORY AND FUTURE (EXTRACTS)**

Stewart Dorrington (Speech at the Limpopo Wildlife Expo)

The ethical standards of professional hunting were also compromised. Many new PHs and some older ones too have let economics supersede the principles of fair chase. Canned lion hunts and unacceptable put & take practices emerged. Some hunting safaris became shooting sprees, with no hunting involved. This has been driven by some trophy hunters demanding to improve on or to collect large trophy animals or multiple species within a very short safari. The SCI record book has helped to erode the principles of fair chase further as some clients don't seem to care how their trophy is obtained as long as it meets their requirements.

For some, tight economics also compromised fair chase. These developments have made the professional hunting industry vulnerable to anti hunters who are actively lobbying against hunting in all forms.

...

We have to clean up our act. Hunting must be understandable and acceptable to the public. PHASA has embedded in its constitution a high level of sportsmanship. Our code of conduct and constitution are aimed at keeping hunting clean and wholesome.

To this end PHASA has taken a very strong stand against the hunting of captive bred lions and we reject the hunting of any captive bred large predator under any conditions. This is taking a higher ethical stance than the proposed government draft document relating to the same issue. We don't want canned lions! It discredits hunting and it serves no conservation purpose!

The industry must be seen to have teeth. PHASA is currently, at substantial cost to the organization, taking disciplinary action against some members for various offences. It is vital PHASA has disciplinary ability to protect our good members and to protect the industry. There has been an inability by some of the provinces to act against "hunting rogues". Hopefully here in Limpopo this will be coming to an end as PHASA and the Department have pledged to work together to clean out unethical hunting in the industry and corruption in the province. Once again, it is imperative that the public, ourselves and our clients, see that there are lines that cannot be crossed without consequence

## **VOL 3/5 (2005)**

### **EXTRACTS FROM G R DAMM'S EDITORIAL**

The second part of the article "Hunting in South Africa: Facts, Risks, Opportunities" is directly relevant. It is a very long article, but I considered that an articulated contribution from the hunters is absolutely essential. I was reinforced when I read the biased commentary in "The Sunday Independent" (August 7th, page 8, "Time to put an end to canned hunting").

The unnamed author certainly wrote some truths, but his/her opinion that "[...] we would like to see all hunting banned and force the blood-letters get their rocks off in a way that does not involve killing animals" and the final phrase that "[van Schalkwyk] stomps on the killer khaki brigade" certainly show a distinct lack of knowledge of the topic. The same paper brought a front page article by Mike Cadman "Canned Hunting Comes Under Scrutiny". This article is better balanced, especially with the contributions of Jokl LeRoux of CHASA and Dr. Rob Little of WWF-SA, but the author committed a serious error when he singled out Jason Bell, the Southern African director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) as spokesperson for what Cadman termed animal welfare organizations.

IFAW is not an animal welfare, but an animal rights organization. In Kenya, IFAW has aptly demonstrated its destructive influence with disastrous results for the country's wildlife. We must not allow IFAW to repeat this in South Africa. Another unnamed representative of an animal rights organization was cited with "pressing for the prohibition of children under 18 hunting with firearms".

## **VOL 3/6 (2005)**

### **WE (ALMOST) BUY A CANNED CHEETAH**

**Fiona Macleod, Mail & Guardian 11 August 2005**

***Editor's note:** This article was published in Mail & Guardian but has been edited for space. According to information received from PHASA the Steyns mentioned here are NOT members of PHASA. PHASA totally rejects canned hunting and has appropriate policies in place. The president of PHASA is a member of the Minister's Panel of Expert on hunting.*

The *Mail & Guardian* stopped short of buying 2 tame cheetah for a "canned" hunt when we refused to fork out R100,000 and failed to produce a letter from a European embassy approving the [import] of the cheetah.. Our investigation into cheetah hunting started 2 months earlier, when an overseas contact alerted us to a website. The site prominently features a hunter showing off a dead cheetah. South Africa does not have a quota for the sport hunting of cheetahs or for export of trophies. Believing the hunt illegal, we contacted the advertiser -- Alexander Steyn, of Steyn Safari in Northern Cape. Steyn and his brother started near Kimberley in 1994 and claim to "have seen the company grow to one of the leading hunting operations in the region". Through an Afrikaans-speaking "agency" in Limpopo, we negotiated with Steyn to buy 2 cheetah and 2 lion. He told us the cheetah were available at R45,000 each, permits included. The prices for lion ranged from R180,000 for "the biggest lion available in South Africa at the moment" to about R30 000 for a lioness. Various other species, like rhino and sable, and novelties such as white lions and scimitar oryx were also on offer.

We posed as a Greek woman hunter who planned to visit South Africa with her Saudi boyfriend. Steyn said the cheetah would come from a tourism project, where they had been captive-bred and "were not suitable for breeding any more". They would be moved into a hunting area. He maintained the hunt would be legal because of a provincial regulation allowing the hunting of

captive-bred predators. To organize CITES permits, Steyn asked the agent to organize a letter from the Greek embassy saying it would not object to the importation of cheetah trophies.

We went back to the conservationists, who had told us no CITES permits could be issued. They added that the system was totally unregulated and hunting outfits were taking advantage of this. Last year the owner of an outfit in North West province brazenly admitted on TV that he was hunting cheetah, but no action had been taken against him. "We know about a lot of cases where people are doing canned cheetah hunts, particularly in the Free State and North West. They are catching wild, free-roaming cheetah, keep them in one-hectare camps and release them into larger areas when they have a buyer," said an expert.

M&G contacted the DEAT law enforcement branch. They put us in touch with a police officer from the Northern Cape, who said the police had been keeping an eye on Steyn's operation. But he could not bust Steyn if the cheetah he offered us were genuinely captive-bred and if he had a CITES permit. We set up a meeting with Steyn, pretending to be a friend of the "hunter" who wanted to check the animals. Steyn said the accommodation was about 90km from Kimberley and the cheetahs hunting area was in another province, about 220km away. The lions were being bred about 150km from Kimberley, but would be hunted about 500km away. Steyn sent M&G photographs of the lions, but not of the cheetah. "I spent hours trying to take photos of the cheetahs, without results," he e-mailed. "They are shy and hide in the long grass." He could not understand why we wanted cheetah pictures.

"I understand a client wanting a lion photo because of the mane but all cheetah look the same ." Steyn phoned at the last minute to say he wanted a 30% deposit before he would drive us out. Because we used a false passport for the "hunter", we could not get the CITES approval letter. When we revealed to Steyn that his cheetah hunting was the subject of a newspaper investigation, he responded furiously: "This was a setup by those green people who want to taint the names of professional hunters, while we are just good, honest Afrikaans people trying to run an honest business." When asked if his business was canned hunting, he replied: "What is canned hunting? Canned hunting takes places in a fenced-off area. Yet the whole of South Africa, the whole of Africa, is fenced. The whole of Africa is canned."

*In a separate article on August 11th, M&G eported about the "godfather of canned hunting in South Africa", a Portuguese game farmer in the 1970s. Gauteng zoos sold him "surplus animals". He took them to a piece of open veld in the Magaliesberg for "hunters" to shoot them. One incident reportedly involved a cheetah that was pumped full of drugs and died before the client arrived.*

*The cheetah was propped up in long grass and after driving around for a while, he shot the cheetah. There was a lot of explaining when the client went to pose for his trophy photo and discovered a stiff carcass. M&G continued saying that there are indications that profiteering in the hunting industry seems to have escalated to the point where it is defeating the conservation cause. Corruption is rife and professional ethics are absent*

## **VOL 4/1 (2006)**

### **BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB STATEMENT: ETHICAL HUNTING VERSUS UNETHICAL SHOOTING**

**Canned Shoot Statement:** Boone and Crockett Club has been a highly respected conservation leader and proponent of ethical Fair Chase hunting of North American big game since 1887. The Boone and Crockett Club's Board of Directors and its membership have unanimously adopted and approved a position statement on "Canned Shoots" because of the growing concern among hunters and the increased public interest.

**Ethical Fair Chase Hunting:** The Boone and Crockett Club, in its **Fair Chase Statement**, advocates any hunting that is “the ethical, sportsmanlike and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild game animal in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage over the game animals.”

**Unethical “Canned” Shooting (Improperly referred to as “canned” hunting.):** The Boone and Crockett Club condemns the pursuit and killing of any big game animal kept in or released from captivity to be killed in an artificial or bogus “hunting” situation where the game lacks the equivalent chance to escape afforded free-ranging animals, virtually assuring the shooter a certain or unrealistically favorable chance of a kill.

**Genetic Manipulation of Game Animals:** The Boone and Crockett Club condemns artificial and unnatural enhancement of a big game species’ genetic characteristics. Unacceptable practices for genetic enhancement include, but are not limited to, artificial insemination, controlled or unnatural breeding programs, cloning, and translocation of breeding stock for canned shooting purposes.

**Public Perception:** The Boone and Crockett Club is greatly concerned that the non-hunting public may confuse ethical, fair chase hunting with canned shoots, genetic manipulations and other related practices, which the Club condemns.

## **VOL 4/2 (2006)**

### **CANNED LION ON E-BAY**

**Gerhard R Damm**

The text quoted below has recently appeared on the internet in eBay posted by a US based seller by the name of “Animal Interiors”. We do not reproduce the photo mentioned in the text. Those who have read our commentaries regarding “canned shooting” know that African Indaba is totally opposed to canned killing. This practise dishonors the hunter and the hunted. We learned about the offer at the internet Accurate Reloading Forum where all comments were clearly negative (check for yourself on this link [eBay Lion](#)).

#### **Quote**

***This is for the Big Black Maned Lion - as pictured. He has a variety of sizes available at the following prices: Large female: \$ 6500.00 Males: from \$ 17,500.00 to \$ 42,000.00 (from 4 year old males to 12 year old. Manes vary from short to very dark long manes) These prices include the following: Trophy fee, day fees for the hunter for 3 hunting days, transport to and from JHB International airport, CITES permits, 3 meals a day, drinks, laundry, caping/skinning, delivery of trophy to taxidermist. Excluding: Additional animals, additional hunting days (\$ 250.00/day), companions, tips to skimmers/trackers/staff, taxidermy fees, shipping of trophy. He has about 20 females, 60 medium to large males and 15 extra large males available. All the hunts taking place within SA. Hunting ground approximately 3500 hectares. All the trophies are guarantee***

#### **Unquote**

Animal Interiors is described on its website as a small business based in Maryland/USA and according to their own words is “an Ebay PowerSeller that seeks to provide consumers, interior designers, and hunt enthusiasts throughout the world with quality unique animal pieces for their home”. The company is owned by Gerry Scheidhauer who claims that he is an experienced Safari guide and a principal safari tour operator. The website says “everything we sell is completely legal. Some pieces we sell are from collections in the United States that Animal Interiors has acquired. The majority of our products come direct from our partners in South Africa who are reputable dealers and hunters”. Scheidhauer also states that “at Animal Interiors are serious about our commitment to

wildlife conservation. Along with being proud members of Safari Club International we are also members of World Wildlife Fund.”

