

NAMIBIA URGED TO SUSPEND HUNTING PERMITS



Dropping levels of animals as well as unethical behavior of hunters made Namibia suspend issuing of hunting permits although the industry represents an essential part of the country's income.

The Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism is urged to suspend the issuing of leopard and cheetah trophy-hunting permits for 2010. Thanks to the Namibian Professional Hunting Association (Napha) the Cheetah Trophy Hunting Permits and Leopard Trophy Hunting Permits for 2009 stopped to be issued on 24 April and 15 June respectively.

Napha wants the moratorium on the permits to be extended to 2010 so that the population can regenerate. According to Napha, urgent action was necessary to save the reputation of Namibia and also to secure the sustainability of the sector. **Trophy hunting as the biggest tourism-related contributor to the country's GDP is regarded as an important part of the Namibian tourism industry.**

Napha has been expressing its worries about the sustainability of the trophy hunting sector for a long time. The organization points out numerous reports of unethical behavior of unqualified hunters like e.g. the use of hounds. In many cases, the hunted animal is trapped and then released just in front of the dogs, who chase it to a tree not far away. Another practice is to trap the animal and sometimes even drug it and then release it in front of a hunter so that he or she has an easy shot.

Consequently, excessive hunting over many years has led to the destruction of the local leopard and cheetah populations. For the past two decades, some 200 leopard trophies were exported per year but in 2008 the number grew to 300. Since Napha encourages hunting in an ethical and sustainable manner, they also requested a temporary suspension on hunting leopards with hounds.

The practice is criticized by most professional hunters.

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