

Written evidence submitted by Mark Stevenson (AAB0011)

I would like to share my experiences of hunting in Africa and the subject of trophy hunting.

I am a hobby hunter and I do not make a living from hunting of any form but I do have a passion for Africa and all its wildlife whether I hunt there or not. I also hunt all over Europe. Most people holiday in Spain or Greece but I prefer to hunt in different countries and experience how different communities manage their wildlife.

I have visited Africa (South Africa and Namibia) frequently in the last 15 years and for the purpose of this call for evidence I shall refer to a farm I visit in the Mariental area in Namibia and a farm in the Khomas Hochland.

MARIENTAL.

This farm is 9800 hectares as you can imagine the country is very arid semi desert. It can hold 2,500 sheep and 1,200 lambs. To put this into perspective a farm of this size on good pasture in the UK could farm 245,000 sheep and 294,000 lambs. The farm is not high fenced and the wild game comes and goes. As you can see this really puts pressure on the Namibian farmers to maximize their land. The need to balance the farm animals and the wild game animals is a finely balanced operation so when he has too many wild game he has to operate a cull this is where the likes of myself come and pay to hunt and shoot. At the end of our stay it is nice to take a memento. It could be a head of horns or a skin. My point is these animals are going to be hunted and shot irrespective of whether we can bring back a "trophy".

2 years ago the farm was under extreme pressure because of an abundance of game. 200 - 250 Oryx, 55 Kudu, 70 Springbok and 15 Hartebeest were culled, last year there was very little game probably due to a drought. Only 20 Oryx, 10 Kudu and 15 Springbok were shot. All the hunted animals are processed and go into the local market as well as being given to the locals and employees.

The farm employs 12 people and they all are involved in a major way from trackers, skinners, cooks and maids and I can tell you from experience the look on their faces when we arrive is a joy to behold they are so hard working and happy they are mostly San Bushmen extremely skilled and humble folks who are a fabric of their environment.

KHOMAS HOCHLAND.

This farm is 11,500 hectares and is on the edge of the Namid desert here cattle and goats are farmed this farm also has no high fences. At best 2000 cattle can be farmed and during hard times, drought etc. they can farm 1200. To my knowledge there are about 15 locals employed but could be more. The hunting here is much more organised for the "trophy" hunter where carefully selected animals are hunted. These types of farm or ranch are strictly regulated by the government and quotas set as to how many trophies and species can be harvested. They are usually the older males past their best breeding so they also have the largest heads. These animals also command a higher price although if there is an imbalance of a species then a cull is operated.

The point I am trying to make is that farming in these places all over Africa is very tight margins and where there is an abundance of game we should leave them to harvest or hunt as they know what works for them. If they can make money from visiting hunters like me then they should be allowed to do so without interference from foreign governments. This piece of proposed legislation smacks of good old fashioned colonialism (we know what's best for you) and could actually hasten the

demise of the very animals it thinks it will help because there is a saying in Africa "if it pays it stays" . It would only take 2 years to eradicate all the wild game and replace with farm animals the other prospect is that these wonderful animals would be poached to extinction. They would be snared and believe me to see a huge Eland in a snare is the most pitiful sight and I have seen this myself and not on a film.

I would also like to add that if importing trophies were banned I would still go and hunt there, it wouldnt bother me that I couldnt have a trophy but it could prevent others but at the end of the day whatever animal is hunted it is dead so what does it matter if the head ends up on the hunters wall.

Thank you for reading.

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