The same Garry Scheidhauer owns Hemingway Outfitters. On the respective website he says that “we have a long standing relationship/ partnership with a handful of hunting concessions throughout southern Africa. We are very selective and believe we have some of the best outfitters in the business. Our professional hunters are very serious about the sport of the hunt as well as respecting the wildlife and conservation for future generations”. On his Animal Interiors website Scheidhauer’s names his partners in South Africa as:

- Kobus Scholtz, portrayed as “Principal Outfitter and professional hunter from a long line of farmers, hunters, and conversationalists [sic] in South Africa and continues to carry along in the tradition he has been taught”,
- Jeremy Agustynus, “professional hunter and culler, including one of three certified in South Africa to thin herds by helicopter. He is a very serious student of the sport and along with sniper shots at moving animals from a moving object he is just as lethal with his bow” and
- Attie Scholtz, “professional hunter and culler. Professional night time hunter, [so] Attie is the guy you want to take you out after dark. Another crack-shot and expert marksman.”

**African Indaba contacted the Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa (PHASA) and Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA) and received emails that the individuals named above are not known and are not members of these associations. We have contacted a few more members of the local and international hunting fraternity – they were all adamant in voicing their disgust about this “offer” for canned killing. Hopefully the Department of Environmental Affairs and tourism will soon put a LEGAL end to it! We also wonder what SCI and WWF have to say about Scheidhauer’s “commitment to wildlife conservation”.**

## **VOL 4/3 (2006)**

### **FROM A LETTER BY BASIE MAARTENS, PAST PRESIDENT OF PHASA, ON CANNED SHOOTING**

Game Ranching flourished in South Africa and has saved many species. But there are boundaries within one must operate. When game ranching and breeding becomes a money-making racket, all the morality has gone out of it, when a “client” shoots a canned animal he is a shooter, not a hunter. It is not a matter of whether it is legal or not, it is a matter of morality.

The ultimate challenge we as hunters face is to create a culture of hunting, respect for the animal and a spirituality which takes us to a higher level than a mere trophy on the wall or venison on the table. This culture must be our philosophy, it must be written in our hearts and not on slates of stone which can be broken.

The word hunting has so many meanings – is it a wonderful concept or a destructive pursuit? An inborn instinct in man and beast, or an acquired taste for self aggrandizement? If we find the right answer then we can truly say that hunting is a necessity, not a luxury, that hunting is conservation in its purest form.

## **VOL 4/5 (2006)**

### **THE SHOOTING OF CAPTIVE BRED LIONS**

**PHASA Policy Statement issued May 2006**

PHASA has always been opposed to the shooting of captive bred lions. Last year the executive committee took a strong stance against this practice and stated it would take action against any member who took part in any such hunts. However before any disciplinary action can be taken, a complaint needs to be laid against and investigated.

There have been very few complaints laid although the practice still continues. The PHASA executive has decided to inform the members that such practices will not be tolerated any further even if no complaint is laid. Thus any member who may be involved in the shooting of captive bred lions is requested to re-frain from such activities or resign your membership of PHASA. Furthermore, PHASA is going public with this stance. A letter will be sent out to the media letting them know what our stance has always been and now to what extent we will act.

PHASA members should be aware that is it fraudulent to offer a captive bred lion as a free ranging lion on a hunt and that PHASA will act upon information that implicates any member in such activities.

#### **PHASA Canned Lion Shooting Policy Issued 1999**

- 1. PHASA hereby states categorically and unequivocally that it does not consider the practice of “canned lion shooting” to be a form of hunting.**
- 2. The legislation in some countries (or some provinces of countries) in Southern Africa does not adequately address the issue of “canned lion shooting” thus making the practice of lion breeding for shooting purposes and the actual shooting of such lion under a variety of conditions perfectly legal.**
- 3. PHASA is in agreement with civil society that adequate legislation should be introduced by the relevant authorities in order to put an end to “canned lion shooting”.**
- 4. PHASA deems an animal to be “canned”, when that animal cannot sustain itself, breed freely and be hunted under the principles of fair chase.**

## **VOL 5/2 (2007)**

### **MOVING AHEAD (EXTRACTS)**

**Editorial Comment by Gerhard R Damm**

Canned shooting of animals is not a “domino” for hunter-conservationists, just as child pornography is not a domino in sexual liberation. We are hunters – we love to hunt, we love nature and together we contribute a lot to conservation. Canned shooting and/or breeding for canned shooting operations is something entirely different. It has no conservation purpose whatsoever, no matter what the proponents say.

The real problem was that we turned a blind eye for too long towards some unsavory activities which erroneously were called hunting by some and which the public perceived as hunting. For too long a time neither the hunting associations nor the State had structures and procedures in place to provide a basis for self-regulation.

## VOL 5/2 (2007)

### SOUTH AFRICA GETS TOUGH ON CANNED SHOOTING

Extracts from a speech by Marthinus van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, at the launch of the “Threatened or Protected Species Regulations” on Tuesday, 20th February 2007 in Cape Town/South Africa.

**Editor’s Note:** *African Indaba* applauds the minister and DEAT for the firm stand on “canned shooting”. We took the liberty, however, to use the expression “canned shooting” in the headline instead of the minister’s use of the word “canned hunting”. There is no such thing as “canned hunting”; what the minister and the new regulations refer to are acts of killing which display no element of true hunting. The Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa (PHASA) said that it welcomed the new regulations as a chance to clean up the image of the South African hunting industry. Lion breeders account for only about 3 percent of game farms. “A small sector has given the whole industry a bad name,” said Stewart Dorrington, president of the hunting body. Up to 7,000 foreign tourists visit South Africa each year on hunting safaris, each spending roughly \$18,000, Dorrington said (see also “Hunting in South Africa: The New Regulations on page 3). For the full text of the **National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act 10 of 2004): Threatened or Protected Species Regulations** click this [link](#)

*Associated Press reported van Schalkwyk saying that “Hunting is an integral part of South African life because of its cultural traditions and importance to the economy. We gave our firm intention more than two years ago to deal with the issue [of canned lion shooting, but] many of the lion breeders thought they were empty threats and did not take it seriously. This is a practice that cannot be defended in any way.”*

Today, it gives me great pleasure to publish the regulations that pertain to threatened and protected species. These regulations will come into effect on 1 June 2007. The regulations are a culmination of a three year period of consultation between government, civil society, the wild life industry as well as animal welfare groups. They also take into account several recommendations by a panel of experts which I appointed in January 2005.

For the first time nationally listed species will now have uniform conservation status across the country. Government will have new muscle to ensure that our biodiversity is utilized in an ecologically sustainable way. A broad range of restricted activities will now require permits. The illicit trading of our endangered fish, bird and plant species, like cycads, will be rooted out. The same legal standards will apply throughout the country, closing loopholes and removing discrepancies between provinces. In support of these regulations, our initiatives to improve law enforcement demonstrate Government’s resolve to protect our biological heritage. The Green Scorpions will continue to play a key role in ensuring compliance.

Let me turn to some of the specifics: The Regulations introduce a uniform national system for the registration of captive breeding operations, commercial exhibit facilities, game farms, nurseries, scientific institutions, sanctuaries and rehabilitation facilities. These institutions will be required to meet strict criteria. For the first time, provision will be made for the recognition of hunting organizations and the application of codes of ethical conduct and good practice.

The introduction of game farm hunting and nursery possession permits will streamline the permit issuing process. It will also compel permit holders to provide critical information to the authorities, which will assist in assessing the status of biodiversity in the country.

In order to meet our CITES commitments, we are establishing a national scientific authority, which will replace the current fragmented system. The new authority will enable uniform implementation and provide access to scientific information beyond just CITES species. As a signatory to the international Convention on Biodiversity, South Africa has a commitment to the sustainable use of our natural resources. We understand the huge responsibility that rests on our

shoulders to nurture the ecological and economic value of our biodiversity. Therefore, we must protect the integrity of our ecosystems to ensure their long term contribution to tourism and job creation. These regulations empower us to do this.

**We are putting an end, once and for all, to the reprehensible practice of canned [hunting] shooting. The regulations specifically prohibit hunting large predators and rhinoceros that are “put and take” animals - in other words, a captive bred animal that is released on a property for the purpose of hunting within twenty four months.** South Africa has a longstanding reputation as a global leader on conservation issues. We cannot allow our achievements to be undermined by rogue practices such as canned lion[ hunting] shooting.

More broadly, the regulations signal the start of a clean-up of the hunting industry. They lay the basis for a well-regulated and ethical hunting and game farming industry in South Africa. Whilst we applaud their substantial and positive contribution to conservation management and economic growth, we also have a responsibility to preserve the resource base and ensure that the industry has a sustainable future. In order to do this, we must balance economic objectives with conservation management objectives. Hunting is an important industry, but we must manage it in accordance with ethical and defensible standards.

The regulations include prohibitions and restrictions on certain activities and methods of hunting. For example, hunting thick skinned animals and large predators with a bow and arrow will be prohibited and hunting from vehicles will no longer be allowed.

The implementation of these regulations will be the first step of a two-step process to clean up the hunting and game farming industry. The next step will be to promote even greater uniformity with regard to elements of the hunting industry that we are not dealing with today. We will introduce national norms and standards that provide a framework for provincial regulation and further streamline permitting. This will also be developed in close consultation with the industry, provincial authorities and other stakeholders.

## **VOL 5/2 (2007)**

### **SOUTH AFRICA**

The South African Predator Breeders' Association says lion breeders face bankruptcy and may be forced to slaughter thousands of lions when government implements laws banning most breeding of the animals for canned shooting purposes. SA has up to 300 breeders keeping about 5,000 lions. Prime male specimens fetched up to R200,000 each on the canned shooting market. The SA Government took action after increased pressure from organized national and international hunting groups to close the canned shooting industry. Carel van Heerden, SABPA chairman, said for \$15,000-\$25,000 [a client] can be guaranteed a lion and we can even send him a photograph of the animal before he travels". Will Travers, director of the Born Free Foundation in England, said the closing of the industry would not affect lion numbers elsewhere as the number of wild lions that could be hunted every year was set "through scientific quotas".

## **VOL 5/5 (2007)**

### **FENCES AND LIONS**

**Ludolph Swanevelder, National Chair: CHASA**

**Editor's Note:** Readers are reminded of the article "Hunting Behind High Fences by Gerhard R Damm" published in African Indaba Vol 2 No 3.

The generation who lived in the beginning of the previous century, referred to game as “res nullius” – a Latin legal term which means that game “belongs to nobody”. Since mankind’s numbers have exceeded the 3 billion mark a few decades ago, this principle has become totally unsound when it comes to the successful conservation of wildlife. Game animals have no chance of survival if they belong to nobody. The successful North American model of conservation is based on game being owned collectively by the people, and the said people’s representatives manage the animals. This model also applies to Southern Africa’s national parks.

The South African model, responsible for the most successful conservation story of all times, is based on the principle that game is owned by an individual landowner. Seventy percent of all game animals in South Africa are owned by ranchers and this success story is based on the necessity of fencing, enabling the individual to own and manage the animals.

