



environment, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 2457 {NW3065E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 40 of 2020

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

- (1) With reference to her reply to question 1995 on 11 September 2020 in relation to the setting of the 2020 trophy hunting quota of 50 elephants, what are the scientific reasons and/or scientific evidence to support the trophy hunting quota of 50 elephants;
- (2) whether she, when approving the quota, considered the scientific data that shows that removing older male elephants, particularly through trophy hunting has a disastrous impact on the species as a whole; if not, why not; if so, (a) how and (b) on what basis is the 2020 quota of 50 elephants allocated for each province;
- (3) what (a) is the 2020 elephant trophy hunting quota for each province and (b) are the scientific reasons and/or scientific evidence for the specific provinces to be allocated with an elephant hunting quota?

2457. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

(1)

The 2020 trophy hunting quota for elephants was set at 108 elephants. However, on average only 50 bulls are hunted annually. Globally, elephants are listed on the IUCN Red List as "Vulnerable". In South Africa, the species is listed on the regional Red List as "Least Concern".

The national elephant population for South Africa is increasing, and estimated at approximately 30,000 individuals, of which an estimated 24,000 individuals occur within national and provincial reserves collectively, in seven of the nine provinces of South Africa.

The elephant population of South Africa is well managed and activities related to elephants are regulated through the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 (NEMBA), specifically the Threatened or Protected Species Regulations (TOPS Regulations), the National Norms and Standards for the Management of Elephants in South Africa (Government Gazette no. 30833), and respective provincial conservation legislation. In addition, local protocols managing elephant trophy hunting, taking into consideration the role of mature bulls, are in place in many areas where trophy hunting of elephants takes place in South Africa. South Africa has an annual national Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) trophy hunting quota of 150 elephants (300 tusks). In managing this quota, provinces are required to conduct calculations of their annual provincial level off-takes. These provincial off-takes are then collated to provide for a national quota.

On a provincial level, the quota is calculated by estimating the total elephant population within the province, multiplied by 1% to obtain the off-take quota for the specific province. Trophy hunting of elephants within South Africa is limited and the allocated annual quota is often not fully utilised. Therefore, trophy hunting is considered as having a negligible impact on elephant populations in South Africa. The 1% trophy hunting off-take is much lower than the average growth rate of the national elephant population.

(2)

The study by Elephants for Africa and the University of Exeter, on "The Importance of Old Bulls: Leaders and Followers In Collective Movement of All-Male Groups In African Savannah Elephants", was recently published in September 2020, whereas the determination of the 2020 quota was made prior to the results of the said study. The department and the Provincial Scientific Authority will consider the key findings of the study in making determination of hunting quota for elephants in the future.

However, given the population numbers and the low number of elephant bulls' trophy hunted per annum the impact on populations is likely to be negligible. The Allen *et al.* (2020) study highlights that the offtake (trophy hunting) of older mature bulls (considered bulls over 26 years of age) not only removes the prime breeders, but also removes individuals with a central role in the male society.

In South Africa the majority of bulls hunted are over the age of 50 years and nearing senescence, thus no longer breeding. It is acknowledged that mature older bulls do play an important role in bull society. However, where low numbers of mature bulls and specifically those nearing senescence are hunted the impact on the population as a whole and the bull society is likely to be negligible. In addition, elephants have evolved to cope with natural mortalities taking place, with the natural mortality rate of older mature bulls at approximately 1% per annum.

- a. A study conducted by Burke et al. (2008) evaluating the risk and ethical concerns of hunting male elephant has indicated that all responses measured were minor and that the hunting of male elephant in South Africa is ethically acceptable when considering effects on the remaining elephant population. The authors recommended that bulls should be hunted when alone. This recommendation has been captured in the Norms and Standards for Management of Elephants in South Africa.

(3)

- a. The table below indicates the 2020 elephant trophy hunting quota for each province:

Province	Quota No.
Eastern Cape Province	3 Elephants (06 Tusks)
Free State Province	0
Gauteng Province	0
KwaZulu-Natal Province	15 Elephants (30 Tusks)
Limpopo Province	50 Elephants (100 Tusks)
Mpumalanga Province	40 Elephants (80 Tusks)
North West Province	0
Northern Cape Province	0

Western Cape Province	0
TOTAL	108 Elephants (216 Tusks)

b. See the response to question 1 above.

Regards



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

DATE: 6/11/2020