

LICENCE TO KILL

CONSERVATION AND THE MORAL DOMAIN OF TROPHY HUNTING



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ABSTRACT

Over the past years, trophy hunting – the recreational hunting of wild animals to obtain a desired trophy – has raised many discussions within political and public context. In this thesis, the central question ‘*Is trophy hunting morally permissible?*’ is answered to provide governmental policy advisors and NGOs insight into the moral domain of trophy hunting. While opponents of trophy hunting claim that this practice is unethical, proponents state that it is justifiable based on its net positive effect in the world. It allegedly advances the interests of all sentient beings because trophy hunting contributes to conservation efforts. In addition, proponents claim that trophy hunting benefits communities by providing both employment and financial support through a share of hunting fees. In this thesis, the central question is approached with a zoocentric moral framework that judges actions by its outcomes, thereby honouring the proponents defence of trophy hunting. It is argued that animals are morally considerable and that their interests, including the crucial interest in continued life, are thwarted by the practice of trophy hunting. The evaluation of the actual effects of trophy hunting illuminates that the achieved satisfaction of hunters’ preferences, individual preferences within local communities and aggregative preferences at a conservational level do not outweigh the frustrated interests of targeted animals. Consequently, trophy hunting is concluded to be morally impermissible. It is, therefore, recommended to cautiously phase out the whole practice. Regulation suggestions are included to provide tools to improve current conditions while awaiting a future without trophy hunting.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Trophy hunting is the practice of hunting game for trophies. It has been broadly condemned in the western world and the practice regularly raises reactions of dismay and protest. A big public uproar resulted from the killing of Cecil the lion in 2015. Cecil, the leader of a pride with 22 members in Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, was studied and tracked by the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WILDCRU) of Oxford University. The research that started in 1999 tagged and tracked 72 lions in total and had lost 36 of them by 2004, of whom 24 lions due to sport hunting on adjacent game farms.¹ The American recreational big-game hunter Walter Palmer had paid 50,000 US\$ for a legal hunt on a lion on such a farm just outside of the national park. According to Palmer he used bait to attract the lion while he was sitting in a blind. He wounded Cecil with a crossbow shot and subsequently killed him by the same hunting method 11 hours later. Although the hunter was in possession of a permit and did not face any official charges, a large international media outrage developed. Cecil was very popular in the area, since he was accustomed to humans, allowing them to make photographs of the lion from a short distance. Strong criticism was expressed toward Palmer by politicians, animal conservationists, celebrities and many others. Additional concerns arose that the loss of Cecil would leave his dozen cubs vulnerable to infanticide.² The whole event sparked a discussion that led, among others, to some Northern American major airlines (Delta, United, American Airlines, Air Canada) voluntarily banning the transport of ‘Big-Five’³ trophies on their flights, with a global total of 42 different airlines imposing at least a partial ban on hunting trophies after Cecil’s death.⁴ The international media attention resulted in 1.2 million people signing the petition ‘Justice for Cecil’, requesting Zimbabwe’s government to ban sport hunting on endangered species.

Not everyone was pleased with these negative connotations with trophy hunting after the ‘Cecil the lion’ affair. As a reaction to the negative attention and international pressure to review current hunting practices Pohamba Shifeta, the minister of Environment and Tourism of Namibia, expressed that *‘This will be the end of conservation in Namibia’*. His concern is

¹ Loveridge et al. 2007, p. 548.

² Over time we have learned that Jericho, Cecil’s companion, had taken control of the pride, protecting Cecil’s cubs. No infanticide had taken place.

³ Buffalo, Elephant, lion, leopard and cheetah.

⁴ Amini, N. More than 40 Airlines Adopt Wildlife Trophy Bans After Cecil the Lion’s Death. Last modified August 25, 2015. http://www.humanesociety.org/news/news_briefs/2015/08/airlines-trophy-bans-082615.html.

founded in the alleged contribution trophy hunting makes to conservation efforts, primarily through the maintenance of wild habitat. This idea is, on first sight surprisingly, endorsed by multiple international NGO's, like the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). After the Cecil the Lion affair the WWF restated in their policy that "... *trophy hunting is a potential conservation tool that can be considered as part of an overall conservation strategy, including for threatened species*".⁵ The IUCN policy states that "*Trophy hunting is a form of wildlife use that, when well-managed, may assist in furthering conservation objectives by creating the revenue and economic incentives for the management and conservation of the target species and its habitat, as well as supporting local livelihoods*".⁶ The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations dedicated an article to the positive effects trophy hunting may have on conservation, the protection of local rights and rural livelihoods in the wildlife management special *Unasylva* in 2017.⁷ Some of the influential organisations opposing trophy hunting are the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Wildlife At Risk International (WAR) and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). In recent years the Netherlands, France and Australia have installed a ban on importing trophies of lions, with the Netherlands even banning the import of trophies of more than 200 species.⁸ The American president Donald Trump, on the contrary, has lifted the by Obama installed ban on some African lion, bontebok and elephant trophies in March 2018.⁹

Trophy hunting remains controversial and keeps flaring tempers in public and political debate. In recent years several governments have discussed if trophy hunting ought to be prohibited or if regulations need to be intensified, while other governments have debated the ban on the import of trophies. These debates were concentrated on the ethical problems that have arisen by the practice, but no consensus has been reached. In this thesis I will carefully answer the question '*is trophy hunting morally permissible?*' in order to provide guidance to policy advisors in decision making on a national level and to international NGOs in taking a

⁵ WWF 2016, p. 1.

⁶ IUCN SSC 2012, p. 4.

⁷ Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. (2014). Special issue: sustainable wildlife management and biodiversity. *Unasylva*, 68(1).

⁸ Government of the Netherlands 2016.

⁹ Embury-Dennis. Trump administration lifts ban on importing body parts of elephants shot by trophy hunters. Last modified March 7, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-trophy-hunting-import-ban-tusksobama-son-elephants-big-game-a8243361.html>

well-considered standpoint within this debate. The ethical evaluation of the matter will be conducted with a consequentialist theory: preference utilitarianism. Consequentialism judges the moral permissibility of a practice by the consequences it produces. This fits the general consequentialist policy of governments and also honours the arguments given in defence of trophy hunting, which focus on the produced positive outcome of the practice. Further justification for the chosen method as well as an explication of the moral framework can be found in chapter 3. In order to provide refined and applicable insights to the aforementioned target group, this thesis aims to:

1. Evaluate the moral weight of preferences thwarted and satisfied by the practice of trophy hunting.
2. To give insight on the actual and possible effects of trophy hunting.
3. Provide a conclusion on the moral permissibility of trophy hunting.
4. To give recommendations on how current practices should be changed.

In order to satisfy these goals this thesis will clearly define the proclaimed moral aims of trophy hunting. Secondly, it will be examined (1) what interests are at stake, (2) if these interests matter and (3) if the weight of the thwarted and satisfied interests result in a net positive or negative balance. This requires a position on the moral considerability of animals as well as nature. In chapter 3 and 4 I will argue that the former is directly considerable while the latter is indirectly considerable. Central arguments in favour of trophy hunting with no direct focus on the effects of the practice are refuted by illuminating false assumptions and premises in chapter 5. Moreover, to balance the interests at stake supporting data from conducted research on the effects of trophy hunting is required, which is laid out in chapter 6. This chapter will show that trophy hunting has potential to benefit conservation efforts and currently slightly benefits national economies and local livelihoods. However, the practice also comes with some detrimental effects for conservation, some unpreventable despite the implementation of regulations. It will follow from my argumentation that the actual positive effects as well as the potential positive effects of trophy hunting do not outweigh the crucial interests that are thwarted. Therefore, trophy hunting is morally impermissible. While governments and NGOs should aim to find ways to phase out trophy hunting and to anticipate on potential negative

effects of a ban, measures that may increase the positive effects of trophy hunting are also discussed in order to give tools to improve current practices.

CHAPTER 2: TROPHY HUNTING: THE PRACTICE AND AIMS

2.1. WHAT IS TROPHY HUNTING?

In order to evaluate if trophy hunting is morally acceptable it must be made clear what is understood under the term. Hunting is an activity that may be performed for various reasons and its moral justification depends on the purpose it is meant to serve. In general three types of hunting can be distinguished, which are not mutually exclusive.¹⁰ First, subsistence hunting, which is the intentional killing of animals in order to provide oneself in essential materials and nourishment to maintain an adequate sustenance level. Second, therapeutic hunting, which entails the intentional killing of wild animals in order to secure aggregative welfare of other animals living in the habitat and the ecosystem as a whole. This kind of hunting is usually performed as a wildlife management strategy whenever a certain species starts to surpass the carrying capacity of the land, impairing the welfare of individuals in the area. Third, hunting that exists in the form of recreational or sport hunting in pursuit of satisfying personal desires to find pleasure. Trophy hunting is understood as sport hunting that targets wild animals with specific desired characteristics, such as their size, their temperament, their tusks or fur. It generally involves the payment of a fee by a local or foreign hunter for a guided hunting experience, after which a part of the killed animal, the trophy, is retained by the hunter and taken home. Trophy hunting is a multi-faceted activity that is motivated by a broad range of factors. Besides seeking a trophy a hunter may or may not enjoy the hunt and/or the kill and may be motivated to consume the meat or to make a contribution to conservation. Social and cultural norms associated with hunting may affect the hunters motivation to take part in the sport.¹¹

Trophy hunting is commonly associated with wildlife poaching. However, trophy hunting generally is a legal activity and to a certain extent regulated and is performed under programmes that are implemented by private landowners, conservation organizations or governmental wildlife projects. Poaching for the wildlife trade is by definition illegal and

¹⁰ Varner 2011, p. 855.

¹¹ Cooney et al., 2016, p.3.

unmanaged and the latter gives it the potential of being far more damaging for populations. For instance, in 2015, 1342 African rhinos (both white and black rhino) were reported dead as a result of poaching.¹² Rhino recreational trophy hunts¹³ has resulted in an additional 69 reported deaths in that year, approximately 20 times less than the poached rhinos.¹⁴ In this thesis I focus on legal trophy hunts.