The principles of ethical hunting requires that the hunted animal have a fair chance of escape from his pursuer, and further that the animal be located in suitable habitat where it can be self-supporting. The vast majority of South Africa’s fenced game farms comply with these requirements, and we can therefore deduce that the presence of fences is compatible with the principles of ethical hunting. During the last years a practice has developed to “hunt” lion in camps where they have no reasonable chance to escape, and the term ‘canned hunting’ has been coined to describe this practice. Responsible hunters totally reject the shooting of canned lions, and also reject the “hunting” of any other species under similar circumstances.

The scientific approach towards conservation does not make any distinction between indigenous species and does not favor one over the other. Favoritism of ‘celebrity-species’ is the style of animal rights activists – normally with the view of soliciting money from a well-meaning but ill-informed public. And favoritism is always detrimental to biodiversity. People who are serious about conservation will manage all wild species according to similar principles. The rules on which we manage other game species, must thus also be applied to lion. When we then reject the shooting of canned lion, we must not overreact and reject all forms of lion hunting. Game conservationists acknowledge that sustainable utilization and game management require fenced areas, and this must also apply to lion. But lion hunts in these areas must be conducted according to ethical norms which comply with the requirements of fair chase, and in suitable habitat where the individual hunted lion is a part of a self-sustaining lion population.

Without the income incentive from responsible hunting of lion, no landowner will make land available for lions, and the conservation of lions will then become the responsibility of SANParks alone. What a tragedy for “*Panthera leo*”.

## **VOL 7/4 (2009)**

### **G DAMM’S EDITOR’S NOTES (EXTRACTS)**

Talking about regulations – there is certainly one I consider good and valid – the two-year-rule for lion which hopefully will now be enforced. The international scandal of South Africa’s “canned lion shoots” - allowed more than 740 cage-bred lion to be shot by tourists (not hunters) while waiting to be fed during 2008. Several thousand more cage-bred lion are at the 123 breeders’ facilities – some real MGM-Monster-Mane ones, no doubt too – and it looks like more are waiting in Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia. These lion shooters are not hunters, and one who is in the know stated that “*I had one of them who thought he would be allowed to shoot the beast in his feeding cage between the bars. Some don't like to get out of the vehicle to shoot. They just want the skin, the head and the boast - I shot a lion in Africa*”.

Unfortunately, South Africa has too many new and well-intentioned laws that have proved too difficult to enforce. The lack of competent civil servants – throw in a bit of corruption as spice, an overstrained police force and those amongst the land owners and outfitters who abet corruption for their own economic gain, are standing in the way. South Africa’s North-West Province accounts 637

lion out of the estimated total 740 killed in 2009. This concentration in one province is most likely not coincidental. South Africa does not stand alone in this nefarious practice.

It raises its ugly head in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia, and authorities there should act quickly and decisively to stamp it out before it takes root.

## **VOL 7/4 (2009)**

### **END OF THE ROAD FOR CANNED LION SHOOTING**

**Gerhard R Damm**

On June 11th, Judge van der Merwe, Free State High Court, Bloemfontein, concurred with the government that the breeding of lions in captivity with the sole purpose of canned shooting did not aid their protection. The former minister of environmental affairs and tourism was taken to court by lion breeders with respect to the promulgated TOPs regulations according to which, a lion which has been bred in captivity, must be self-sustaining for 24 months (in other words, hunt for prey), before it can be hunted.

The judge dismissed the lion breeders' case with costs. The lion breeders had sought the 2 years restriction be changed to "a few days". Van der Merwe said in his verdict that lion farmers are just worried about money and the economic losses they allegedly suffer if the semi-tame lions must first spend 2years roaming free before they can be hunted.

Albi Modise, spokesperson for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, said the SA government welcomed the verdict. Modise confirmed that the South African Hunting Industry makes a substantial and positive contribution to conservation management and the country's economy and added that *"we need a clean hunting industry, free from unacceptable behaviour which could damage the country's image."* The judge writes in paragraph 71 of the 81 page decision (download at <http://sapredators.co.za/docs/Uitspraak.pdf>) that *"it is not disputed that the hunting of lions bred in captivity has damaged the reputation of the Republic of South Africa immensely. It is clear on the evidence and also not disputed that very many people all over the world find the notion of hunting a lion bred and raised in captivity, often by hand, and totally dependent on humans for its survival, abhorrent and repulsive. I find this view to be objectively reasonable and justifiable, to say the least."*

In paragraph 73 the judge refers to Conservation Force Chairman John J Jackson III: *"Today the killing of captive bred African lion behind high fences as well as 'put & take' hunting of lion are not considered acceptable hunting practices by the greater hunting community. Hunting behind high fences, however, can offer the discerning hunter a true fair chase experience if the hunted game animals are naturally interacting members of wild sustainable game populations within ecologically functional systems that meet the spatial and temporal requirements of the species populations"*.

Readers of African Indaba will remember that we and almost the entire South African hunting community always took strong opposition towards canned shooting.

*"It will close down our business,"* Carel van Heerden, chairperson of the South African Predator Breeders Association, said following the ruling. According to him, their legal team will apply for leave to appeal the verdict. He reiterated that the association did not agree with the set period of 24 months because it was *"not scientifically based but rather grabbed from the air"*.

The ruling comes more than a decade after a BBC documentary showed a lioness being shot in a small enclosure in South Africa in front of her cubs, leading to international criticism.

## **VOL 7/5 (2009)**

### **PHASA PRESIDENT'S OPINION**

**Peter de Villiers Butland**

The judgment in the case of the SA Lion Breeders' Association against the Minister of Environmental Affairs has been given at last, the noise from the various parties has died down and South African hunters can hopefully put this sorry saga behind them. A DEAT spokesman summed it up well, saying "Hunting is an important industry but we must manage it in accordance with defensible standards".

Although not all were guilty, the standards which some clients were prepared to accept to tick off a lion on their trophy lists were indefensible. And the willingness of some "PHs" to take those clients' money and to pretend that they were "hunting" a wild animal was despicable.

The damage done to the reputation of our country, to its image in the hunting world and to the reputation of all South African hunters, the good and the bad, by this sloth and greed will take some time to overcome. But it is time to move on.

PHASA has in the past consistently condemned the shooting of captive bred predators, because of actual and potential abuse of the law. PHASA's past president [Stewart Dorrington] was a member of the Panel of Experts. PHASA participated in the consultative process which led to the TOPS regulations and PHASA has noted the judge's detailed comments [*see last African Indaba for details*] and his judgment in the court case.

PHASA has accordingly reconsidered its position on lion hunting in South Africa. It will support the hunting of any and all species that have been released into an extensive wildlife system and can fend for themselves, provided that species listed as TOPS are hunted strictly according to the provisions of the TOPS Regulations and that all species are hunted according to the laws of the land, the PHASA Code of Conduct and the commonly accepted principles of Fair Chase. Unethical and illegal practices will not be tolerated and PHASA members will be held to account if found guilty of misconduct.

## **VOL 8/4+5 (2010)**

### **LION TRADING THE SAME AS COW TRADING FOR SOME**

**Tony Carnie**

A pending court case on South Africa's canned lion controversy is expected to have far-reaching ramifications for local hunters and several thousand lions - and possibly open a new and much uglier can of worms. In a nutshell, local lion-breeders have mounted a last-ditch legal challenge to prevent the government from shutting down their hunting and breeding industry. If they lose the case, the captive-breeding/ hunting industry will have to shut down or go underground and most of its members will be looking for new jobs. When this happens, lion breeders say, there will be no alternative but to "euthanize" most of the captive-bred lion population estimated at about 5 000 animals.

Local animal welfare groups say there are not enough zoos or sanctuaries to accommodate so many lions and acknowledge most of them will probably have to be destroyed. There is also a possibility the government will grant the lion-breeders a phasing-out or sunset period to wind up their businesses and offer the last captive lions to hunters and other takers. But there is also a much grimmer alternative – turning lions into the equivalent of bone meal. The notion that the government would tolerate such a proposal seems outlandish and far-fetched, yet it is not illegal to export and trade lion products, if traders can obtain permits.

David Newton, Johannesburg-based head of the international wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, says in theory there is nothing to stop lion products being traded legally under the provisions of the international Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Lions are classified under CITES Appendix II, which affords a lower level of protection than is given to the more endangered Asian tiger, which falls under Appendix I.

In his opinion, international laws would not prohibit trading of captive-bred lion bones. Asked if lion-breeders could exploit this opportunity, Newton said: "I'm sure they will. There is some interest in this already. Whether breeders choose to acknowledge this or not is neither here nor there. Some traders don't follow the animal rights view. For them it is just another commodity... trading in lions would not be any different to trading cows.

"We know there is a limited trade in lion bones already and this is of great concern to us - especially if it is being driven by the Asian markets. We also know tiger bone is in demand in Asia and there have been some recent confiscations of intercepted lion patella bones (kneecaps)." Newton says wildlife intelligence sources indicate cat bone traders in Asia could be prepared to accept lion bones as an alternative to tiger bone, as the two big cat species are closely related and also capable of interbreeding.

"So far we have not seen any lion bones in powdered form, and I would be surprised to see that happening, because most traders would want to be supplied with the real thing. Perhaps if they really trusted the supplier they would accept powdered bones."

Asked for his opinion on whether trade in the products of captive-bred lions might help ease hunting pressure on wild lions, Newton said there were captive-breeding facilities, such as the De Wildt cheetah-breeding centre, that had conservation objectives. "I'm not sure the captive-lion breeders help conservation. To some extent they are creating a new market, so TRAFFIC does not support tiger farming or lion farming where the final product is bone. We think there is a risk that some animals will be mixed up to create a new market. "People in China have tried to farm tigers for some time, yet we have not seen any improvement for wild tigers - and so the same holds for South Africa. My feeling is that some farmers are catering to hunters who could not care less where their lion comes from."

As for lion-bone farming, Newton says this could increase the pressure on wild lions but says the organisation does not have enough information about this market and hopes to raise funds to do a more detailed study. "How do you know whether lion bones are coming from wild or captive bred animals?

How many wildlife officers can recognise a lion bone? If you are going to allow something like this you need to know what you are looking at." In his opinion, local wildlife officials could be entitled to sign a CITES export permit for lion bones if scientific experts decided such trade was "not detrimental" to the species. Another source cites a recent case in which the Free State nature conservation agency allegedly issued a permit allowing the export of lion bones to a neighbouring province. What rang alarm bells was that the permit contained only English and Chinese text, sparking concern that some lion breeders had already made contact with Chinese intermediaries. "My information is the Chinese will pass off the lion bones as free-ranging tiger bones. If South Africa relaxes controls there is no way to flood the Chinese bone medicine market because it's so massive."

Last month the Endangered Wildlife Trust and other conservation and animal welfare groups met Department of Environmental Affairs officials and urged them to put regulations in place to avert a further conservation crisis involving lion bones.

Sarel van der Merwe, chairman of the Kuruman-based African Lion Working Group, also fears lion-breeders are poised to exploit the potential lion bone trade option. "If there is money to be made from bones they will find ways to do it - or the trade will simply go underground. At the moment, some of our concerns are based on suspicion that lion breeders, zoos and safari parks from all over the world will find it increasingly worthwhile to export bones, much like the illegal trade in rhino horn.

