

PUTTING AN END TO TROPHY HUNTING IMPORTS

Trophy hunting involves the killing of wildlife purely for the purpose of displaying parts of the animal – often the head or skin.

Every year around the world more than **200,000** threatened animals are killed for trophies.



IMAGE: TRACY LOUISE / GETTY

Over the past decade Australians have imported (or applied to import) more than 1,000 hunting trophies from 46 different mammal species listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

That includes:

- 299 American black bears
- 147 Hartmanns mountain zebras
- 47 hippos
- 17 polar bears
- 16 giraffes

The majority of Australians are opposed to trophy hunting. This year we have the chance to end the import of hunting trophies to Australia.

HIPPOPOTAMUS (HIPPOPOTAMUS AMPHIBIUS)

Hippos are the second largest land animal on Earth, weighing up to 3,200kg. Once found throughout all sub-saharan Africa, now they are largely confined to protected areas in East African countries. Hippos spend most of their day in rivers and lakes and are most active at night when they forage for food. They usually live in herds of 10-20 individuals and can live for around 40 years in the wild. They are considered vulnerable to extinction, primarily caused by habitat loss.

Hippos are also at risk from trophy hunting and hunting for hippo ivory, which is often used as a replacement for elephant ivory. Over the past decade Australians have imported, or been granted a permit to import, 47 hippos as trophies. This has included imports of their heads, feet, teeth, skulls and skins.



SPECIES
PROFILE

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK / NETTA AROBAS

AUSTRALIA'S TROPHY HUNTING IMPORT TRACK RECORD

RANK	MAMMAL SPECIES	IUCN RED LIST*	TROPHIES IMPORTED								IMPORT PERMITS ISSUED			TOTAL
			DATA FROM CITES TRADE DATABASE								ISSUED			
			2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
1	American black bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>)	LC ▲	44	32	26	40	42	22	18	40	20	15	299	
2	Chacma baboon (<i>Papio ursinus</i>)	LC ▼	33	19	15	20	26	30	12	14	2	6	177	
3	Hartmann's mountain zebra (<i>Equus zebra hartmannae</i>)	Vu ▲	22	8	20	13	15	9	13	38	3	6	147	
4	Brown bear (<i>Ursus arctos</i>)	LC ►	14	11	8	6	20	7	12	3	6	6	93	
5	Red lechwe (<i>Kobus leche</i>)	NT ▼	11	12	7	8	7	10	5	18	2	4	84	
6	Cougar (<i>Puma concolor</i>)	LC ▼	11	11	3	6	10	7	5	10	4	2	69	
7	Caracal (<i>Caracal caracal</i>)	LC ?	4	8	9	15	11	4	3	5	1	3	63	
8	Vervet monkey (<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>)	LC ▼	4	8	0	8	7	10	6	18	0	0	61	
9	Grey wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	LC ►	8	9	1	2	6	3	5	11	6	8	59	
10	Hippopotamus (<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>)	Vu ►	12	2	1	1	3	10	1	13	2	2	47	
11	Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>)	LC ►	1	1	2	2	2	6	0	17	9	3	43	
12	Siberian ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>)	NT ▼	0	3	2	1	9	5	2	3	0	14	39	
13	Blackbuck (<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>)	LC ?	0	4	1	5	4	1	1	11	4	0	31	
14	Barbary sheep (<i>Ammotragus lervia</i>)	Vu ▼	5	2	0	1	2	0	8	6	1	5	30	
15	Lion** (<i>Panthera leo</i>)	Vu ▼	22	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	
16	African civet (<i>Civettictis civetta</i>)	LC ?	0	6	2	1	2	2	3	5	0	1	22	
17	Bobcat (<i>Lynx rufus</i>)	LC ►	2	0	1	2	3	1	0	6	3	3	21	
18	Polar bear (<i>Ursus maritimus</i>)	Vu ?	4	4	2	1	0	2	1	2	0	1	17	
19	Giraffe** (<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>)	Vu ▼	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	5	5	5	16	
20	Honey badger (<i>Mellivora capensis</i>)	LC ▼	1	0	2	2	3	2	0	4	0	2	16	
	Other (26 species)		13	17	13	17	14	3	10	10	4	8	109	
	Totals		211	164	115	151	186	134	106	239	72	94	1472	

*IUCN status at time of the report: Vu=Vulnerable, NT=Near Threatened, LC=Least Concern with symbols showing population trends of increasing (▲), decreasing (▼), stable (►), and unknown (?)