Generally there is a focus in the debate on Sub-Saharan African countries. Although the industry is concentrated in this area, trophy hunting is well spread throughout the world. It is also a common practice in, among others, Canada, the USA, Mexico, New Zealand and Argentina. A wide variety of species are subject to trophy hunting, including threatened species. The exact amount of money that is generated by the trophy hunting industry is unknown, especially from a global perspective, but the most commonly used illustrative number is the estimated annually generated revenue of \$200 million in the Sub-Saharan countries that allow trophy hunting.¹⁵ In these countries the revenue of the tourism industry as a percentage of the GDP approximates 2,4% on average, with trophy hunting revenue making up merely 1,2% of the tourism revenue.¹⁶ This number still includes Botswana's trophy hunting revenue, which was by far the highest, consisting almost 12% of their national tourism industry revenue. Recreational hunting was banned in the country in 2014. Hunters pay greatly varying amounts of money to obtain their trophies, depending on the targeted species and country. A black bear hunt in Canada may cost you \$6,000. A South African caracal costs \$1,000 while an African Elephant bull may cost you up to \$70,000 in the same country. A black rhino hunt was auctioned by the Namibian government for the astounding price of \$350,000, while baboon trophy hunts are sold for about \$150.¹⁷ The hunter's fee usually includes the hunting operator's costs, a separate fee for the landowner (state, community or private) and official governmental fees.¹⁸ Meat obtained from the hunt is kept for own use or sold by the hunting operator.

¹² Emslie et al., p. 2.

¹³ Trophy hunts on rhinos are only allowed in Namibia and South Africa, with white rhinos hunted without quotas and black rhinos hunted under a CITES quota of 5 surplus black rhino males per country annually.

¹⁴ Emslie et al., p.8.

¹⁵ Lindsey et al (2007), p. 455.

¹⁶ Economists at Large (2013), p. 11-12.

¹⁷ Humane Society International (2016), p. 5-6.

¹⁸ Cooney et al, 2016, p. 5.

2.2. THE AIMS OF TROPHY HUNTING

In order to judge trophy hunting by its consequences, which is intrinsic to utilitarianism, I will map out the goals of the practice as such. Trophy hunting is disputed due to the harm it inflicts on the targeted animals. Hunting impedes an animal's welfare and ultimately ends its life. In the next chapter we will see if this is morally objectionable and if so, to what extent.

Aforementioned hunters' motives to hunt are relevant since they are able to reflect the preferences these agent holds. Hunter are motivated to hunt out of a preference for relaxation, for doing something meaningful for conservation, for social interaction, for being out in nature, for complying to the social norms of a group or for obtaining a high status within a social group.^{19 20} Hence, the practice of trophy hunting as a leisure activity does not solely aim at providing the hunters pleasure. Many hunters hold a high affiliation with conservation and aim to contribute to it. In a way, the practice of trophy hunting is a business model that aims to generate money and jobs and to contribute to conservation efforts. The industry aims to benefit local communities and the economies of developing countries, satisfying preferences related to maintaining an adequate quality of life. Wildlife management and conservation may be directly benefited by the revenue generated, or indirectly, by making wild animals economically valuable as such. This will give incentives for people to conserve natural habitat in order to keep wildlife on their land, motivate people to support antipoaching activities and increase tolerance for living with wildlife, reducing the human-wildlife conflict.²¹ In chapter 6 it will be investigated to what extent trophy hunting achieves these goals. This will determine in as far the claimed beneficial consequences can be used as a justification for the practice of trophy hunting.

CHAPTER 3: THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF GAME ANIMALS WITHIN A ZOOCENTRIC MORAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. PREFERENCE UTILITARIANISM AS A MORAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter it will be evaluated if the killing of game animals as such, can be considered a moral harm. However, in order to evaluate the moral permissibility of trophy hunting a moral

¹⁹ Leader-Williams 2009, p. 11.

²⁰ Gamborg et al. 2018, p. 489.

²¹ IUCN 2016. Informing decisions on trophy hunting. IUCN Briefing Paper.

framework in which actions can be judged is needed. The thesis adheres to the moral framework provided by the preference utilitarian theory. First, I will explicate why this ethical theory is most suitable to approach the debate concerning the moral permissibility of trophy hunting. As previously mentioned, preference utilitarianism is a consequentialist theory, which judges actions by its outcomes. Since the defence of trophy hunting greatly relies on the alleged positive effects it produces, a consequentialist theory would honour such arguments to the full extent as it is intended by its proposers. Furthermore, in public policy decisions are based on their predicted consequences, aiming for the most satisfying outcome for all. In order to attain a valuable advice for policy decision makers, it is most suitable to use a moral framework that fits the general public policy approach. Utilitarianism, as originally founded, states that an act is morally right if it maximizes happiness, or pleasure. Hence, no action is categorically wrong under all circumstances, but the moral permissibility depends on the consequences it produces. However, it would be impossible to review here if in every possible case of trophy hunting happiness is maximized. Furthermore, when taking into account the defence of trophy hunting - regarding the effects on conservation, economies and livelihoods - it should be noted that a hedonistic account has trouble honouring these effects, since they produce happiness in more general, delayed way than in terms of direct happiness. Therefore, I adhere to a variant of utilitarianism: preference utilitarianism. This consequentialist theory is different from classical utilitarianism in that the 'best consequences' are defined as what, on balance, furthers the most interests of those affected, instead of what, on balance, increases the most pleasure and reduces pain. Thus, an act is morally right if it maximises the fulfilment of interests of all those affected.²² Consequently, an action contrary to the interest of any being is wrong, unless this is outbalanced by the satisfaction of other preferences that weigh equally or more heavily. Interests can be seen as what, on balance and after reflection on all the relevant facts, an individual prefers and is disposed to pursue. Having interests entails that one has a welfare, or a good of its own, that matters morally.²³ This theory enables to take into account the significance of satisfying long term desires. Thus, the preference utilitarian framework is an approach that acknowledges the preference in conservation (see chapter 4) and sufficient livelihoods, which are vital to the trophy hunting debate.

²² Singer 1993, p. 13.

²³ Varner 2002, p. 7.

3.2. SINGER'S ANIMAL LIBERATION VIEW

To evaluate if the animals, who are affected by trophy hunting, should be taken into consideration, I turn to the view of preference utilitarian Peter Singer. He argues for the equal consideration of interests of all sentient beings, which includes nonhuman animals.²⁴ His argument is grounded in the acknowledgement that humans and nonhuman animals have a shared capacity of sentience, that is, the capacity to experience pain, pleasure and suffering. Since it is the essential capacity for suffering and enjoying things it is a prerequisite for having interests at all, a condition that must be satisfied before we can speak of interests in any meaningful way.²⁵ Objects like stones or books cannot suffer, and it makes no sense to say that letting them fall would thwart their interest or impede their welfare. Burning a book may be bad only in reference to another entity, who for instance desires to read that book. Setting a mouse on fire would however cause immense suffering to the mouse itself and is therefore considered morally wrong. Singer accepts the claim that most nonhuman animals can feel pain based on their behaviour, as animals behave similar to humans during a painful event, and based on the foundationally similar nervous systems of humans and other animals, mainly vertebrates.²⁶ For as far as there is a scientific indication that animals are able to feel pain and suffering, it can be assumed that they have an interest in avoiding it. Pain is equally bad for all who can experience it. The extent to which it is intrinsically bad depends on factors like intensity and duration, not on the species to which the subject belongs.²⁷ There is no *prima facie* reason for preferring the interests of beings from your own species over the interests of another who belongs to a different species, just as discrimination based on race or gender is thought to be prejudicial.²⁸

Singer rejects that only the human species could be granted moral standing based on characteristics like rationality, autonomy, having a language, empathy or a sense of justice. Firstly, research has revealed that it is not clear that some nonhuman animals like chimpanzees do not have those characteristics and secondly, even if all nonhuman animals would fail such a requirement, it is clear that some humans, like infants, will too.²⁹ If one would try to make a clear moral distinction between humans and non-human animals based on a characteristic that no non-human animal has, it has to be concluded that some humans lack the trait that is required

²⁴ Singer 1990, p. 9.

²⁵ Singer 1993, p. 57.

²⁶ Singer 1993, p. 69-70.

²⁷ Singer 1997, p. 159.

²⁸ Singer 1997, p. 159.

²⁹ Singer 1991, p. 7.

to be included in our moral community. Saying that mentally handicapped people are not morally considerable is however a counterintuitive conclusion. Thus, the statement that humans, and only humans, are eligible for full and equal moral status cannot be defended.

Singer refers to the idea that only humans ought to be morally considered as 'speciesism': unjustly assigning special moral consideration toward individual's interests based on their species membership.³⁰ Singer attributes all sentient beings equal moral status, which does not require identical treatment, but equal consideration of those involved.³¹ All sentient individuals have value regardless of their usefulness to humans and this value restricts the human treatment of animals. Thus, animal liberation holds that we have direct duties towards animals, not just indirect duties towards humanity. This entails for the trophy hunting debate that the interests of targeted animals do participate in the balancing of thwarted and satisfied interests in order to come to a normative judgement.

3.3. THE HARM IN KILLING ANIMALS FOR TROPHIES

In order to obtain the trophy, the targeted animal evidently has to be killed. Here it will be evaluated if this is thwarting any preferences. First, it is established what exactly is the moral harm in killing humans. Thereafter, it will be analysed if this harm also accounts for other sentient animals. Lastly, it will be evaluated if the method of hunting induced additional harm and, since animals are regularly kept for the sole purpose of trophy hunting, if animals are harmed during their lives. In order to explicate the harm in killing, I again turn to Peter Singer, who uses a distinction between person and non-person sentient beings. He adheres to John Locke's view stating that a person is a rational and self-conscious being, a being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself in the future.³² A being aware of itself as a distinct entity with a past and future is capable of having desires about its own future.³³ Killing a person who prefers to continue living is wrong according to the preference utilitarian theory. Moreover, the death of a person does not only frustrate the preference in continued living, but a wide range of future-orientated preferences.³⁴ Singer states that non-persons cannot see themselves as entities with a future and therefore killing them does not frustrate a desire to continue living or any other desire

³⁰ Singer 1990, p. 6.

³¹ Singer 1990, p. 2.

³² Singer 1993, p. 87.

³³ Singer, 1993, p. 90.