Leigh Fletcher, a lion breeder from Sandhurst Safaris in North West, testified in a recent trial that she had spent her life feeding, rearing and doctoring lion cubs in much the same way as farmers bred cattle. Her brother Clayton Fletcher will stand trial in October for his alleged involvement in a criminal syndicate that poached, procured and traded illegal rhino horn throughout South Africa.

Van der Merwe says the African lion is already under severe threat from habitat loss, disease, poisoning and human persecution. Compared with estimates of about 200 000 lions in Africa in 1975, Van der Merwe and Dutch researcher Hans Bauer believe the continent's wild lion population has declined to between 16 000 and 30 000 animals. Other researchers suggest a more optimistic figure of 47 000 lions. But regardless of the true total, Van der Merwe says the entire African lion population would not fill a large city soccer or rugby stadium.

**This article was originally published on page 6 of Cape Times on July 22, 2010**

## **VOL 11/5+6 (2013)**

### **SHOOTING OR HUNTING: WHAT IS IT TO BE?**

**Gerhard Damm and Peter Flack**

More than a decade ago, representatives and leadership of organized professional hunting in South Africa condemned the practice of shooting canned lions in the country and they were in good company with practically all associations and clubs in Africa and around the world in agreement. We reported quite frequently on "canned shooting" issues and, when researching the subject, I found in African Indaba Volume 4 # 5 (September 2006, page 9), the article "*The Shooting of Captive Bred Lions*" – the subtitle reading "*PHASA1 Policy Statement issued May 2006*".

One phrase from this Statement deserves to be mentioned "... *any member who may be involved in the shooting of captive bred lions is requested to refrain from such activities or resign (his/her) membership of PHASA. Furthermore, PHASA is going public with this stance. A letter will be sent out to the media...*". Reference was made to a PHASA Policy Statement of 1999, which reads under point 1 that "*PHASA hereby states categorically and unequivocally that it does not consider the practice of "canned lion shooting" to be a form of hunting*" and under point 4 that "*PHASA deems an animal to be canned, when that animal cannot sustain itself, breed freely and be hunted under the principles of fair chase*".

Now we heard that PHASA has made an about turn and adopted the position of the South African Predator Breeders' Association (SAPA) on this matter without alteration (African Indaba has a copy of the PHASA document dated 20.11.2013). What used to be canned lion shooting is now called "Hunting of Captive Bred Lions". Sounds better, doesn't it? But it still remains the same old thing. It reminds me of the old Grouch Marx statement, "Of course I have principles. But if you don't like these, I have others!" Something like this must have been on the mind of those who elected to embrace the money-making machine of canned lion shooting as old school outfitters and professional hunters were apparently steamrolled by the vast majority of PHASA members who adopted the SAPA policy on lions. In this regard, we shouldn't forget the political support for this position by some of the Conservation/ Environmental departments in South Africa's nine provinces.

We often hear that the canned lion industry only exists because there is a high demand to shoot these poor beasts but you can probably also reverse this argument, at least to certain extent, if you look at the advertisements for lion "hunts" on the internet, which usually portrays a South African lion "hunt" as a breath-taking adventure. Another argument claims that "*the hunting [sic] of captive bred lions assists the conservation of wild lions by reducing hunting pressure on them*".

Well, there is indeed a high demand for hunting a lion in the African wilderness. But lion hunting and their annual quotas are tightly regulated and controlled in all range countries which allow lion hunting. The quotas in these countries will always find eager hunters willing to pay the

high prices for the privilege of hunting a wild lion; even if the chances of harvesting a mature male lion are 50/50 at best and not a few hunters go home empty-handed. This category of hunters will continue to hunt wild African lions and thus contribute to lion conservation in more than one way,

This cannot be said of the other type of “hunter” who opts for the “guaranteed” shooting of canned South African lions. Their money goes to the lion breeder and the professional hunter and not a cent finds its way into lion conservation. It is a well-established fact that this kind of lion breeding has no conservation value. If the argument of reduced hunting pressure on wild individuals by hunting captive bred animals has any validity, the question must be asked why do we not then hunt captive-bred large carnivores like grizzlies in North America or brown bears in Eurasia?

## **VOL 12/1 (2014)**

### **CANNED LION SHOOTING REVISITED**

**Gerhard Damm and Peter Flack**

**In the previous issue of African Indaba, we discussed canned lion shooting under the title *Hunting or Shooting: What is it to be?* We wanted to provoke a reaction, and indeed, we succeeded. PHASA, the Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa circulated an email on 19th December 2013. The email did not reach the authors directly, nor was it addressed to African Indaba; we received it in copy from a PHASA member. Our readers may be interested what PHASA had to say, and here it is:**

#### *SHOOTING OR HUNTING: CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE – PHASA HAS A DUTY TO BE INVOLVED*

*The issue of lion hunting is both topical and emotive, and it is a pity that Messrs Damm and Flack have elected not to make a constructive contribution to the public debate on this subject but have instead produced a polemic which is factually inaccurate and fundamentally misrepresents PHASA’s position (African Indaba, 5 December 2013).*

*The authors’ attack on PHASA is based on their confusion between canned hunting and the hunting of captive-bred lions. These are not the same: canned hunting, which is illegal in South Africa, is when the animal is hunted while it is drugged or in an enclosed hunting area too small for the lion to evade the hunter; in captive-bred hunting, the animal is released into an extensive wildlife system to be hunted in accordance with South Africa’s strict and explicit regulations.*

*PHASA is now, and always has been, strongly opposed to canned hunting and will act against any of its members who engage in this activity. PHASA will continue to work with the government and the law enforcement agencies to eradicate this practice. This position was reaffirmed at its annual general meeting in December 2013.*

*PHASA’s position on captive bred hunting was, prior to our 2013 AGM, covered by the following policy: “PHASA supports the responsible hunting of all species in a sustainable wildlife system, in which animals can fend for themselves, provided that they are hunted in accordance with the laws of the land and PHASA’s own code of conduct.”*

*There have however been a number of developments that necessitated a review of our 2006 position, as stipulated in the previous paragraph, on captive-bred hunting. First, the South African Predator Breeders’ Association (SAPA) won its appeal against the Minister of Environmental Affairs in 2010, effectively ending any attempts to stop the practice in South Africa; second, the Department of Environmental Affairs has itself significantly softened its stance on the activity, calling it sustainable; and third, demand for lion hunting continues to grow.*

*Given this growth in demand, the fact that captive-bred lion hunting was deemed legal and sustainable by our courts and government, and the potential risks that continued unethical hunting practices in the captive-bred hunting industry posed to traditional trophy hunting, we resolved at our*

2011 AGM that it would be a dereliction of our duties to simply distance ourselves from the practice while ignoring continued unethical hunting and the damage this could cause to the reputation of all trophy hunting activities.

As such, we entered into a dialogue with SAPA to improve the conditions in which lions are reared and hunted, and over the two year period we have helped SAPA draw up a set of norms which we believe is a good starting point to ensure that captive-bred lion hunting is carried out responsibly. There are too many distortions and inaccuracies in the article by Messrs Damm and Flack to deal with individually – it is worth noting that the only authority they cite for their assertions is one of their own articles – and readers who would like to know more about PHASA’s policies and principles are welcome to contact me.

Hermann Meyeridricks

PHASA President

For further information contact Adri Kitshoff, PHASA chief executive, on 083 650 0442

We suggest that our readers assess the PHASA statement in conjunction with a statement which can be found on a website called SAMPEO. SAMPEO is an acronym for *South Africa's Most Professional and Experienced Outfitters*; the group consists of eight senior professional hunters, all currently members of PHASA in good standing and their respective outfitting companies (see [www.sampeo.co.za](http://www.sampeo.co.za) for the names of individual SAMPEO members). Here is the SAMPEO statement:

**SOUTH AFRICA’S MOST PROVEN AND EXPERIENCED OUTFITTERS (SAMPEO Est. 2011) STANCE ON CAPTIVE BRED / CANNED LION HUNTING**

We, hunting outfitters and members in good standing of PHASA, feel compelled to express our views on the recent decision by PHASA to support the shooting of canned/captive bred lions.

This represents a reversal of the decision by PHASA in 1999 and reiterated in 2006 with regard to the practice of shooting canned/captive bred lions and as such, we unanimously and unequivocally:

1. Condemn the immoral practice of canned/captive bred lion shooting, where lions are bred for the SOLE purpose of being killed by paying clients and play no meaningful contribution to wildlife conservation, financial or otherwise that aids the species the African Lion (*Panthera leo*) in its natural state.
2. See no meaningful distinction between the terms “canned” or “captive bred” lion.
3. Believe that the shooting of lion, bred and raised in breeding facilities and subsequently released for a period agreed by PHASA and SAPA of 7 days prior to the shoot commencing, is reprehensible.
4. Do not believe that the adoption by PHASA of the SAPA norms and standards for the shooting of canned/captive bred lions can be considered fair chase hunting. Where the animal is self-sustaining, can feed naturally, breed naturally and has a chance of evading the hunter. None of these criteria are met.
5. The inability of both Associations to police the current norms and standards, due to both being “voluntary” Associations and not “statutory” bodies is a major concern. As no sway is held over “non-members” to either Association
6. We believe the practice is degrading to the African Lion, which is an iconic and regal symbol of all African wildlife.

The activities of a few have severely tarnished the reputation of our industry. They have caused major harm to those of us who are committed to acceptable hunting practices that enhance the already significant conservation efforts that have been and are made by hunting in South Africa.

We note that PHASA states that our article is “*polemic ... factually inaccurate and fundamentally misrepresents PHASA’s position*” and that there are “*too many distortions and inaccuracies in the article ... to deal with individually*”. For his statement to be seen as anything other than playing the man instead of the ball, it would require a detailed statement, not only in support of the contentions of PHASA, but an explanation of how the opinions expressed by Damm and Flack differ from those of some senior PHASA members, amongst them former presidents and vice presidents of the association, as shown in the SAMPEO statement. The attentive reader will note that the authors of the PHASA statement also choose not quote the two official PHASA policy statements on canned shooting (1999 and 2006) mentioned by Damm and Flack.

African Indaba readers may also be interested that Damm quoted David Mabunda, SANParks CEO in a presentation made at the 2011 PHASA AGM. Mabunda’s words were a direct citation from the concluding section of Peter Flack’s acclaimed book *The South African Conservation Success Story* and the corresponding documentary CD, which was launched in March 2011 in Johannesburg with PHASA, WRSA, CHASA, SAHGCA, amongst others as promoters.

Mabunda’s clear message said “*... despite the benefits hunting and wildlife ranching have brought to South Africa, the future of wildlife and its conservation in this country may well be at crossroads ... [with] a land and wildlife conservation model that [enfranchises] large numbers of previously disenfranchised people lacking, ... [when] a significant rise in canned and put & take killings has tarnished the image of hunting, and ... [when] new entrants to South African game ranching have brought with them methods from the domestic livestock industry.*”

Damm recalls that the reaction of the audience was mixed – some applauding, and a few calling for his removal from the floor. During the same AGM, the president of PHASA announced that a dialogue with the SA Predators’ Breeders was on the agenda; if we recall correctly, he put it on the agenda in order to make the breeders accept PHASA standards, and not *vice versa*.

