



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 410 {NW1382E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7 of 2019

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 26 July 2019

Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries:

- (1) (a) What number of (i) lions are currently kept in predator-breeding farms across the Republic and (ii) farms or facilities across the Republic are involved in the breeding of predators and (b) what systems are in place to audit the captive lion breeding industry in each province;**
- (2) what is the reason that the specified industry has been allowed to continue when it is commonly accepted that the industry has no conservation value and is detrimental to the Republic's conservation record (details furnished); and**
- (3) why has her Department not adhered to the strong recommendations and resolutions put forward by the parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environmental Affairs in November 2018, which called for an end to the captive lion-breeding industry in the Republic?**

410. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES REPLIES:

(1) (a) In terms of section 87A of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEMBA), the Members of the Executive Council (MECs) of the provinces who are responsible for the conservation of biodiversity are the issuing authorities for permits in respect of listed threatened or protected species, which, in this case, includes the registration of captive lion breeding facilities. The following information is applicable, as reported by provincial issuing authorities in December 2017:

- (i) There are approximately 7 979 lions in captivity in South Africa.
- (ii) There are 366 captive facilities that are registered in terms of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004): Threatened or Protected Species Regulations, 2007.

The figures provided in (i) and (ii) are an indication of all lions in captive facilities, which could be purely captive breeding facilities; or captive facilities that operate as a combination of captive breeding facilities and commercial exhibition facilities (zoos); or captive keeping facilities/zoos that do not specifically engage in breeding.

(b) A permit is required, in terms of NEMBA, to carry out any restricted activity involving a listed threatened or protected species. Since lions are currently listed as a vulnerable species in terms of section 56(1) of NEMBA, the permit requirements of NEMBA apply to all specimens of African lion, whether those specimens are in the wild or in a captive environment. Further, the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations, promulgated in terms of NEMBA in 2007, require that any captive breeding operation must be registered.

Officials from the provincial conservation authorities who have been appointed as Environmental Management Inspectors (EMIs) in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), are responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of NEMBA, as well as conditions of permits issued in terms of NEMBA and registrations issued in terms of the TOPS Regulations. These EMIs are also responsible for taking enforcement action in the case of non-compliance with NEMBA and the TOPS Regulations.

- (2) A non-detrimental finding (NDF) made by a Scientific Authority, in respect of African lion and in terms of section 61(1)(d) of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (copy attached for ease of reference), indicates that there are currently no major threats to the wild and managed lion population of South Africa, whereas minor threats include over-utilisation, disease, poaching and conflict with communities around protected areas. The NDF further states that trophy hunting of captive-bred lions poses no threat to the wild population within South Africa, and *"it is thought that captive lions may in fact serve as a buffer to potential threats to wild lions by being the primary source for hunting trophies and derived products (such as bone)".* The NDF was published in the *Gazette*, No. 41393, on 23 January 2018.
- (3) The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries takes the resolutions and recommendations of the Portfolio Committee (PC) on Environmental Affairs seriously. It is for this reason that the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries is finalising the appointment of a High-Level Panel to review the policies, legislation and practices in respect of the handling, management, breeding, hunting and trade involving, among others, lion.

Regards


MS B D CREECY, MP

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

DATE: 12/8/2019