³⁴ Singer 1993, p. 94.

or plan³⁵. Surely, non-persons try to escape life threatening situations, but this is merely an indication for a preference for the cessation of painful and stressful events. Due to their future-oriented preferences, killing a person is considered a moral wrong, but this cannot be concluded for merely conscious animals. However, indirect wrongness of killing can apply to both non-persons and persons. This includes the effect the killing has on others who are in a relation with the killed being.

Singer states that in order to have what one might say is a 'right to live'³⁶, one must have, or at least at one time have had, the concept of having a existence over time.³⁷ Seeing yourself as an entity over time with future orientated desires are the conditions for the attribution of an interest in continued existence. He subsequently argues that the preference of continued life doesn't cease to exist when a person is not actively desiring it. The interest does not disappear while we are asleep or unconscious. The desire to live is a part of us, even if we are not consciously thinking about it. Killing a sleeping person is therefore still a moral wrong.

Merely conscious beings do not have expectations or desires that are internally linked over time, but rather they have immediate hedonistic desires. Singer states that the death of a conscious being, while temporarily being unconscious, does not result in the frustration of any desires. However, still it should be noted that if such a being was living a pleasurable life, the death would still result in an overall loss of pleasurable experiences in the world. Therefore, only if the loss of these pleasurable experiences is compensated by replacement of another being that would lead a similar pleasurable life, we could say that the death of a conscious being as described is not blameworthy from a utilitarian point of view.³⁸ Future-orientated preferences in persons will however form a great loss in case of death and they cannot be replaced by merely putting new preferences into existence. A preference can be either good or bad in itself, depending on the pleasure of the experience as a whole.³⁹ The experience of finishing your studies for instance is much more pleasurable than getting an aspirin when having a headache. Future-orientated preferences are, contrary to hedonistic pleasure, not replaceable.

However, I disagree with Singer that non-persons do not have an interest in continued existence. Using the same line of reasoning he used it can be argued that merely conscious

³⁵ That is, if the killing could be performed painlessly without any discomfort.

³⁶ Rights are not imbedded in utilitarianism, since theoretically every preference can be outweighed by another. For practical reasons, the term 'right' is sometimes used as an indication of the moral weight of the preference.

³⁷ Singer 1993, p. 98.

³⁸ Singer 1993, p. 126.

³⁹ Singer 1993, p. 128.

animals do have an interest in continued life, based on the presence of dispositional desires and implicit desires. Singer portrays the enjoyments of merely conscious beings as fleeting, hedonistic experiences that are transient and not relatable to a future self. Thus, they are not thwarted by a painless death while being unconscious. I state that those enjoyments should be understood as dispositional desires that animals continue to possess over time.⁴⁰ To enjoy something entails that it gives a feeling of mental pleasure and that one has a positive attitude of approval toward it. Enjoyment is not synonymous with pleasure, which is a sensation without necessarily having a favourable attitude toward it. Similarly, pain is a sensation that does not entail a negative attitude, since it is possible to like the feeling of pain. Enjoyment should be understood as a thing that one desires and is motivated or disposed in one's behaviour to pursue. The enjoyments of animals that they are disposed to pursue over time may differ in different species, but include forms of play, physical activity, the pleasures of food and enjoying social relationships. The intentional behaviour that conscious animals recurrently display to pursue those enjoyments suggests that there are preferences that animals have continuing dispositions to, that can be thwarted by death.

Apart from dispositional desires, I state that animals, furthermore, have implicit desires that are thwarted by death.⁴¹ Preference utilitarianism is defined by maximizing desire satisfaction. A problem with this account is, however that getting what one desires is not always beneficial and similarly not getting what one desires is not always harmful. Satisfying desires that are based on mistaken beliefs can be harmful for individuals, just as desires arising from addiction. Therefore, to avoid counterintuitive conclusions the preference utilitarian view embraces that only well-informed, rational desires count. Thus, it is only morally good to satisfy desires that are beneficial for a being. In this way the theory corrects for errors of reasoning or errors of state of beliefs. Then it is not ruled out by preference utilitarianism that desires of which one is not aware, that are instrumental for the fulfilment of other desires of which a being is aware and further the welfare of that being, are included in moral deliberation. The preference of continued existence can be considered an implicit desire a non-person has, that needs to be satisfied for the fulfilment of other considerable preferences. It is prerequisite for animals to enjoy the satisfaction of present and dispositional desires.

⁴⁰ Simmons 2009, p. 388.

⁴¹ The argumentation has been laid out by Visak (2011), p. 75-79.

Singer argues that the preference for continued life does not cease to exist while persons are asleep and someone's preference for finishing their studies does not cease to exist when he is not currently studying. Similarly, a merely conscious animal may periodically have, for instance, a desire for forms of play and have a continuing tendency to pursue this enjoyment, even when it is not currently playing.⁴² Dispositional desires do not cease to exist while being unconscious. Furthermore, implicit desires do not cease to exist when asleep, since those desires are instrumental to the fulfilment of those dispositional desires. Therefore, it is considered a moral to kill an animal, even when it is unconscious.

Moreover, it should be noted that these animals have those dispositional and implicit desires presently. Therefore, the preceding argumentation does not struggle with the absence of a continuing self, an identity, over time in non-persons. Another used theory, the deprivation view, states that death is bad since it forecloses future opportunities.⁴³ When this theory is applied to non-persons, it faces the problem that their identity cannot be internally linked over time and therefore those future opportunities cannot matter to them. I have argued however that killing animals that are not persons would result in the frustration of *present* enduring dispositional preferences that matter to them and therefore they have an interest in continued life as well. Notably, this does not make the death of a person and a merely conscious being with dispositional desires morally equal. The weight of the preferences thwarted by death in different individuals would determine their comparable value of life.

Apart from the harm of death, animals are additionally harmed by the hunt itself. Painless deaths are extremely unlikely within the practice of trophy hunting, since these only occur when animals are accurately shot through the brain, while hunters aim for the lungs and heart. With this method – even if a 100% accuracy would be reached – physical pain is unavoidable. Then again, many recreational hunters are insufficiently trained. Firstly, or solely, injuring the animal induces even more suffering. It is common to first wound the animal and subsequently attempt to track it down in order to kill it. Moreover, different weapons used for the kill, such as rifles, bow and arrow and spears, may inflict different injuries with different corresponding amounts of suffering. Furthermore, research has shown that hunting animals, among others, lead to high cortisol levels, the hormonal representative for stress.⁴⁴

⁴² Simmons 2009, p. 388.

⁴³ Visak & Garner 2016, p. 189.

⁴⁴ Bateson & Bradshaw 1997, p.1707.

Since part of the animals that are targeted by trophy hunting are bred and kept for the sole purpose of hunting, it should be evaluated if the animals experience additional harms during their lives. It is hard to give an estimated value of the quality of life of game animals, since we have to generalize their living circumstances. The welfare of animals is, furthermore, not easily determined. In the past decades there has been extensive debate on how to define and measure animal welfare. The first welfare definitions were regarded narrow minded over time. The absence of suffering didn't suffice, since it ignores the value in positive mental states. The idea that animal welfare could be defined in certain species specific potentials, aiming for animals to live their natural lives, led to counterintuitive conclusions, since negative experiences and mental states are of biological relevance and part of such a natural life. Instead, the concept of animal welfare that I adhere to here includes (1) the animals' own perception, taking into account that animals are able to link their emotions to experiences and contexts⁴⁵, and (2) the animals' adaptability, recognizing their ability to interact with and adapt to their environment. According to these insights an animal is in a positive welfare state when it has the freedom to adequately *react to* hunger, thirst, physical discomfort, disease, fear and chronic stress. Or in other words: positive animal welfare is achieved when the animal has the freedom to display normal behavioural patterns that allow it to adapt to the demands of the prevailing environmental circumstances and enables the animal to reach a state that it perceives as positive.⁴⁶ With this definition, welfare is only compromised if the situation exceeds an individual's adaptive capacity.

Game animals usually live in nature reserves or in privately owned game farms. The wild animals are generally free to go wherever they want. They may adapt to challenging circumstances by migrating elsewhere. In general it is believed that wild animals fare well in the wild, as long as the circumstances are not exceptional challenging. But even on the private game reserves the land stretches far: a paper published in 2002 showed that the average size of game farms in the provinces of South Africa varied from 146 to 4921 ha.⁴⁷ Privately kept game animals, thus, also have a lot of freedom to adapt to their environment. They can roam around, choose their own partners and can choose to live alone or within groups. Valuable animals of farm owners may even enjoy veterinary care and are provided with food and water in the dry

⁴⁵ Ohl & Van der Staaij 2012, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Ohl & Van der Staaij 2012, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Meisnerr & Van Niekerk 2013, p. 378.

season. It is, therefore, plausible that game animals live pleasurable lives. Thus, the weight of the harm done to animals by trophy hunting is not intensified as such.

3.4. PRIMA FACIE CONCLUSION

Thus, in this chapter it is explicated that animals are morally considerable based on their shared capacity of sentience. Therefore, their interests should be taken into account when evaluating the moral permissibility of trophy hunting. It is argued that game animals are not harmed during their lives, but at their deaths. The crucial interest that is thwarted is the interest in continued life. This preference is based on the existence of dispositional and implicit desires. Moreover, not only the kill is morally blameworthy with trophy hunting. The hunt inflicts suffering on animals in several ways. Therefore, it is concluded that game hunting is *prima facie* wrong.

Since trophy hunting thwarts crucial interests of the targeted animal, justification for the practice can only arise from an effect of this killing that satisfies other crucial interests or several important interests that outweigh this harm. The preferences of hunters – for relaxation, for doing something meaningful for conservation, for social interaction, for being out in nature, for complying to the social norms of a group or for obtaining a high status within a social group – that are satisfied by sport hunting are trivial and can easily be satisfied in other ways. Since even the cumulative satisfaction of these interest would not outweigh the significance of the preference thwarted of animals, they cannot be used as a justification for trophy hunting. The defence of trophy hunting, however, mainly relies on claims regarding the contribution to conservation and local communities. Contributions to local communities in undeveloped countries is potentially a strong defence within a utilitarian framework, since crucial interests in subsistence can be satisfied due to such contribution. Nature, however, is not sentient, therefore does not have interests that should be considered morally. In the next chapter it will be shown that nature conservation is, however, indirectly morally considerable based on individuals' aggregative interest in balanced ecosystems. This will be illustrated by addressing the dualism between environmental and animal ethics.