Seasoned African Indaba readers know that our E-Newsletter reports about lion hunting and conservation, including canned lion shooting, from the time Damm conceptualized and started African Indaba in 2003. In many articles we supported and actually praised PHASA for their clear policy statements against canned shooting (if you are interested you can go to the African Indaba archives [www.africanindaba.co.za/entry.htm](http://www.africanindaba.co.za/entry.htm) and download every single issue).

We argued the case of regulated and sustainable wild lion hunting, but we cannot and will not cave in on our view of killing captive bred and raised lions for the sake of economic benefits for a few. To paraphrase PHASA – hunting or shooting, call it what you like, African Indaba will stay involved!

## **VOL 12-3 (2014)**

### **FORMER PHASA PRESIDENT RONNIE ROWLAND ON PHASA LION POLICY**

**Editor’s Note (G. Damm):** Ronnie Rowland is a past president of the Professional Hunters’ Association (PHASA), recipient of the PHASA Wildlife Utilization Award in 2000 and recipient of the Coenraad Vermaak Trophy in 2005. Today Ronnie Rowland lives and hunts professionally in Namibia. Following the PHASA decision to adopt the SA predator breeders’ association stand on “hunting” of captive bred lions, Rowland wrote to the Executive Committee of PHASA in March 2014. African Indaba obtained permission to let you have Rowland’s thoughts in an authorized, edited version:

Aldo Leopold concluded in his contemplation on ethics, that ethical behavior defines itself by doing the right thing in the absence of witnesses – even if it’s legal to do the wrong thing! Ortega y Gasset, in turn, observed in his masterful essay “Meditation on Hunting”, that the essence of hunting in our modern day and age has changed its character from hunting and gathering for

survival to sport hunting with the principle of fair chase at its core. This change was prompted by hunters in order to negate the emerging imbalance between hunters and hunted through the development of modern day weapons and technological aids. By doing this, hunters strive to preserve the true essence of hunting and not to transgress certain boundaries which would reduce it to merely become an act of wanton killing or execution.

To preserve the true essence of hunting in today's world one also has to consider that animals should be naturally wild with natural inborn instincts, as opposed to those that have been linebred, domesticated and/or habituated. Both Leopold and Ortega impressed upon us to adhere to certain self-imposed principles, norms and standards should we want to safeguard our natural heritage as true hunters. At the core of this is our conscience.

Many years ago I wrote in the PHASA Newsletter that morality and prudence are two sides of the same coin. The two concepts are often confused with one another. I suggested as difference that fair chase hunting based on morality is killing with a conscience, whereas the killing of animals based on prudence alone, entails an act of execution without a conscience. For clarity sake compare any true fair chase hunt of a wild animal with the shooting of a captive bred lion. Once we allow hunting to become amoral, i.e. without a conscience, we are transgressing the self-imposed boundary between hunters and hunted, ultimately destroying the essence of hunting. Once we allow rationality especially material gain to supersede our moral values, our world in general and hunting in particular, is doomed. Decisions based on prudence alone, will kill hunting!

As a PHASA Past President and Honorary Life Member I would like the leadership of PHASA as well as the members to take note that I do not only disagree, but also distance myself totally from the direction taken and also from the ending of the liaison with the CIC

Captive-bred lion shooting and the non-definitive positioning of PHASA regarding line breeding of mutants and recessive gene color variants of wild animals transgresses the boundaries of fair chase hunting, endangers the essence of hunting and at the same time allows the erosion of our moral foundations. In my opinion our greatest challenge is convincing the general public as well as governments that the wise and sustainable utilization of our natural wildlife through hunting is indispensable. The CIC is the only European based organization that has stood up for our cause with distinction. No other organization has a better and broader respected standing with IUCN and governments worldwide! So why did PHASA decide terminating membership in the CIC? Obviously, if the reason for the breakdown in relationships concerns the captive-bred lion issue and/or line-breeding, massive obstacles have to be overcome.

It is fair and well to comment that the lion issue was debated extensively at the last two PHASA AGMs and that a majority decision by PHASA members led to the present direction taken, i.e. to accept captive bred lion shooting as a reality. However, the lion issue had already been properly debated and thoroughly contemplated since the middle 90s resulting in a PHASA policy statement against captive bred lion shooting in the late 1990's This position and the policy were reconfirmed again in 2006. The PHASA leadership in those days refused to accept "canned lion hunting" as a form of hunting, defining it to be the mere execution of captive bred lion, hence the phrase "captive bred lion shooting", like in target shooting. In both cases the policy was accepted with an overwhelming majority by the members at the AGMs concerned. Question: What in actual fact has changed? None of the arguments, contemplations deliberations and facts of yesteryear, based on ethical reasoning with a moral foundation, have changed. The only thing to my mind that has changed is the leadership and the overwhelming commercialization of hunting which allows the "Dollar God" to reign supreme!

The PHASA Code of Conduct underwrites the concept of fair chase. Has anyone realized that the acceptance of captive bred lion shooting also requires a change in this Code of Conduct since fair chase hunting is in total contradiction with the acceptance of captive bred lion shooting. [I will] have no choice but to resign as an honorary life member should the principle of fair chase hunting be disregarded in favor of the lion debacle and there are many like-minded members who will also be put before this choice!

[Once] we allow hunting to become amoral we are transgressing the self-imposed boundary between man and wild animals which stops hunting to be hunting. Once we allow material gain to supersede moral values, our world in general and hunting in particular is doomed. Prudent decisions alone, e.g. captive bred lion execution and line breeding of mutants, will kill hunting!

Our only chance to safeguard hunting as a noble tradition and way of life is to convince the majority of the populace that our activities have a moral foundation. The breeding of lions in captivity as well as the line breeding of mutants and recessive genes for execution has and will never have a place in the sphere of true fair chase hunting. It has no moral base, no conscience and is purely based on materialistic considerations.

## **12/5-II (2014)**

### **Canned Killings And Other Unnatural Behavior In The Game Ranching Industry**

**Peter Flack**

Why do I and my amateur and professional hunting friends detest the increasing number of incidents involving the killing of canned or put-and-take animals? Why do we also dislike so intensely the domestication of wildlife and the manipulation and intensive breeding of unnatural color variants and freaks?

In my case, the answer lies partly in the subjective reasons why I hunt. I hunt because it satisfies something deep within me. It is part of my culture, who I am, just as it has been part of the culture of other peoples such as the Bushmen, Pygmies and Inuit since time immemorial. Something that has been acquired and ingrained over the 200,000 years we have been recognizable as human beings on earth and during which time men were obliged to hunt to provide for and protect their families. If you think about it, agriculture was only invented about 10 000 years ago and, for many of us, the last five per cent of the time we have been on earth has not eradicated that which was inculcated over the previous 95 per cent.

As such, anyone or anything which threatens my right and/or ability to hunt legally, ethically and sustainably is a cause for grave concern as it attacks something of critical importance to me and, I believe, the country as a whole but more about that later.

Partly the answer lies in the manner in which I like to hunt. My favorite hunts are fair chase ones for wild, free ranging game animals in their natural habitats where they can feed themselves, breed naturally and escape their predators (of which I am one), in the way they have done for tens of thousands of years. I have also enjoyed hunting on big, fenced properties – those where you only see the fence when you arrive and leave through the front gate - and where the animals there are capable of and do, in fact, live as they would in their natural, free range habitats.

Therefore, for my friends and me, shooting an animal in a small paddock into which it has been recently released and where it has little or no chance of feeding itself, procreating and escaping its predators, can never be considered hunting. It may be culling, killing, slaughter or shooting but it can never be hunting. There is simply no hunting involved despite the fact that animal rightists and the uninformed or ill-informed insist on calling it “canned hunting”!

And I detest the fact that this type of thing gives animal rightists the ammunition to tar my friends and me with the same brush. After all, are we not also hunters?

When this disgusting practice is compounded by drugging the animal, domesticating it so that it loses its natural fear of man or depriving it of food and/or water so it remains at the only spot in the paddock where this has been provided, it merely exacerbates the reprehensibility of the act and those who have staged and orchestrated the slaughter. People who offer these canned or put-and-take experiences and those who knowingly partake, often justify it on the following grounds:

1. It saves an animal in the wild and therefore contributes to conservation.

2. The animals have lost their fear of human beings and are, therefore, more dangerous.
3. Conversely, because they have been drugged or are tethered by their hunger or thirst, they can be quickly found and safely approached on foot or in a vehicle and shot from close range. The end result is guaranteed.
4. It provides an affordable, legal experience as it is too expensive, difficult, dangerous, time-consuming to hunt these animals on a fair chase basis in their natural environment and one should not be deprived of this experience or, alternatively, are entitled to have this experience.

Firstly, conservation does not enter the picture. All the money goes to the people providing the animals and the “experience” and none of that is invested, directly or indirectly, in the conservation of wildlife or wildlife habitats. These animals have been bred for the sole purpose of being killed and there is little or no difference to this and an abattoir except the transport and killing methods. Secondly, those hunters who want the experience of a fair chase lion hunt, for example, will always want the genuine article and will not knowingly substitute the one for the other.

I keep on using this word “knowingly” because South Africa has the unfortunate and unenviable reputation of cheating more hunters more often than any other African country and it is clear that a number of overseas recreational trophy hunters have been duped into thinking they were participating in a fair chase hunt when this was not the case. It’s not that everyone in the South African hunting industry is a crook. Far from it. It just seems at times as if every crook is in the South African hunting industry.

Point two - I do not understand how danger provides justification for this disgusting practice. It is analogous to arguing that murder in Afghanistan is acceptable because it is dangerous to go there. The third point is so ridiculous that, although it is used as a marketing and sales tool by the purveyors of this immoral practice, I will not bother to address it. The last point is similar to arguing that everyone has the right to experience driving at over 300 kilometers per hour, therefore Formula One racing cars should be provided at a fraction of the cost to all those who have an interest in motorsport.

At the end of the day, however, can it not be argued that the opposition of my friends and me to these practices is based purely on a personal point of view? That everyone is entitled to his own opinion and that, as the constitution effectively guarantees the right of everyone to make a legal living, our objections have no more weight than the contrary view?

I want to digress for a moment. Some years back, after two fruitless fair chase hunts for free range cheetah in Namibia, I booked a hunt on a property along the Limpopo River. What impressed me, initially, was the landowner’s statement that, “You should have a 50/50 chance. They are definitely here, but they come and go.” So I not only booked the two week hunt and paid my deposit but also booked a hunt for some of the small cats on his Free State property. About two weeks before the hunt I was called by one of his employees who informed me that, as his boss had sold the land along the Limpopo where I was due to hunt cheetah, I would not be able to hunt there. “Never mind” he said, “You can hunt cheetah on our Free State property.” In response to my immediate cancellation of the hunt - as I knew there were no free range cheetah in the Free State - he argued that the hunt would be completely legal. To bolster his argument he added, “An official from nature conservation will be there because we will be doing a lion hunt on Monday and your cheetah on Tuesday.” I patiently explained why this was completely unacceptable to me and drew his attention to my initial correspondence in which I stated it was a material term of the hunting contract that it be conducted both in accordance with the law and fair chase ethics. He eventually accepted my point of view but then said, “But what about the small cats? They are completely fair chase.”