**Hunting trophies from lions were not permitted to be imported after 2015 and permits were not required for hunting trophies from giraffes until 2019.

Information on mammals traded as trophies for the years 2014-2020 inclusive were obtained from the CITES Trade Database (available at <https://trade.cites.org>) based on information provided in *A guide to using the CITES Trade Database* (CITES, 2013) using rules that are described in HSI Australia's 2022 report *Trophy Hunting by the Numbers: Australia's Role in International Trade in Hunting Trophies*. Data for 2014-2018 was obtained on April 28, 2022. Data for 2019-2020 was obtained on 7 February 2024. Data for the years 2021-2023 were obtained by searching the Australian Government Wildlife Trade Permit register (available at <http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/wildlifetradepermits/>) for permits that were granted for purpose 'personal', that listed trophies or body parts for mammal species, as described in the 2022 HSI Australia report. The permit register is a public register that shows all permits that are applied for during a particular year. It is an indication of interest in importing trophies rather than an official record of total imports because it is likely that not all permits granted will be used.

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT TROPHY HUNTING

MYTH 1: AUSTRALIA ISN'T PART OF THE PROBLEM

Despite our small population size, Australians make a substantial contribution to the trade in trophy hunting. Research by HSI Australia in 2022 showed that Australia ranked tenth in the world for the number of global trophy imports of mammal species for period 2014–2018, with 827 trophies from 40 different species. This update shows that despite the COVID interruption, trophy hunting imports, or applications to import, are continuing at a scale similar to previous years.

MYTH 2: TROPHY HUNTING IS GOOD FOR CONSERVATION

Trophy hunters prefer to kill the largest, strongest animals, which can lead to decreases in population size, health and resilience. This in turn reduces long-term population viability and species survival – it is another impact on many already threatened species.

MYTH 3: TROPHY HUNTING SUPPORTS LOCAL ECONOMIES

Compared to overall tourism revenues and employment, trophy hunting is economically insignificant. Trophy hunting is often conducted on private farms or state reserves, with the money split between foreign hunting companies and the local elites, rarely making it to local communities. In contrast, ethical wildlife tourism is a significant contributor to the wellbeing of many African communities.

MYTH 4: TROPHY HUNTING IS A QUICK DEATH

Because trophy hunters seek a high quality 'trophy', they often avoid damage to body parts that will subsequently be displayed, such as the head, and seek to reduce the number of shots to the animal, increasing the chances of a protracted and painful death for the target animal. It is often not a requirement for the trophy hunter to hold a gun or hunting licence, and lack of experience can lead to unnecessary suffering of the animal.

MYTH 5: THERE IS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR TROPHY HUNTING

Polling commissioned by HSI Australia showed that in a representative sample of adult Australians, only 15% supported the continuation of trophy hunting. In South Africa, 64% of the population opposed trophy hunting in a 2020 survey, despite South Africa being a major exporter of hunting trophies.



IMAGE: THE HSUS



IMAGE: THE HSUS



IMAGE: JOS BAKKER

AUSTRALIA'S MOST IMPORTED TROPHY

AMERICAN BLACK BEAR (*URSUS AMERICANUS*)

American black bears historically ranged over most of the forested regions of North America but have now lost more than 60% of their habitat. Almost all of their diet is plant based, so they are mainly found in forested areas with an abundance of fruits, nuts and vegetation. In winter they hibernate in dens. They are solitary animals except for mothers and cubs who stay together for about two years. They can live for up to 30 years.

American black bears are often hunted using cruel methods such as baiting, trapping, shooting with handguns, and shooting with bows or crossbows. Dogs can be used to track and pursue bears and bears may even be forced to engage in a physical fight with the dogs. American black bears are consistently the species most imported into Australia as a hunting trophy.

IT'S TIME TO END THE IMPORT OF HUNTING TROPHIES INTO AUSTRALIA

While Australia has banned the import of hunting trophies from African lions and elephants and the southern white rhino, the import of trophies from many CITES listed species including giraffes, hippos, bears and zebras is still permitted.

Our national environment law, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), regulates the import of hunting trophies and it is currently being rewritten. The reforms to the EPBC Act can be used to prohibit the import of all wildlife trophies of CITES-listed species into Australia.



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Find out more and take action at
hsi.org.au/endtrophyimports



IMAGE: KATHY MILANI / THE HSUS