CHAPTER 4: THE TENSION BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTALISM AND ANIMAL ADVOCACY

The conflict between environmentalism and an animal ethic, as provided by Singer, rests on the dualism between individuals and wholes. In this chapter I will argue that the dichotomy is not that clear. The preference utilitarian individualistic framework can acknowledge the value in nature and wholes in an indirect way. In environmental ethics two principles are made explicit: (1) nature is intrinsically valuable and (2) this value resides in ecological wholes rather than individual natural entities.⁴⁸ Nonhuman individuals have value only because, and to the extent, they contribute to the functioning of ecological systems. On the contrary, animal ethics, that focuses on the welfare of individuals, doesn't seem to recognize the intuitive value in ecological groups and systems as such. To have morally relevant interests is to have a good or welfare of one's own, which can be positively or negatively affected. An ecosystem does not have desires, nor a good of its own. Since such entities are not able to have interests, they are not morally considerable in themselves. Then, can animal advocacy somehow fit into conservation aims? Does it meet our intuitive conviction that we ought to protect species and biodiversity in our world?

Conservation efforts aim to preserve diversity and wildness.⁴⁹ In order to obtain these goals there is a management focus on ecological wholes. Such a holistic approach is embraced by environmental ethics, that takes into account the whole dynamics of nature and attributes intrinsic value to ecological wholes. It should be noted however, that the conservation goal of diversity does not solely refer to a diversity of species, but also to diversity of populations and diversity of individuals that are carriers of the gene pool. At first sight animal ethics may not seem to fit well within conservation aims. The thriving of individuals is, however, an essential part of the thriving of ecological groups and systems. Modern conservation efforts also concern the fates of individuals since the dynamics of populations emerges from individual welfare. Therefore conservation and animal ethics do not rule each other out, they both recognize the importance of the faring of individuals.

Furthermore, it should be recognized that the welfare of non-human animals as well as humans is benefitted by a balanced ecosystem. All sentient being are dependent on and a part of the natural world. The animal liberation view does indeed recognize the interdependence of

⁴⁸ Peterson 2013, p. 12.

⁴⁹ Jamieson 1995, p. 70.

all forms of life, just as holistic environmental ethics. When departing from an individualistic zoocentric viewpoint we can, thus, very well conclude that the preservation of populations and balanced ecosystems are valuable and we have strong reasons to preserve those. In other words, there is an aggregative interest of sentient beings in a healthy ecosystem. Even though ecological wholes may not have desires and are therefore not morally considerable in themselves, they are valuable for the wellbeing of all. Paul Taylor, a distinctive environmentalist who recognizes intrinsic value in individuals (plant and animal life) instead of wholes, likewise stated that *“It is true that a greater wrong is done when a whole species-population or biotic community is harmed. This is not because the group as such has a greater claim-to-be-respected than the individual, but because harming the group necessarily involves harming many individuals.”*⁵⁰ This illustrates that collective harms can be understood as the sum of individual harms. In that sense, animal liberation is interested in the dynamics of nature, in its populations and systems. Thus, potential beneficial conservation effects of trophy hunting are relevant for the trophy hunting debate, since they may satisfy an aggregative interest that is of greater moral importance than the thwarted interests of the targeted animals.

CHAPTER 5: MORAL ARGUMENTS AS JUSTIFICATION

5.1. CONDITIONAL HUNTING

There are some arguments in favour of hunting that emphasize that sport hunting, amongst which trophy hunting, is morally permissible only if it meets some conditions. The justification is derived from the necessity to kill in order to prevent greater harm, in the case of therapeutic hunting, or on the fairness of the hunting circumstances, in a ‘fair chase’ hunt. Moreover, human predation may also be seen as natural and homologous to natural predating behaviour in some other species in the animal kingdom. Another argument proposes that the harm done is less compared to other practices that involves the eventual killing of animals, thus, it would be hypocritical to condemn trophy hunting. These arguments are looked into more closely in the next paragraphs.

Some argue that hunting is necessary on game farms to keep populations under control. This argument is especially used on game farms that do not include the bigger predators, like lions and leopards. Without these the prey species will multiply very fast. Without intervention

⁵⁰ Taylor 1986, p. 286.

this would lead to a situation where the environment won't be able to feed all the grazing animals. This will lead to significant suffering, since starvation and dehydration will soon start to affect the animals. To keep the population level under control the owner of the farm would have to shoot some animals. This can be considered therapeutic hunting: the intentional killing of animals to conserve the lives of others and/or benefit the ecosystem. Therapeutic hunting is morally acceptable according to the animal liberation view if it concerns species that have a tendency to overshoot the carrying capacity of its range, in this way degrading the range's capacity to support current and future generations of its and other species. Since there are some people that would love to pay a high amount of money for this, why wouldn't a farm owner allow them to? As a matter of fact this money can be invested in the maintenance and care for the field and its animals. This argument, however, turns out to be weak. The farmer initially creates a situation which is not sustainable without inducing harm. He bought the ground, put fences around it and decided which animals are allowed to be introduced on its farm. He decides on the amount of water that is available, what kind of equilibrium between species can be achieved and refrains the animals from adapting to its circumstances by finding better conditions elsewhere. While most animals live pleasurable lives on these game farms, their deaths are also essential for the continued existence of the farm. Therapeutic hunting might be morally justifiable, since the death of one may benefit the lives of many, but creating the situation in which therapeutic hunting is necessary is morally wrong. Similarly, it would not be justifiable to deliberately create a situation in which five healthy people are about to die and then act heroically for saving one. (Trophy) hunting might be acceptable according to the argument of therapeutic hunting in token situations that are already created, but the whole practice of trophy hunting, which is the reason for these problematic situations, is not.

Another proposed argument is the argument of fair chase. In fair chase hunting the hunter does not make use of fences or bait. In this way the animal has a fair chance to run, hide, or fight. It aims to mimic a natural situation in which would encounter wildlife. It is disputable, however, to what extent the use of advanced weapons is fair. It seems that the hunter aims for a one on one hunt. A fair play. But why would it be acceptable to use weapons like guns, make use of cars and hides, while the animal can only fight bare 'clawed'? To be honest, a human being wouldn't stand a chance against a lion if it solely had to rely on its physical abilities. Humans are however smart, capable of deceiving animals and have the ability to make tools to enhance its striking power. In a way baiting and fencing are hunting strategies that we owe to

our cognitive capacities, comparable to the use of guns. The distinction between fair and unfair chase appears arbitrary. It is unclear why an 'unfair' chase is considered unacceptable, while a fair chase is not. Moreover, the argument of fair chase relies on the assumption that predation by humans is natural, therefore, morally acceptable and certain conditions would make it objectionable. I will put this claim up to evaluation.

5.2. *THE ARGUMENT OF (NATURAL) PREDATION*

According to the argument of natural predation, we are just a species, not necessarily better or worse than other species, but humans just happen to be on top of the food chain. Predation is a natural phenomenon. We don't blame the wolf for eating a sheep, although we might have reasons to keep it from happening. Other animals exploit and eat members of other species and since we are part of the natural world we are entitled to do the same. To forcefully cease to hunt other species is to alienate ourselves from the natural order. In this argument is strongly imbedded the idea that the natural world is a violent one. Hunters generally find advocacy of non-violence toward animals hypocrisy rooted in self-deception. While non-hunters exploit animals, eating meat out of cellophane packages and being detached from the truth, hunters are aware of the violence and bloodshed intrinsic to the hunt, without necessarily enjoying the kill. If anything, hunters generally have a higher stage of consciousness about the harms within the process. Within the provided line of reasoning we can distinguish two arguments that support human predation: one is based upon the comparable harm done by humans or other predators and the second on the morality of living according to one's nature. The first argument states that (1) it is morally acceptable for animals to hunt and eat prey and (2) there is no significant difference between animals predating other animals and humans predating other animals. Therefore, (3) it is morally acceptable for humans to hunt animals.⁵¹

In order to prove this argument to be flawed I will attack the second premise. The premise implies that nonhuman animals' behaviour performed by humans can be considered the same from a moral point of view. Surely, for a prey animal the experience of dying from a lion may be just as horrific as being killed by a human. However, there is a significant difference in the performed act. Animals do not have the moral conceptual resources to reflect on their behaviour, to tell right from wrong. For the wolf it is essential to feed himself on prey to survive,

⁵¹ Fink 2005, p. 2.

therefore he displays the behaviour of hunting. For the wolf it is instinctive behaviour, not a choice. This is a significant difference between animals predating other animals and humans predating other animals. Humans are capable of reflective thought and making conscious choices. If we would adapt and internalize animal behaviour we would get to very counterintuitive situations. We can choose if we want to live in symbiosis with or want to hunt animals. And since the hunting of animals is not essential to our survival and does inflict harm, we ought to do otherwise according to the utilitarian point of view. Since the second premise of the argument turns out to be false, the argument appears to be a fallacy.

The second argument is very similar, but emphasizes the need to live according to one's nature, to seek moral guidance in the natural world. It doesn't draw an analogy on the effects of predation between human and nonhuman animals but on the intrinsic motivation to perform this act. The argument is developed as follows: (1) It is not wrong for natural predators to kill other animals for food. (2) Human beings are omnivorous, thus, at least partly natural predators. Therefore, (3) it is not wrong for human beings to kill other animals for food.⁵² This argument seems only to apply for hunting which aims to obtain nutritional sources to maintain oneself. However, with trophy hunting the meat of the killed game is usually sold by the game farm owner, thus, used for human consumption. Let's accept for the sake of the argument that trophy hunting is used for food provisioning and the gain of trophies is merely a side event. This naturalistic argument raises the same objection as the previous one. Humans cannot be categorized as predators in the same way as animals are. We are rational beings, able of reflecting upon our conduct and able of imposing moral rules upon ourselves. The fact that our body has canine teeth and capable of digesting meat, doesn't mean we have to. If we would merely use the natural world for moral guidance human society would become very different from how we know it. Behaviours that are natural in other species are, for instance, to consume one's partner after mating and killing the offspring of the previous mate of your new partner. Although this is natural behaviour in other species, we do not choose to behave in such a way just because it is part of the natural world. These behaviours would tremendously violate our accept moral rules in society. Secondly, I would like to emphasize that not all animals hunt. Only 20% of the species in the animal kingdom are carnivorous, therefore, exploiting other animals is not the natural norm. Furthermore, it is clear that species are not only superior or

⁵² Fink 2016, p. 95.

inferior to one another in the natural order, they have also adapted through symbiotic mutual cooperation or they act indifferent to each other, not causing harm or benefits. Even from a naturalistic argument it is arbitrary to identify ourselves with the ‘predator part’, putting ourselves on top of the food chain. Surely there are many carnivorous species that hunt. Nature is, however, very diverse and that makes it hard to identify with nature in general, using existing behaviour as moral guidance. Again, it is not at all the case that without hunting humans would not be able to survive or that the predator behaviour is that deeply rooted in our nature that it cannot be controlled. The latter would mean that it would fall outside of moral judgement. Humans have the capability of deliberation and they ought to use it.