My answer was what you would expect. I explained that I could not hunt with him or his outfitting company under any circumstances as it was clear, by his own admission, that they conducted canned killing operations which, therefore, tainted whatever else they did. I could never be certain, therefore, whether the other “hunts” offered were not also canned killing operations and

I was not prepared to take the risk. Bear with me if you will and I will try and explain the relevance of this experience later.

If you accept that the quiet conservation revolution which has swept across South Africa over the last 60 years or so has been funded almost exclusively by hunting as has been empirically established time and time again, then you should also accept that anything which damages or abuses hunting is going to have a negative effect on conservation in this country. I mean examine the issues, the numbers are clear. From three game ranches that existed in the 1960s, there are some 10,000 today. From the 557,000 game animals which existed in 1964, there are some 18.6 million today. From all but zero land under game in private hands then, some 21 million hectares or almost three times the land covered by all the national and provincial parks put together exists today. From all but zero money that was generated by hunting in the 1960s, nearly R2 billion is generated, directly and indirectly, for the economy by overseas recreational trophy hunters alone and most of it is spent in the poor rural areas where it is needed most.

In other words, as was demonstrated in the documentary, *The South African Conservation Success Story*, hunting has driven the biggest conservation movement this country has ever seen. Not only has this already provided tens of thousands of decent jobs in a growing "industry" but the movement has the capacity to provide opportunities for all in perpetuity and anyone or anything which puts this at risk should be cause for close scrutiny by everyone including the authorities given that there is so much at stake.

Let us pause there for a moment. CIC - the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, one of, if not the, most prestigious hunting organization in Europe, with 38 country members and others including IUCN, CITES, TRAFFIC, FAO and the Boone and Crockett Club, recently passed a resolution confirming its support for fair chase hunting. The latter club is the most prestigious hunting organization in North America and, if members of these bodies feel as I and my friends do, they will not want to come and hunt in South Africa for fear of being tainted by the unsavory practices of a number of game ranchers who seem prepared to do anything for money, regardless of the consequences. Should this attitude become part and parcel of the rules and regulations of these bodies, we can expect a dramatic reduction in numbers of overseas recreational trophy hunters visiting the country and, as their contribution of some R2 billion per annum represents roughly a quarter of the entire revenue generated, directly and indirectly, by all hunting in this country, the effect of this on conservation will be catastrophic as many game ranches will go under and, in all likelihood, revert to crops or domestic livestock.

The breeding of animals for canned and put-and-take killing practices goes hand in hand with the manipulation and intensive breeding of unnatural color variants and freaks. This comparatively recent phenomenon has also been heavily criticized by overseas hunting and conservation bodies, not the least being CIC again. In 2006, the so-called Limassol resolution was passed by them, which stated that the CIC (1) condemns the unethical manipulation of game animals in order to produce trophies; (2) confirms its support for fair chase hunting and (3) urges all hunters and hunting associations to oppose such unethical, manipulative practices." This was followed in 2011 by the much more comprehensive *Wildlife and Commercially-Bred and Formerly Wild Animal Recommendation* in which it opposed "artificial and unnatural manipulations of wildlife including the enhancement or alteration of a species' genetic characteristics (e.g. pelage color, body size, horn or antler size)".

While many overseas recreational hunters have participated in the canned and put-and-take operations, knowingly and unknowingly, I am not aware of any hunter who has shot any of these unnatural color variants or intentionally cross-bred freaks. To date, it would appear as if these animals are being sold from breeder to breeder and few, if any, from breeder to hunter and even here suspicion has been cast that in certain instances the record prices have not been paid.

As many hunters, particularly those from North America, like to enter animals they hunt that qualify into the two main, international record books, Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* and SCI's *Record Book of Big Game Animals*, should either refuse to create categories for or allow the

entry of these new animals, this would detract significantly from the attraction of these animals from a hunting perspective. In conversation with the owners of Rowland Ward, the oldest of the record books (1892), they stated categorically that they will neither create separate categories nor allow the entry of these animals. In response to my written queries, Chris Emery, the Chief Master Measurer of SCI wrote, "SCI's Record Book Committee has no intention of accepting any color variations or unnatural crosses of species into the SCI Record Book and will not be creating any categories for these unnatural species."

Seeing as the huge prices paid for these animals by game ranchers and breeders can ultimately only be under-pinned by what a hunter would pay to hunt them, if a majority of European hunters were to abstain from hunting them or, worse still, from hunting in South Africa at all, then this would be a major blow to any hope these breeders might have of generating a financial return on the high prices they have paid for these domesticated, freakish and manipulated animals. If this movement then to spread to North America via the Boone and Crockett Club and SCI, it would be the death knell of this type of business, which would follow in the well-worn path of other pyramid schemes, not least the least being the tulip boom or mania in Holland.

In Charles MacKay's book, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, he describes how many investors in tulip bulbs were ruined by the precipitous fall in prices and how Dutch commerce suffered a severe shock as a result. He defined the term, "tulip mania" as any large economic bubble when asset prices deviate from intrinsic value. During the tulip boom one bulb was exchanged for five hectares of land and the prices of others reached 10 times the annual income of a skilled craftsman or \$300,000 in today's money. While this is a far cry from the nearly \$4 million paid for a buffalo bull last year, if you compare the relative sizes of the items in question, then the comparison becomes more understandable.

And who are these manipulators and breeders? Who is driving this new variation of what I perceive to be an old fashioned kibus (remember it?) or pyramid scheme? From what I can tell, a few rich businessmen and politicians with no discernible track record in conservation are the main protagonists and beneficiaries of this boom. How long can the current sky high game prices be self-sustaining and defy gravity? I do not know but I predict that, within ten years, the boom will have become a bust. It is always so. When things sound too good to be true it is usually because they are, particularly when so much time and effort is spent persuading the unwary and uneducated that this is the next best investment thing.

Partly the answer to the questions posed at the start lies in the objective reasons why I hunt. While I do not hunt solely in order to conserve wildlife and wildlife habitats, it is by far and away the most important of the objective reasons behind hunting. Having hunted for the last 59 years, in 17 African countries, on literally hundreds of safaris, for virtually all the game animals available on license, it is my confirmed and sincere belief and conviction that, without hunting, neither of these two key sustainable natural resources - which, if maintained, could provide opportunities for all on this continent in perpetuity - will survive in any significant form in 50 years' time.

Those offering canned and put-and-take killings, those offering domesticated wildlife and manipulated, intensively bred, unnatural color variations and freaks for sale are putting hunting at risk and, by definition, conservation. No-one who cares for the conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitats and all they have to offer the citizens of South Africa, can stand by idly and watch this happen so a few greedy people can make a short term profit, which benefits only them while being at such a high cost to the country.

Reluctant as I am to suggest that the government should become involved in any private sector initiative, is it not time that they follow CIC's example and ban these reprehensible practices if they want hunting and conservation in this country to continue growing and provide opportunities for all.

*This article first appeared in [African Outfitter](#), a South African magazine aimed at the hunting outfitter and his clients as well as local hunters. We republished with the kind permission of [African Outfitter](#) and the author [Peter Flack](#).*

## **VOL 13/1 (2015)**

### **NEW YEAR – OLD PROBLEMS (EXTRACTS)**

**Editorial by Gerhard R Damm**

In December last year I met Daniel A. Pedrotti Jr. during the Boone and Crockett Club AGM in St. Petersburg, Florida. This select group of conservationists also happens to be a select group of hunters. They build on the traditions and values of President Theodore Roosevelt, America's foremost conservationist. Dan regularly writes in the Club's magazine on the "Ethics of Fair Chase". We quickly realized that the problems and issues in North America and Southern Africa are quite similar – despite of some differences in the successful wildlife conservation models on both continents.

There and here the debates rage around the difference between native, and free ranging game animals (North America), and native, free or enclosed ranging game animals in ecologically functional areas (Southern Africa) on one side, and wildlife-like livestock produced on certain farms. In North America this "livestock production" includes exotic animals and deer with top-heavy unnaturally grotesque antlers. In Southern Africa, we observe an ever increasing infatuation with color phases and "horn inches", and exotic animals are also on offer. The methods to achieve the objectives are quite similar – line breeding, hormonal treatments, artificial insemination, close confinement of breeding stock, predator elimination, booster feed formula, and so on.

In both cases there is significant discourse between those that are obsessed with antler inches, horn lengths, pelage color, close confinement breeding, and those that despise these ideas. In South Africa the debate is additionally charged with what many perceive as canned lion shooting, and others vigorously defend as "captive-bred lion hunting".

It must be said that the producers of "frankendeer" in North America, and those in South Africa who breed colorful "frankenantelope", enormous cattle-like Cape buffalo, and thousands of lion destined to end their life in a shooting area, are pursuing a perfectly legal and very lucrative business.

Dan Pedrotti and I are, however, adamant that it is our right to disagree with their premises and objectives. We are also within our rights to put as much distance as possible between them and us in what the public perceives as defensible and honorable when it comes to hunting.

Dan and I don't want them to be perceived as us! As hunters we subscribe to the tenets of Fair Chase of wild animals. We are convinced that we are part of a much larger group than those who breed "frankenspecies" or those who can afford to kill them. The vast majority of the hunting community does not value pseudo-hunts of herbivorous or carnivorous livestock on which these pseudo-hunts are based. We value great hunts, the exhilarating and breath-stopping chase, and the experiences of nature in forest, bush, mountains and deserts – much more than discussing the pedigree nuances of unnaturally maned, horned or antlered freaks which were bought and killed.

In this discourse, the breeders and shooters call us elitist, intolerant and divisive, yet the standard they use to sell their products are B&C, SCI, CIC and Rowland Ward formulae; they invariably refer to the killing of artificially bred animals as hunting and they continuously use a smoke screen of pseudo-conservation arguments. Thus they open another door for the public to misapprehend the massive differences between hunting and killing.

Kai-Uwe Denker, president of the Namibia Professional Hunting Association, expressed the same feelings at the NAPHA AGM in November last year. Kai-Uwe said "that there are too many facets – especially in trophy hunting – that totally undermine all good work ... we sit with a serious dilemma and [money] is the driving power behind this dilemma ... for monetary reasons, not at all

for ideological reasons – we hunters drift away from the rest of the conservation community. That ultimately has to be fatal.” And Kai-Uwe continued saying that color phase breeding is directly contradictory to natural selection, breeding of lion to be shot by collectors has nothing to do with sustainable use nor with Fair Chase – and although financially lucrative it places a huge question mark over our true motives as hunters. Neels Geldenhuys, chief editor of African Outfitter, personally commended Kai-Uwe Denker for this NAPHA stance.