Another way to argue in favour of human predation is to emphasize the inconsistency in protecting animals from human predation but not from predation in general. As I previously explained, humans are able of reflective thought. We ought not to hunt animals, since this will harm animals for arbitrary reasons. The behaviour of other animals is instinctive and not blameworthy. However, even though they are not morally responsible for harm done, it is still a harm. Would this not give humans an obligation to prevent this harm, since they *are* able to signal it? It is an argument of *reductio ad absurdum*, which entails that if the premises lead to an absurd conclusion, the premise must be false. It states that if we accept animals in our moral community (1) we must protect them from harm, (2) predators (nonhuman and human) harm wild animals, therefore, (3) we should protect animals from that harm⁵³. Apart from the moral impermissibility of human predation this conclusion would entail a moral obligation for active interference in nature, eradicating all predator species. Since this is an absurd consequence⁵⁴ we have to conclude that either animals are not part of our moral community. Since that would imply that we do not have direct duties toward animals, human predation would be morally acceptable again.

Animal liberationists are charged with inconsistency when they fight against (sport) hunting, while allowing predation by wild animals. Singer argues, however, that the harm of animal predation cannot be eliminated without creating harm. Interfering with wildlife and wild nature is likely to increase the net amount of suffering by disturbing the balance of the ecosystems. Without natural predators, prey animals would soon surpass the carrying capacity of the land, resulting in famine, suffering and death. We therefore ought to be apprehensive in

⁵³ Fink (2016), p. 96.

⁵⁴ Some philosophers have argued that this conclusion is not absurd and we ought to act on this conclusion.

interfering with wildlife since it is likely to do more harm than good, although intervention can be justified “*if, in some way, we could be reasonably certain that interfering with wildlife in a particular way would, in the long run, greatly reduce the amount of killing and suffering.*”⁵⁵ I argue that Singer misses the point here. Although his argumentation might be true in most cases, he must accept the conclusion to begin with before overriding it by other conditions. The predation ‘*reductio*’ argument, however, emphasizes the absurdity of the conclusion to begin with, regardless of if this conclusion can be overridden in some cases or not. The conclusion, however, does not hold if we would rephrase the premises, giving them a bit more specification, incorporating what Singer is aiming for. When analysing the animal liberation theory it is not that one is morally required not to inflict harm and to prevent harm, but to not inflict unnecessary harm and to prevent unnecessary harm. Some harm may be permissible if it is outweighed by some moral good. It is in the core of the utilitarian theory. It would alter the argument as follows: if we accept animals in our moral community (1) we must protect them from unnecessary harm, (2) nonhuman predators usually inflict necessary harm, (3) humans generally inflict unnecessary harm, therefore, (4) we ought to protect animals from human predation and not from animal predation. In this way it is still acknowledged that animal suffering counts on the moral balance and the fact that animals suffer from predation constitutes good moral reasons for preventing it. As a general rule wild predators kill other animals for food or else they would die of starvation and at the same time they contribute to the ecosystem.

While as a general rule for humans, on the contrary, meat is simply a luxury. This doesn’t mean exceptions do not exist. While one is not morally required to prevent a wild dog from killing a bunny, one is required to prevent its Golden Retriever Oscar from killing the same bunny. Since Oscar is provided in its nutritional needs, his preference to hunt is not crucial enough to outweigh the bunny’s preference in continued existence and should, therefore, be prevented if possible. Similarly if a lion attacks a human being, it can be stated that although living off prey is essential for the lion’s survival, the life of the human is more valuable since many and more complex future orientated desires are thwarted by its death. Thus, this should be prevented if possible, even if the only way to do this is, is by killing the lion. Likewise, if humans do not have access to adequate food sources it is morally acceptable for them to hunt in order to maintain a certain level of subsistence. The personal preferences for sport hunting,

⁵⁵ In Singer, P. (1973). Food for thought, reply to David Rosinger. New York Review of Books.

including trophy hunting, are trivial, and do not outweigh the harm done. Therefore, it is morally unacceptable.

5.3. *JUSTIFICATION BY LESSER HARM*

Another way of justifying trophy hunting is by accepting that the practice is at least to some extent morally wrong, but putting emphasis on the bigger harm that is done to animals in our society and the general acceptance of this harm. The condemnation of trophy hunting is considered hypocritical and ignorant. It is claimed that game animals experience less harm, than animals in the intensive farming industry. If, as a society, we allow the agricultural harms done, there are no grounds to object against trophy hunting. As previously described, the method of killing does affect the moral harm done in the killing of animals and the methods of hunters are unprecise, generally inducing a lot of suffering. There is no clear-cut answer to the question if this painful death is equally bad as the lives animals live in the livestock industry, in which the animals are fairly painlessly killed but generally live less pleasurable lives. It depends on the type of husbandry we refer to. While in some intensive farming systems the welfare of individuals may be low, in biological farming systems these welfare levels are generally high. For the sake of the argument, let's assume that moral wrong done to game animals is indeed less than to farm animals. This would give us stronger reasons to alter the harmful practices in animal husbandry first, with higher priority. It can even be argued, from the point of welfare and the interest in continued existence in animals that these practices should be abolished. Within society there is increasing concern about the welfare of these animals and with this pressure to alter the practices. Admittedly, the attitudes of the public to animal affairs can be very inconsistent. The outrage resulting from the death of Cecil is disproportionate to the concern factory farming receives. With trophy hunting and factory farming, animals' welfare is jeopardized and death follows from human actions. This, however, should not distract us from altering or prohibiting trophy hunting if we have good reasons to do so. Even if the affair of trophy hunting might be of less urgency, it is still important. To draw an analogy: just because someone else murdered his father and you 'just' robbed a bank, doesn't mean you should not be put up for judgement for breaking moral (and legal) rules.

Summarizing, the three central pro-hunting arguments fail to give further justification for the practice of trophy hunting. They either attempt to avoid the recognition of previously

conducted moral harms, make arbitrary distinctions, rely on similarities between species that are actually not that similar or deter the attention to other moral wrongs. What is left is to evaluate to what extent trophy hunting contributes to conservation and people in local communities in order to see if these effects can outweigh the harm done to animals by the practice of trophy hunting.

CHAPTER 6: THE ACTUAL EFFECTS OF TROPHY HUNTING

6.1. CONSERVATIONAL EFFECTS OF TROPHY HUNTING

Pro-hunters claim that trophy hunting benefits populations by giving financial incentives to people to keep and protect wildlife and to preserve habitat. In this way even species that are on the brink of extinction may recover to plentiful numbers due to the protection they receive by game farm owners. Deliberately killing individuals of a population already threatened by extinction is, however, very counterintuitive. Yet, it is claimed that this, by the very practice of (trophy) hunting, may be the best approach to fight for their survival. If harvesting is retained within sustainable proportions the reproduction rates are not negatively affected. As mostly males are targeted by trophy hunting, recruitment of mating partners in polygynous systems is unaffected, since females will not have difficulty acquiring mates unless a large proportion of the males are removed.⁵⁶ One of the success stories is the resuscitation of black and white rhino populations in South Africa and Namibia (figure 1).

Trophy hunting, in combination with game auctions and tourism, has encouraged more than 300 private landowners in South Africa to keep a collective herd of about 6,140 white rhinos and 630 black rhinos on 49 communal or private lands⁵⁷. This represents approximately 1.7 million hectares of conservation land. As a comparison, South Africa's notorious Kruger National Park stretches 2 million hectares. Although this is just one illustrative example, it makes it evident that trophy hunting does lead to preservation of habitat and species conservation by private endeavours. Comparable stories of population restoration have been reported.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, in the past years, the economic incentive to keep rhinos has been jeopardized by escalating poaching practised aiming at rhino horn harvesting for the Asian

⁵⁶ Knell & Martínez-Ruiz 2017, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Emslie et al. 2016, p. 11.

⁵⁸ See IUCN 2016.

traditional medicine market. Due to this risk less private landowners are now willing to keep rhinos.⁵⁹ Restrictions on trophy hunting or import bans of rhino trophies would similarly lead to a decline in the species' populations, if no alternative preservation projects are set up to prevent this.

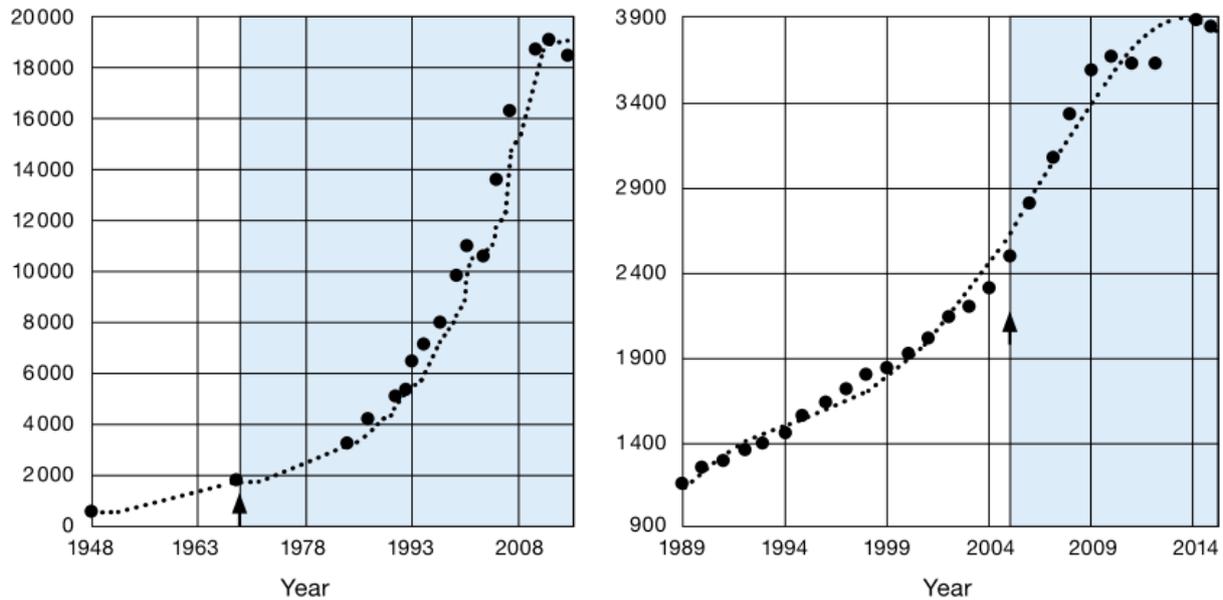


Figure 1. Changes in estimated numbers of white rhinos in South Africa (left) and black rhinos in South Africa and Namibia (right) before and after limited trophy hunting started (↑) in respectively 1968 and 2005. Cooney et al. 2017.

Trophy hunting has also some (unintended) negative effects. The hunt is typically performed selectively, either by the desired morphological attributes of the animal or in terms of which sex and age classes are killed. Trophy hunters are generally most interested in killing adult males, with large secondary sexual characteristics such as antlers, tusks or horns. A change in mortality patterns is likely to result in changing survival payoffs of certain characteristics. Trophy hunting will in these cases function as a selective pressure. A notorious example showing the effects of trophy hunting on gene selection is the decline in tusks in the African Elephant. Ivory harvesting puts a selective pressure on the tusk gene. For instance, in the Republic of South Africa approximately 3% of the elephants in the Kruger National Park, where hunting is prohibited, are tuskless, compared to 70% in Addo Elephant Park in the Eastern Cape where elephants were

⁵⁹ Cooney et al. 2017, p. 8.

intensely harvested for ivory in the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ While the genetic shift protects them from human predation it renders the elephants insufficiently able to dig for water, feed adequately or fend for themselves.⁶¹ Similarly, the size of the horns of bighorn rams in the Rocky Mountains had decreased 30% over 23 years of phenotype selective trophy hunting, consistent with an evolutionary response to artificial selection. Rams were allowed to be shot when their horns reached 4/5th of a circle, which in case of rapid growing horns happens around an age of 4 or 5 years. Normally large horned Ram Mountains have a mating advantage from an age of 7 to 8 years (figure 2), but these individuals were regularly removed by trophy hunting in the Rocky Mountains before they had reached this mating advantage. Instead, rams with slow growing horns that did not meet the horn length standards, were able to grow old and obtain high dominance status, resulting in high mating success.⁶² When hunting pressure in the area was drastically decreased the decline in horn size stopped, but was not reversed in the following 15 years.⁶³ Recovery by natural selection may, thus, be slow.

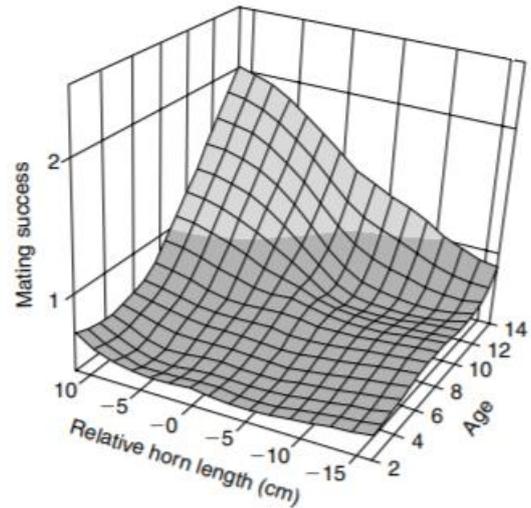


Figure 2. Surface plot of mating success in relation to horn length and age (without hunting pressure). Coltman et al. 2002.

The consequences of this selective pressures by trophy hunting can be extensive. There is increasing evidence that the degree of expression of the traits used in signalling and contests between males, the traits that trophy hunters are usually after, are condition dependent.⁶⁴ This entails that the trait expression and therefore reproduction success is correlated with the wellbeing and condition of the animal. This is associated with the overall quality of the genetic makeup of the individual, which also includes their genetic match to the environment. Populations in which a reproductive skew exists towards the fittest males clear deleterious mutations faster and adapt to environmental changes more quickly than populations that mate

⁶⁰ Raubenheimer & Miniggio 2016, p. 333.

⁶¹ Raubenheimer & Miniggio 2016, p. 333.

⁶² Coltman et al. 2002, p. 170.

⁶³ Pigeon et al. 2016, p. 521.

⁶⁴ Knell & Martínez-Ruiz 2017, p. 1.

less selectively. According to Darwin's evolutionary theory the one who is best adapted to its direct local environment is most likely to survive and pass on their genes by the mechanism of natural selection. Natural predation usually enhances species persistence, since the poorly adapted individuals are most targeted by predators, inducing a selective push.⁶⁵ Selective trophy hunting, however, puts pressure on gene selection by altering survival chances of the fittest individuals. As a result, animals that are less equipped to adapt to their environment are more likely to reach a high reproductive output, weakening the species. Without the spreading of the 'strongest' genes the resilience of the population declines, making them less capable of adapting to environmental changes. This is likely to lead to higher mortality rates and consequently higher chances on species extinction, in the light of the current global climate change.⁶⁶ A study by Knell and Martínez-Ruiz has also shown that these effects can be reduced by harvesting the older males. In this way they had time to spread the good genes around the population, improving the population's adaptability to environmental changes. Age restrictions on targeted males could therefore contribute to reducing this negative effect of trophy hunting on populations.

Furthermore, in social species the selective killing of an individual is likely to affect the social structures. The harvesting of male Scandinavian brown bears, for instance, leads to the increase of sexually selected infanticide. This is a strategy of male animals to restart the reproductive cycle of females. Research has shown that the selective killing of males indirectly leads to reduced population growth due to decreased cub survival rate.⁶⁷ A possible mechanism enabling the increased infanticide is the spatial reorganisation that takes place after the removal of a male brown bear. Remaining males will enter the harvested male home range and are therefore, more likely to encounter a female with cubs that are not his own.⁶⁸ Infanticide as a reproductive strategy is known in many hunted species, such as baboons and lions.⁶⁹ Notably, it has been suggested that in lions the impact of infanticide can be largely avoided by using age restrictions on male harvesting.⁷⁰

Age-restricted harvesting, however, is not the final solution to trophy hunting's negative potential on populations. Lion populations have been decreasing significantly over the past

⁶⁵ Knell & Martínez-Ruiz 2017, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Knell & Martínez-Ruiz 2017, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Gosselin et al. 2015, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Leclerc et al. 2017, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Loveridge et al. 2006, p. 233.

⁷⁰ Whitman et al. 2004, p. 175.

decades. From 1993 to 2014 the total number of wild lions declined by 43% to less than 20,000 individual.⁷¹ Although lions are, as accounts for many top predators populations, limited by a combination of factors, including habitat loss, prey depletion, poaching and retaliatory killings, research has also shown that trophy hunting was the number one contribution to their decline in many populations.^{72 73 74} Since lions, like other large carnivores, have low adult mortality rate in adults, it is unlikely that hunting substitutes death by other causes.⁷⁵ Age restrictions on targeted male lions strategy has been broadly recommended as a sustainable lion hunting strategy. A spatially explicit, individual based, stochastic model parameterized by 40 years of Northern Tanzanian demographic data on lion populations had shown that targeting males above 7 years would not negatively affect population size.⁷⁶ However, this study has been criticized since it was based on data from a well-protected and growing lion population in the Serengeti National Park. Therefore, a population projection model was made on a Zambian population of lions subject to more typical conditions, including source-sink dynamics, in which lions from the National Park were harvested in adjacent hunting areas. The model revealed that over a 25 year period hunting resulted in lion population declines for all continuous harvest strategies.⁷⁷ A strong correlation between age-restriction on male harvesting and population size was found, but age restriction alone could not ensure population stability. Only the harvesting strategy that combined an age limit of ≥ 7 year, a maximum quota of 1 lion/2,000 km² (two hunting blocks) and implemented periods of recovery yielded an acceptable risk of extirpation below 10%.⁷⁸ The analysis incorporated that the effects of poaching, human encroachment and prey depletion did not increase over time, which is not necessarily likely. These results show that sustainable hunting, in the light of maintaining stable population numbers, cannot be achieved by age restrictions alone, but need additional policy measures.

These are not the only negative consequences trophy hunting may have on conservation. It should be noted that financially incentivizing people with trophy hunting and perceiving animals as a commodity, can make conservation goals subordinate to profit. The gene pool is, for instance, not only altered as a by-product of selective male harvesting, but genetic mutations

⁷¹ Bauer et al., p. 2.

⁷² Rosenblatt et al. 2014, p. 176.

⁷³ Brink et al. 2016, p. 11.

⁷⁴ Packer et al. 2011, p. 142.

⁷⁵ Creel et al 2016, p.5.

⁷⁶ Whitman et al. 2004, p. 176.

⁷⁷ Creel et al 2016, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Creel et al 2016, p. 19.

are actively pursued. Game farm owners profit from animals that are desired by hunters. A strategy many farm owners have adhered to is attracting clients with special colour variants of game species caused by rare mutations. This has created a niche market for the selective breeding of such variants, i.a. black impala, golden zebra, white springbok, golden wildebeest and white lion. The practice has been limited to South Africa due to the country's unrestrictive hunting regulations. Intensively breeding animals from a limited genetic stock leads to inbreeding problems, reducing viability, adaptability and fertility.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the animals' mutant colour render them unfit to survive in the wild, since variant coloured preys are easy targets and the predators strikingly visible hunters (figure 3). The negative consequences of variant coloured game has not been limited to the individual animals. Game ranchers use virtually impenetrable electric fences in order to protect their costly animals, fragmentating habitat and reducing free roaming space. Additionally, the fences lead to immense mortality rates due to electrocution in other animals, such as pangolins, tortoises and snakes. Moreover, the irresponsible use of pesticides against endo- and ectoparasites has led to resistant parasites and furthermore, have harmed dung beetle populations.⁸⁰



Figure 3. A black coat makes an impala an easy prey. Photo: Ryno Rare Game

⁷⁹ Endangered Wildlife Trust 2016.