My conversation with Dan Pedrotti concluded that trophy breeders and shooters constitute a threat to the entire hunting community and to hunting way of life. The NAPHA president thinks along the same lines and so do many professional and amateur hunters in Africa (see also previous issues of African Indaba) and elsewhere. We are not intolerant because we express the most widely accepted definition of the experience-based hunt scenario within an age-old hunter-conservationist ethos. We are not elitist with our understanding that hunters are the foremost conservationists. We are not divisive if we don't accept with open arms the money and ego which drives them. We have the high ground – all we have to do is stand up and be counted

## **VOL 13/2 (2015)**

### **HONOR AND RESPECT**

**Daniel A. Pedrotti, Jr., Boone & Crockett Regular Member, Chair, Hunter Ethics Sub-Committee**

**Editor's Note (GRD): African Indaba thanks the Boone & Crockett Club as well as the author for the kind permission to reproduce this article from Fair Chase Magazine Spring 2015 issue. Founded in 1887, the Boone & Crockett Club is the oldest wildlife conservation organization in North America. For more information go to [www.boone-crockett.org/](http://www.boone-crockett.org/)**

We are a community of multitudes and generations. Our way of life predates recorded history. Our roots go back to a time when there was no thought of justifying or defending the right to hunt. Hunting was done for one simple reason, survival. There was no one who did not understand the value of the hunt and no one to question the reason or consider the merit. There was honor and respect in taking wild game to feed one's family.

In modern day society, our hunting community is based on a culture of honor and respect derived from our ancestors' dependence on the hunt and the quarry. We are defined by our skills as hunters, our love for the wild animals we pursue, and our concern for the wild places in which the animals thrive. As hunters we are vigilant, prepared, and capable when there is a threat to our community, the animals, or their environment. Our intentions are true and pure as they relate to our pursuits, and the non-hunting public is tolerant, if not supportive, as long as we stay true to our core principles and ethics. Our ethics are not established nor limited by the minimum standards of the law. In fact, "legal" is often way less than ethical.

With that said, there is a war raging and the public's perception (and therefore the acceptance or tolerance of us as a community), is potentially at stake. What is astounding is that multitudes and generations of us are being outmaneuvered by the Frankendeer faction. The "antler inches at all cost" addicts and their suppliers are so driven by ego and money that they will go to any lengths to legitimize their pseudohunts, including a very effective and well-funded lobby. At the very heart of their effort is a desperate need to make the public view them as a part of us, so as to trade on the goodwill we have worked for generations to establish and maintain.

They are very good at the political game. It all begins with their propaganda, which suggests that we are starting a fight among hunters when we reject their redefinition of the hunt. It is bizarre that this underwhelming minority has such potential to negatively affect so many of us and that their position is that "we started it!"

One of the hottest battlefields is Texas. There is a well-funded group in Texas that practices “extreme animal husbandry,” whereby they produce Frankendeer and sell them into a pseudo-hunt situation, which they sell as a “hunt.” It is currently legal to release Frankendeer and kill it within 10 days of its release. This cuts against so many of the parameters of the fair chase hunt equation it is laughable, but yet it is “legal.” And according to their propaganda, we are the bad guys for “pitting hunters against hunters.”

Another case of propaganda is that this is a property rights issue. This is the best defense in Texas, as everyone is exceptionally sensitive to our right to do what we want with our land. In this case, it is a red herring. We would no more advocate any diminution of a landowner’s rights than we would advocate against our rights as hunters.

The simple truth here is that we want to expose and thereby devalue the Frankendeer product and the pseudo-hunt scenario. We want to highlight the distinction between “legal” and “ethical” as defining standards of the hunt. We want to help the public see the tremendous difference between the egregious pursuits of antler inches at all cost versus simple, justifiable fair chase hunting. Fortunately, we have a remarkable advantage in this situation. There are multitudes and generations of us. All we really need to do is stand up and be counted.

## **VOL 13/3 (2015)**

### **STEWART DORRINGTON ON HUNTING AND GAME BREEDING**

*Editor’s Note: In the last issue of African Indaba we published several articles on the debate on hunting and game breeding in South Africa. We have now received a letter from Stewart Dorrington, a highly experienced South African professional hunter and outfitter and past president of the Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa (PHASA). With permission of Stewart, we share this letter with our readers:*

For hunting to have a future in the world, it is imperative that hunting is supported by a sound conservation ethic. If hunting does not contribute to conservation, the public will eventually close all hunting down. The animal rights groups are attempting this with growing success. They have just succeeded in persuading Australia to ban the import of any lion trophies and products from SA as they public want canned lion hunting shut down!! They are now moving their campaign to Europe and then the USA.

If we can demonstrate publicly that hunting contributes greatly to conservation, then it is unlikely that the animal rights groups will be able to persuade the public to support the closure of hunting. At this moment in time, all hunting associations in South Africa and around the world should be making a concerted attempt and investment in getting that message to the public.

Taking it further, without a hunting community, there will not be a game ranching community. Hunters are the consumptive end user of the game that is produced by game farmers. Venison, skin and horns are other lesser earners. Hunters pay for conservation on private land.

Hunting also benefits provincial and national parks. Even if these parks do not hunt, they sell excess game which is bought by game ranchers and the final consumptive end user is the hunter. So hunters indirectly benefit all national and provincial parks that sell live game!!

Thus it is vital to the game ranching industry that they look after the hunter first and foremost. If there are no hunters, only the game farms where tourism is sustainable will survive, and there are maybe only a couple of them that are profitable and sustainable on tourism alone! The hunters are the cornerstone of private conservation in South Africa; they are the foundation of the wildlife industry. It would be good for the wildlife industry to listen to the voice of hunters as there is growing anxiety amongst hunters as to the direction the game farming industry is moving.

Currently, there is a growing perception amongst hunters in SA and around the world, that hunting in SA is becoming tame. Many animals offered to hunters are viewed as "farmed" animals. The majority of hunters do not want such hunting. As a hunting outfitter who markets abroad, it is becoming harder and harder to sell SA hunting. The canned lion industry has done enormous damage to the image of hunting in SA, but our image is being further damaged by the proliferation of intensive game farming and color variants and the perception that this creates. I am neither a scientist nor a geneticist, but I am both a game farmer and a hunting outfitter and I notice the perception of hunters both in SA and abroad.

My greatest concern comes in with the various color variants and the continued attempts by ranchers to line breed any color aberrations. There is a very limited demand for these animals for hunting. In fact, most hunters I speak to despise them! However, if hunters voice their opinion and speak out about their dislike of such color variants, the game ranching industry lashes out at them and attempts to ridicule them ... even though they represent the consumers of the game ranchers' product!

Not only are the majority of these color variants not wanted by hunters, they contribute further to the negative perception that all hunting in SA is canned or farmed, and thus continue to erode the international marketability and credibility of safari hunting in SA. Many hunters, outfitters and conservationists who share my concerns don't speak out for fear of causing conflict. The game farming industry should do a survey of the hunting outfitters (over 100 of them) who marketed in the USA this year and garner some honest feedback about the demand for the products they are now producing as fast as they can. If the hunter is not the end user, who is? When new entrants stop entering the color variant market the industry will collapse. It's not sustainable.

Once again, if hunting doesn't support a good conservation ethic it has no future. Without hunters there will be no healthy game farming industry. In my opinion the game ranching industry is building its massive house on sand and one day it will collapse, ruining many ignorant investors who have put their pensions and life savings into worthless freaks of nature.

## **VOL 13/05 (2015)**

### **HUNTERS NEED LEADERSHIP AND VISION**

**Editorial by Gerhard R. Damm**

A recent on-line debate of conservationists and sustainable use experts made me pen down this editorial – and I drew heavily on the contributions of the discussants.

The paradigm of the animal rights movement consists of a heady mix in which the belief that stripping wildlife of all tangible values will save it, is one important component, and the manipulation of the well-meaning empathy of the average human for individual animals the other one. To reach their objective this movement uses huge public propaganda budgets, which in turn mobilize millions of followers to regularly spread their often convoluted messages in a flurry of effective political lobbying and social media campaigning. Those who know and practice conservation recognize that the animal rights groups are increasingly and blatantly dishonest by distorting, ignoring and misinterpreting available science and even hard facts; nevertheless they appear to be winning the debate.

Hunting has become one of "their" main targets – it is opposed with claims that it is anachronistic, unsustainable and immoral or unethical. In this recent debate of sustainable use experts one participant said that "they" attend all the important meetings, all the rallies, and appear to be constantly lobbying. In the meantime sustainable use experts and advocates sit back, confident that science and facts will speak for themselves – when in reality they don't. As a conclusion, this participant believed that sustainable use advocates do need to be fronting up and presenting our case face-to-face, because that's what "they" are doing. I interpret in this context WE

as sustainable use practitioners in general and hunters as one component of the “sustainable use side” in particular.

Another discussant added that the important issue is not “how” we are able or not able to argue the potential benefits of sustainable use [and hunting] but more “what” we are saying - i.e. the message. She added that “we need to be really cognizant and honest that it is not only our delivery (or our hindered ability to deliver the message) but also that the message itself is not palatable and seemingly becoming less so.”

I paraphrase the remarks of another discussant: “Hiring a few articulate scientists will not be enough to counter the animal rights behemoth. We need to reach the ear of the media and the public, and through them the politicians. You can give scientific facts to politicians until you’re blue in the face, but without public support they rarely act in a constructive way for conservation.”

The movie *Blood Lions* has been aired in the United States, South Africa and elsewhere. Most of the movie’s message condemns captive breeding and canned hunting of lion. I suggest that all decent hunters will subscribe to ostracizing canned shooting. However, the producers of the documentary could not resist discrediting and attaching a stigma to all hunting. Maybe they felt the pressure of previous own actions and decided to ride the bandwagon of the recent tsunami of public outcries against all forms of hunting to act this way. Yet a succinct piece of information on the producers contains a certain irony: Producer Pippa Hankinson sits on the board of the [Global White Lion Protection Trust](#), an organization which spends most of its donor funds on captive-bred lions. The documentary makes it very clear that captive bred lions have no conservation value. Yet somehow Mrs. Hankinson does not apply this to her own white pets.

This movie and the Zimbabwean lion case have clearly shown that expressive human voices go a lot further than a few scientific facts lingering in obscure peer-reviewed journals. We need to find the financial resources and the philanthropic support of foundations, smart billionaires and whatever to package the messages of sustainable utilization and with it the conservation contributions of sustainable and regulated hunting in a way the public can understand and find acceptable. We need to do this aggressively and fast in order to counter the gobbledygook the AR faction is presenting and to front up in the dire situation and the potential and real threats to biodiversity and conservation.

AR NGOs do little else but produce media propaganda. They have dozens of experts designing and cranking out campaigns through mailings, websites and social media. They organize well-publicized marches and get celebrities to lend fame and face in TV ads and public statements.

If this attack on sustainable utilization [and hunting] is not faced and won in the court of public opinion, wildlife and habitats will disappear very much quicker than anyone has yet predicted, said another discussant. The people who live with wildlife will not put up with the costs with no benefits as compensation.