⁸⁰ Endangered Wildlife Trust 2016.

Popularity and subsequently prices of variant coloured game have skyrocketed since the new millennium. This has motivated many new buyers to flood into the game industry. A massive over-inflation occurred due to market speculation. Prices were based on the demand of game farmers and breeders, but not by the actual demand of hunters. As a consequence, too many people got involved in the business creating a severe oversupply of the colour variants, while the actual demand turned out to be not nearly as high as expected. Hunters' demand was further decreased when the big pro-hunting organisations Safari Club International and Dallas Safari Club condemned the colour variant market due to conservation considerations. When potential buyers realized that the animals were overvalued, they were not interested in buying them anymore and the prices severely collapsed. Since the beginning of 2016 the devaluation of colour variants has been spectacular. In prime time black impala, for instance, were sold for \$45,000, while a normal impala could be bought for \$100.⁸¹ In 2017 prices for black impala have dropped to \$700.⁸² South Africa now copes with a surplus of variant coloured animals that no one wants to have.

Another unique practice of South Africa that evolved from the liberal regulations and financial incentivizing is canned hunting. Recreational hunting is considered canned hunting when the animal is unfairly prevented from escaping the hunter. The lions are 'canned' by physical constraints such as close fencing, by mental constraints such as being habituated by humans in breeding facilities or by the use of tranquilizers. Commonly the animals are attracted by the use of bait and/or newly released in a fenced area and subsequently shot by a recreational hunter from a short distance. The hunters are able to choose which lion they want to shoot in advance, and there is a 100% lion kill guarantee. Regular lion trophy hunts take up 2 to 3 weeks, and there is a fair chance that the hunter is not able to track down and kill the lion within this time. With canned hunting you may go home with a trophy two days after arriving on the game farm. A practice that is inevitably connected to canned hunting is the intensive breeding of lions. In South Africa there are no regulations for such facilities. Cubs are taken away from their mother after 3 to 10 days, to bring her back in to oestrus again. In the wild, cubs stay for 18 to 24 months with their mother. When young, the cubs generate substantial amount of income for

⁸¹ Rooijen, L. Colour variant game naturally profitable. Last modified July 2, 2012.
<http://www.farmersweekly.co.za/bottomline/colour-variant-game-naturally-profitable/>.

⁸² Stafford, T. Hunting: The colour game is over. Last modified January 26, 2017.
<https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/features/2017-01-26-colour-game-is-over/>.

the breeding facility owner by attracting tourists and volunteers to cuddle, walk and photograph the little lions. Between being suitable for tourist activities and becoming full-grown, there is period of time in which lions are kept with no specific profit for the owner and are therefore, commonly neglected. Feeding a lion annually costs more than \$2000 dollars, which motivates people to feed their captive lions as less as possible. Although neglect is not a necessary consequence, it is a logical consequence from a financial driven industry. Multiple horror stories have been reported, for instance, Walter Slippers' lion breeding facility with over 250 lions, all severely malnourished (Figure 4).⁸³ The lack of care, space and food are all impeding the individuals' welfare. Then, once the lions have reached the desired size and looks, they are sold for the hunt. Despite the ethical objection to this variant of trophy hunting it has shown to be very popular. The amount of lion trophies exported from South Africa is more than double the combined export of all other African countries.⁸⁴ This raises the concern that if only captive-bred lion hunting were prohibited, the demand will shift to wild lion hunts. Consequently, elevated off-takes of wild lions would have negative effects on the overall population. However, if wild lion harvesting would be kept constant or reduced through effective installed regulations



Figure 4. Severe malnourishment on a canned hunting lion breeding farm in Alldays, South Africa. Photo: Africa Geographic.

⁸³ Wiggons. Lion crisis. Last modified July 15, 2016. <https://iwbond.org/2016/07/15/lion-crisis/>.

⁸⁴ Lindsey et al. 2012, p. 11.

and quotas, increased demand would just increase the price of lion hunts, and fit the financial incentivizing strategy.⁸⁵ It should be remembered, however, that this may not be the best strategy for achieving conservation goals. Both variant coloured game and canned hunting lions are inbred and have no conservation value, since reintroduction in the wild would weaken the overall gene pool. These practices show that providing financial incentives for keeping and protecting wildlife as a conservation strategy is a significant risk, since it does not entail that people will actually adhere to conservation goals apart from their financial goals. Where conservation and financial goals do not coincide, there will be individuals that act counterproductive to conservation goals.

6.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TROPHY HUNTING

Different numbers on the contribution of trophy hunting to economy have been reported by several parties. Of course the contribution depends on the country it is performed in. I will focus on Southern and Eastern Africa, where the economic impact can be expected to be the biggest, because of trophy hunting's popularity in these countries and the relatively weaker local economies. The Humane Society International has commissioned the Australian organization Economist at Large twice to evaluate the economic value of trophy hunting in 8 Sub-Saharan hunting countries⁸⁶. In the earlier report in 2013 they evaluated the claim that the generated revenue in Sub-Saharan Africa amounted \$200 million, made in the study by Lindsey et al (2007). This number was widely adopted as the generated revenue by trophy hunting for years to come. This number entailed that trophy hunting revenue consisted merely 1,2% of the tourism industry in the studied countries, with the latter approximating an average of 2,4% of the national GDP's, making the contribution of trophy hunting to the national economies about 0,025%. Economist at Large warned that even this number should be used with caution since the \$200 million claim was based on unpublished data and in reality may have been much lower. Economist at Large subsequently evaluated in their second report (2017) the claims made in the study conducted by consultants Southwick Associates for the pro-hunting Safari Club International. In this study it was found that annually, from the year 2012 to 2014, 18,815 trophy hunters had visited the studied countries and their overall economic benefit amounts \$USD 426 million. Furthermore, trophy hunting directly and indirectly supports 53,400 jobs in these

⁸⁵ Lindsey et al. 2012, p. 21.

⁸⁶ These countries include Botswana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

countries.⁸⁷ However, the Economist at Large report that was released in 2017 severely criticised these conclusions. They argued that the methodologies used in the studies are insufficient. First of all, the Southwick study fully ignored the opportunity cost of resources used for trophy hunting.⁸⁸ In this way, the potential alternative uses of the land are not taken in the calculations. Clearly the alternatives uses of the land may (nonhunting wildlife tourism) or not preserve the same landscape (for instance agriculture). Analysis that fails to take into account alternative uses cannot contribute to the question of whether trophy hunting is the most economically valuable use of resources. Furthermore, Southwick makes unrealistic assumptions in its calculation of the total economic contribution. Trophy hunters spend significant amounts of money in the visited country apart from on the hunt itself. In the Southwick study it is assumed that none of the trophy hunters would visit, if a trophy hunt would not be possible. In the analysis it is also assumed that all businesses that directly earn from trophy hunters will not find alternative income sources if the practice would disappear and moreover, their suppliers, and their suppliers' suppliers will not find any alternatives either, and so forth.⁸⁹ In this way a unrealistic multiplier within the value chain is used to maximize the 'calculated' total economic benefit. As a result Economists at Large concluded that the economic contribution of \$426 million is heavily overstated. Instead they adjusted the Southwick findings for these problems to estimate the *marginal* economic benefit of trophy hunting. Thus, what benefit provides trophy hunting over and above what alternative use of labour, land and wildlife would generate for the studied countries. Subsequently they found that a more realistic estimate would be a maximum of \$132 million annually for the combined 8 Sub-Saharan countries. Moreover the contribution to employment is more likely to lie within the range of 7,500 to 15,000 jobs, instead of the claimed 53,400. This is a maximum of 0,76% percent of the total direct tourism employment in the countries. The overall tourism industry generates between 2,8 and 5,1% of the GDP in the studied countries and trophy hunting, with its generated revenue of \$132 million, is responsible for a maximum of 0,78% of this amount. Thus, trophy hunting still merely contributes 0,03% to the overall economy when taking a most favourable perspective.⁹⁰ The way the Southwick study came to their high estimated economic contributions is illustrated in figure 5. Furthermore, Economists at Large emphasizes that both the \$200 million and \$426

⁸⁷ Southwick Associates (2015), p. 4.

⁸⁸ Economist at Large (2017), p. 3.

⁸⁹ Economist at Large (2017), p. 4.

⁹⁰ Economist at Large (2017), p. 3.

million figures do not only fail to demonstrate the marginal economic contributions of trophy hunting, but also fail to show to what extent this revenue contributes to meaningful conservation efforts.⁹¹ The Safari Club International, for instance, claims that the economic benefit estimated in the Southwick study implicitly support their ‘conservation equation’: the view that hunting equals conservation because the economic benefits can defray conservation costs. It is, however, not at all evident that generated financial resources will flow in effective conservation efforts. For instance, money may be used for personal gain, may flow into projects that do not have a direct benefit for wildlife or economic incentives could possibly even incentivize wildlife depletion. What can be concluded is, not surprisingly, that the practice of trophy hunting does generate some money, namely the unsubstantial amount of 0.03% of national GDP’s.