The key to a solution are sustained, strategically targeted, well-resourced science-based messages, documentaries, school programs, publications and articles understandable to the proverbial “man or woman in the street”, expert participation in popular talk shows, etc. The only obstacle in rolling these out is our failure to find and globally pool adequate financial resources, and on occasion, petty institutional jealousies.

I paraphrased an important remark of Robert Kenward of the European Sustainable Use Group of the IUCN: Some of the more rational members of the opposition will agree that wildlife that competes with other land use forms is unlikely to survive in the longer term as a priceless, but paradoxically, commercially valueless asset. We need to enter into a constructive dialogue with them to plan for win-win outcomes that improve hunting regulations, promote best practice in hunting and animal welfare, engage local communities and encourage coexistence with natural systems.

There are card carrying members of the flat earth society sitting on both sides of the fence – they certainly will not be willing to dialogue. “But there are also many of goodwill out there who are

ready to define a compromise that will lead to a sustainable mission accomplished”, Robert Kenward said.

I fully concur with Robert Kenward that there seems to be a need for outreach through the multilingual communication of very simple messages, based on good peer-reviewed research, collated for practical application via broadcast [and social] media, and through communication of messages with a little more meat from good research via special web-sites. This needs to be done on a country by country (or perhaps culture by culture) basis in order to shine idiomatically.

The large hunting and conservation associations of the world, the different North American clubs, the European Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation (FACE), the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) as well as all the respective national associations and clubs need to recognize the immense challenge sustainable use is facing, and with it our valued traditions and passion for sustainable hunting. There is a host of potential allies out there – may our leaders rise to the challenge.

## **African Indaba Vol 14/02 (2016)**

### **African Lion Working Group: Statement On Captive-Bred Lion Hunting And Associated Activities**

**Sarel van der Merwe, Chairman, (Dated 17/02/2016)**

It is the opinion of the African Lion Working Group (ALWG) that captive-bred lion hunting, which is defined by ALWG as the sport hunting of lions that are captive bred and reared expressly for sport hunting and/ or sport hunting of lions that occur in fenced enclosures and are not self-sustaining does not provide any demonstrated positive benefit to wild lion conservation efforts and therefore cannot be claimed to be conservation.

In addition while more data are still needed, the international lion bone trade that is currently being supplied by the South African captive-bred lion industry may fuel an increased demand for wild lion bones elsewhere. This could negatively impact wild lion populations and hinder conservation efforts. The recent dramatic increase in lion bone trade should be reason for concern.

The estimated 8,000 lions in South Africa currently being maintained and bred on game farms as part of this industry should not be included in any assessments of the current status of wild lions. Captive breeding of lions for sport hunting, hunting of captive-bred lion and the associated cub petting industry are not conservation tools. In our opinion they are businesses and outside the remit of the African Lion Working Group and should be dealt with accordingly.

## **African Indaba Vol 15/02 (2017)**

### **Encore: Canned Lion Breeding And Shooting**

**Gerhard R Damm**

The advocates of captive lion breeding and canned lion shooting often claim that these practices have broader conservation outcomes, such as a demand reduction in the hunting of wild lion and positive conservation outcomes as the reintroduction of captive bred lion into the wild. Hunter et al. (2012 in Oryx, 47(1), 19–24) already stated that the captive breeding and shooting

industry lacks any capacity to contribute to *in situ* lion conservation<sup>1</sup>, with the dubious exception that the industry has been trying to bribe its way towards recognition by offering rather substantial financial "conservation contributions" for each killed (or 'hunted' as they say) captive bred lion!

In this issue of African Indaba the article "Why Men Trophy Hunt" highlights at least one of the reasons why there is still a market for South African lion breeders and the associated hunting operators. Fortunately, the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service closed this loophole last year. The lion breeders responded with lobbying the SA government to establish a quota for lion bones to be exported to Asia. If this is legal and sustainable, I have no reasonable argument against it, although a decidedly negative opinion. After all we also 'produce' beef, pork, lamb and chicken this way; but just as these latter activities—it has nothing to do with conservation, let alone hunting! It is worthwhile re-reading the IUCN resolution WCC-2016-Res-013-EN "[Terminating the hunting of captive-bred lions \(\*Panthera leo\*\) and other predators and captive breeding for commercial, nonconservation purposes](#)" (pages 40-41), overwhelmingly passed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress Hawai'i in September 2016. This resolution was accepted as official position of the CIC International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation by the CIC Executive Committee. In any case, all professional hunting associations in Africa and most national and international hunting associations have distanced themselves from shooting captive bred lions!

## African Indaba Vol 15/02 (2017) Defining Fair Chase Behind A High Fence

[Craig Dougherty](#) October 7, 2011 [OutdoorLife](#)

**Editor's Note:** I recently discovered Dougherty's 2011 article when searching the internet. Although written in a North American context, it strikes me as being applicable to Southern Africa, if one exchanges deer with buffalo, antelopes, etc. and readjusts the property sizes. We have written often about Fair Chase and related topics in previous issues African Indaba, and how the color- and trophy mania together with canned lion shooting damages not only the reputation of all hunters, but also undermines the genuine connection between hunting and conservation.

I recently published a piece criticizing deer farmers for creating "[freak show](#)" bucks through [genetic manipulation](#). Apart from a few deer breeders who were critical of the post, it seemed like most readers shared my concern. It was my most widely read post so far on OutdoorLife.com and it really got some folks fired up.

Interestingly, the post spurred a conversation on high fence hunting (apart from genetic manipulation) which fanned the flames even higher. It seems like hunters have very strong opinions on high fences and are not shy about sharing them. Their opinions range from believing that high fences are the future of the sport to believing that high fences are destroying the sport.

But before we get any further, a few facts:

- Both native and non-native game species are hunted behind high fences
- High fence hunts are widely practiced in this country
- High fence hunts are growing in popularity, are a very big business, and have many supporters
- Not all hunting behind high fences is fee hunting on shooting preserves or game farms. Much of it is on private ranches with thousands of acres under fence

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<sup>1</sup> The availability of wild founder lions, the unsuitability of captive lions for release and the evidence-based success of wild-wild lion translocations shows that captive-origin lions have no role in lion restoration. Compare the M. Schwartz' article 'A Hard Truth For Lion Conservation' in this issue of African Indaba.

### **Defining Fair Chase**

Much of the opposition to high fence hunting seems to center around the concept of "fair chase." Fair chase is defined by most as a situation where the hunted is not put in a disadvantaged position and has a real chance to escape.

In the wild, this means you don't shoot a moose when he is swimming across a lake, you don't walk up to a caribou mired in the mud and shoot him and if you find two helpless locked-up bucks you do everything you can to get them apart and let them escape unharmed.

Some extend the definition "fair chase" to not hunting over bait, food plots, watering holes or any other artificial means of concentrating wild animals. Others believe hunting islands, blind canyons or using natural terrain blockades isn't fair chase either. Short of obeying state and federal fair chase game laws, the concept can get pretty gray pretty fast. Basically it is up to the individual hunter or club or organization to draw the fair chase line in the sand. When it comes to fair chase and high fences, there are three different scenarios. Here's my take on each ...

### **Fair Chase Behind the Fence**

A gray area in the hunting community is hunting behind a high fence that encloses hundreds if not thousands of acres. The whitetails living on this ground have never seen a baby bottle or Snickers bar and are every bit as wild and wary as deer on open land. The deer live under natural wild conditions and are plenty challenging to hunt. Aside from the fence, they are not artificially constrained or for that matter, even concentrated in a given area. In my book, this is black and white, this is fair chase hunting.

The fences are up to keep undesirable animals (and trespassers) out and desirable animals in. I have on occasion hunted these places and have noticed no difference in hunting these properties from unfenced ground. In fact, some of them can be considerably tougher to hunt than some free range properties I've been on. On hunts like this there's no guarantee that you're going to kill a buck, or even get a chance to kill a buck. As far as I'm concerned, the only real difference is you can't register your high fence kill in some of the record books.

But cut the acreage to say 50 or 75 acres, stock it regularly with new recruits from a game farm and feed your deer in troughs, and it's a different story for me. The hunt is now a "shoot" and I want no part of it (more on this later). I shoot doves, I hunt whitetails. But that's just me.

### **Almost Fair Chase Behind the Fence**

Then there are shooting preserves with stocked game, guides who put you on animals and highly-managed property. These places basically guarantee a kill. Many argue that these pay-to-hunt shooting preserves and game farm hunts are not only legal but plenty fair as far as the "fair chase" doctrine goes. They point out that it is not shooting fish in a barrel and their hunting experience is every bit as rewarding as a hunt taken in the wild. In fact, they argue since most shooting preserves are well stocked with wild game, the experience for many is more rewarding than a non-fenced hunt where you often come home empty handed.

They cite high fence operations, which excel at providing a "hunting experience" that feels like a real hunt with plenty of drama and "almost got him" opportunities. The high fences are seldom if ever noticed, the guides are authentic and the animals are good at making themselves scarce. Many of the animals were born behind the high fence or at least have lived there long enough to learn the ropes. The "stockers" came out of natural whitetail stock not inbreeding freak show antler genetics. The hunt often lasts for a couple of days or more but in almost every case, by the end of the hunt the hunter is put on a shooter, shots are fired and an animal gets killed. Backs get slapped, chests get pounded and somebody gets paid. Money must change hands in order for this kind of thing to work.

Proponents of these hunts claim they are a great way to introduce newcomers to the sport, or that it's the only way they can hunt with their busy schedule. Or maybe it's the only hunting

within 500 miles. For some, it's what hunting is all about. Some simply state: "It's legal and I'm having a good time, so mind your own damn business and quit putting ideas in the anti's heads!"

OK, I get it, and I don't begrudge folks who enjoy this kind of thing. I've been there once or twice and it didn't do a thing for me. It might be a sign of the times, but count me out!

#### **Unfair Chase Behind the Fence**

The worst canned hunts (or more accurately shoots) are nothing short of obscene. You select your "trophy range" in inches and by what your checkbook can handle. The only rule being "the bigger the better." Your deer may have been delivered to your hunting location a few days earlier or may have been stocked a few weeks or months earlier. If he carries uncommonly massive antlers he is probably the product of genetic manipulation where the only thing that matters is rack size. He was sold as a "shooter" because he didn't make the grade as a breeder. He may be semi-tame or even semi-stupid with all that "only antlers matter" inbreeding in his line.

You may shoot him out of a golf cart or you may choose to break in those new boots, but one way or another you will get your buck. You may hunt over bait or wait for the boys to walk him through a narrow shooting slot but get him you will. You will head for the bar, pay the bill (\$10,000 to \$15,000 for a really good whitetail), drive through the gate and will be home for dinner.

The problem is, you've just been ripped off. This buck is no trophy. He is not the same as a naturally bred whitetail. His spectacular antlers are the product of genetic manipulation and artificial insemination. He's been raised on supplements and steroids and all sorts of high performance foodstuffs.

**Most agree these hunts have little semblance to the real thing. Not only are they not "fair chase" but an abomination as well. Becoming a hunter isn't all that complicated. You can do better than this.**