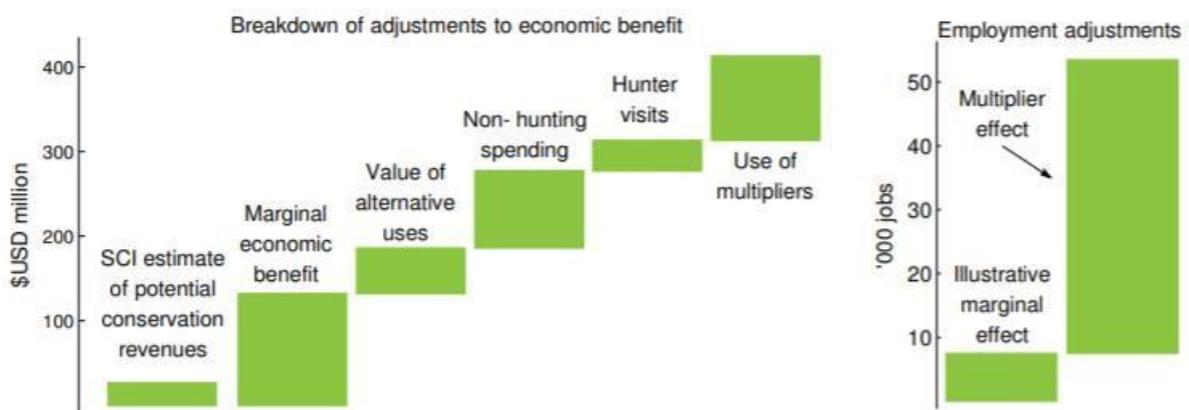


Figure 5. Marginal economic effect of trophy hunting compared to the Southwick study (2015) findings illustrated. Economist at Large (2017).

As previously mentioned, trophy hunting has the potential to contribute to the local livelihoods in unprivileged communities in areas where hunting is possible. Communities can benefit from the practice through hunting-concession payments, improved community services such as water infrastructure, health clinics and increased employment opportunities by creating jobs as guides, wildlife managers, game guards or taxidermists. Not surprisingly, the contributions of trophy hunting to local communities and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples vary greatly. Studies has shown that the actual positive effect on local communities is small. The 2009 report *Big Game Hunting in West Africa* by the International Union of Nature

⁹¹ Economist at Large (2017), p. 5.

Conservation, an internationally well respected pro-hunting conservation organization, showed that the contributions to local communities in West Africa are negligible. It is estimated that the distributed revenue created from big game hunting, not only trophy hunting, for local communities is about \$US 0.1 per hectare of potential village land classified in hunting area.⁹² This includes community destined revenue from salaries from created jobs and a percentage of taxes and turnover of the big game hunting industry. On average this entails that each inhabitant may count on \$0.3 a year. That is, if the generated money actually reaches the communities and doesn't 'disappear' due to local corruption. Similarly, it was found that the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe resulted in a gain of \$0.1 to \$0.3 per person a year.⁹³ This doesn't motivate local communities to be supportive of conservational efforts while living in the proximity of wildlife and therefore, doesn't decrease existing human-wildlife conflicts. Instead, the bush meat trade is far more interesting for impoverished citizens, giving them an opportunity to provide in their nutritional needs and make financial profits. For instance, in Ghana bushmeat industry was estimated to make an annual turnover of \$250 million in 2005⁹⁴ and in Cameroon this turnover amounted \$97 million in 2016, more than the country's mining industry.⁹⁵ With this practice most revenue flows directly to the local communities instead of the financial elite. This provides unprivileged communities with more opportunities than trophy hunting and gives them incentives to preserve habitat. However, the unregulated nature of the practice does pose severe risks for conservation, including intense overharvesting of the areas.

6.3 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS AS A JUSTIFICATION

In chapter 3 it is concluded that the killing of animals is *prima facie* wrong and cannot be outweighed by trivial interests. Some alleged consequences of trophy hunting, e.g. on trophy hunting and local livelihoods, are, however, of considerable weight and have been examined in the current chapter. The downfall of an utilitarian approach in evaluating moral permissibility of a practice is the challenge of determining at what point aggregative interests outbalance the thwarted crucial interests of individuals. An exact calculation lies outside the capacity of this thesis. What can be concluded is that trophy hunting cannot be justified by arguments of

⁹² IUCN/PACO 2009, p. 84.

⁹³ Campbell et al. 2000, p. 41.

⁹⁴ IUCN/PACO 2009, p. 84.

⁹⁵ Lescuyer & Nasi 2016, p. 93.

'natural' human predation or by the comparison of harm of other practices. Moreover, I have shown that the alleged positive effects of trophy hunting on conservation, economy and local livelihoods are not closely as expansive as it is claimed. Although trophy hunting has the potential of contributing to conservation efforts by providing people incentives to protect wildlife and their habitat, there also significant negative effects. The same financial incentivization have led to welfare impeding practices, such as the breeding of colour variants and lions for canned hunting. Even with regulations in place trophy hunting leads to weakening of gene pools, infanticide and habitat fragmentation due to electric fences. In this sense trophy hunting does the opposite of contributing to conservation. Since the positive effects on conservation, the economy and local livelihoods are fairly small, this cannot be used as a justification to outweigh the harm of killing animals. Consequently, it has to be concluded that trophy hunting is morally unacceptable and should be abolished.

CHAPTER 7: POLICY ADVICE

Governments might be apprehensive about prohibiting trophy hunting because they are afraid of protests and financial setbacks. A sudden worldwide ban of trophy hunting may indeed have an impact on the economy, which can lead to sudden unemployment and a decrease in local attitudes toward wildlife. Moreover, the decline of game animals' economic value is expected to impact the motivation of game farm owners to protect and keep the animals. This can lead to negative consequences for population size and animal welfare. Here, I propose that the practice should be phased out and that potential negative consequences should be forestalled.

Phasing out trophy hunting requires active anticipation on the effects of a trophy hunting ban. First, I propose that an alternative for sport hunting is photographic tourism. Although it is unknown to what extent photographic tourism can contribute to conservation of hunting land, we do know is that photographic tourism and hunting rule each other out. That is because hunting makes animals skittish and therefore hard to photograph. Currently, ecotourism is already a well faring and growing industry, and might be able to extend to hunting lands. Success stories have been reported. For example, a community-based photographic tourism project in Zimbabwe was able to generate 100% more than comparable trophy hunting projects.⁹⁶ Another illustrative example was shown in Rwanda, where the government tried to

⁹⁶ Loveridge et al. 2006, p. 235.

preserve the wild mountain gorilla after numbers had dropped to only 250 individuals. The government decided to expensive ecotourism permits, in contrast to just selling hunting permits, which allowed tourists to hike through the dense jungle with expert guides. As a result, the mountain gorilla population has been growing significantly.⁹⁷ However, photographic tourism has also a reported downfall. Its financial viability is vulnerable to political instability, whereas trophy hunters are more likely to keep visiting such countries.^{98 99}

Since phasing out the practice of trophy hunting is a long-term process, plus it is realistic to assume that not all countries and policy makers are going to comply with the ethical verdict of this thesis, it is meaningful to discuss options that are able to improve the current situation. By regulating the practice of trophy hunting, potential positive effects can be enhanced and negative effects reduced. First, laws should be enforced that prevent direct animal suffering. This includes prohibiting canned hunting, implementing regulations for breeding facilities and installing welfare monitor programs on hunting and breeding farms. Second, the hunt should be performed as welfare friendly as possible. This can be accomplished by solely allowing certain types of weapons for recreational hunting. An international accreditation system for recreational hunters will further the welfare of animals in that it can be used as a quality assurance. Hunting skills and accuracy need to be tested before qualifying for the accreditation, thus, as such decreasing inadequate hunters within the industry. Third, the selective breeding of animals on disadvantageous traits should be prohibited, hence abolishing the colour variant industry. Governmental or CITES regulations can prevent overharvest by installing strict hunting quotas to maintain sustainable levels and prevent genetic regression by installing species-specific age-restrictions. Additional beneficial effects can be achieved by increasing the flow of generated revenue to local communities, which can be implemented in hunting fees. This revenue can reduce negative attitudes of local communities toward wildlife and thus, increase tolerance and reduce retaliatory killings.¹⁰⁰ At last, if trophy hunting countries are not willing to install effective regulations to reduce the negative effects of the practice, other countries can put pressure on hunting country governments by installing import bans on trophies of all or some hunted species from those countries.

⁹⁷ Johnson, K. A bright future for Rwanda's mountain gorillas and adjacent communities. Last modified January 12, 2018. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/GiantsClub/a-bright-future-for-rwanda-s-mountain-gorillas-and-adjacentcommunities-a8155646.html>.

⁹⁸ IUCN 2016, p. 8.

⁹⁹ Loveridge et al. 2006, p. 235.

¹⁰⁰ IUCN 2016, p. 5.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The practice of trophy hunting aims to hunt and kill game animals to satisfy personal preferences and collective interests, for instance through maintaining adequate subsistence levels and a balanced ecosystem. I have argued that animals are morally considerable beings and humans have direct duties towards them. Trophy hunting severely thwarts the interests of the animal, because the hunt inflicts stress, physical pain and the kill frustrates their interest in continued life. Therefore, trophy hunting is *prima facie* wrong from a preference utilitarian perspective. The hunters' satisfied interests are trivial and cannot outweigh the moral weight of the animals' thwarted interests. Attempts to justify the practice of trophy hunting by arguments like conditional hunting, natural human predation and lesser harm has shown to be based on false assumptions, premises and arbitrary distinctions. An investigation of the socio-economic effects of trophy hunting has shown that the practice furthers the interest in subsistence for some people in developing countries, although it should be noted that these contribution are small and possible negligible. The actual contributions to conservation are partly beneficial. That is because trophy hunting has the potential to increase natural habitat and population numbers through financially incentivizing people to protect and keep game animals. However, the strategy of creating financial incentives to further conservation efforts have been shown to be a significant risk, because conservation and profit do not always coincide. This risk has the potential to lead to practices that severely harm affected animals. Moreover, trophy hunting is counterproductive in more ways. The practice does not only lead to increased, but also fragmentated habitat by the use of electric fences. Furthermore, it has severe negative effects on genetic pools by the selective harvesting of individuals, making species more prone to go extinct in the light of current swift environmental changes. Although an exact calculation of interest balancing is hard, it is clear that trophy hunting does not even nearly contribute as much to local livelihoods and conservation efforts as it is proclaimed. The effects on conservation may – at least under some circumstances – even turn out to be more harmful than beneficial. Consequently, I conclude that trophy hunting is a morally impermissible practice that should be abolished. I propose that abolishment should be done with caution in order to prevent avoidable negative consequences of a sudden cessation of the practice. In the meantime, multiple regulations can be put into place to reduce the net negative effect of trophy hunting which will allow a future without trophy hunting.

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