

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

1. Proposal

In accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.21 (Rev. CoP13) on Interpretation and application of quota for species included in CITES Appendix I; and in accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP13) on any increase in a quota or any new quota (i.e. for a State not previously having one), following the criteria provided under Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13), the Republic of Uganda requests the Conference of the Parties at its 14th meeting (CoP14) to transfer the population of the leopard (*Panthera pardus*) of Uganda from Appendix I to Appendix II with an annotation that reads as follows:

- "1) for the exclusive purpose of sport hunting for trophies and skins for personal use, to be exported as personal effects; and
- 2) with an annual export quota of 50 leopards for the whole country."

Proponent

Uganda

2. Background information

2.1 Within the CITES decision-making process

The leopard (*Panthera pardus*) is widely distributed in Africa in general and Uganda in particular. The leopard was included in CITES (Washington, D.C, 1973). However this listing was not based on scientific data and was done in the absence of any listing criteria (*Wijnstekers 2003*). Subsequent reviews of this listing and its inappropriateness led to a compromise resolution on the trade in leopard skins.

The purpose of this resolution was not to open the trade in species listed in Appendix I contrary to Article III of the convention, but only to simplify the procedures provided by that Article especially regarding non-detriment determinations.

During CoP4 (Gaborone, Botswana) in 1983 and CoP5 (Buenos Aires, Argentina) in 1985, the Conference of the Parties to CITES recognised that the killing of leopards may be sanctioned by countries of export "in defence of life and property" and "to enhance the survival of the species" (Resolution Conf. 4.13 and Resolution Conf. 5.13).

It was also recognised that "the leopard was in no way endangered in a number of range States". The Conference of the Parties accordingly agreed on the establishment of a quota system and in 1985 on the increase of quotas of three countries, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

At the sixth meeting of the Conference of Parties (Ottawa, Canada) a report on the leopard population of Sub-Sahara Africa, based on the habitat available in each country and average rainfall, was presented (*Martin and De Menlenaer, 1988*).

Resolution Conf. 9.21 (Rev. CoP13) on The interpretation and application of quotas for species included in Appendix I, a Party desiring a quota for a species included in Appendix I should submit to the CITES Secretariat its proposal, with supporting information, at least 150 days before a meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Basing on Criterion B under Annex 2 a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13), regulation of trade in the Ugandan leopard population is required to add appreciable value and ensure that the harvest of specimens from the wild is otherwise not reducing the wild population to a level at which its survival is threatened by "continued conflict of livestock industry and subsistence cultivation and other forms of development land use alternatives". In accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP13), the Conference of the Parties is requested at its 14th meeting (CoP14) to adopt the proposal, as we are convinced that the export will not be detrimental to the survival of species and that the purpose of the import will not be detrimental to the survival of species.

2.2 National level

While leopards in Uganda are legally and formally protected, both in Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, Forest Reserves) and on Private Land (Forested and Savannah Rangeland Areas), the conservation of this species still poses one of the biggest challenges to Livestock Industry, Wildlife Conservation and other Rural Economic development programmes. For Uganda's unique bio-geographic and geo-morphologic set-up, the distribution can be broadly described as ubiquitous or common.

However, considering the historical and current human settlement pattern, and in particular how this relates to leopard distribution, the species is widely known for its very stealth behaviour; attacking and killing local people's livestock and sometimes people, and in response the local communities killing it, mostly through prey-bait poisoning or direct hunting. Locally, people, particularly those who keep livestock, consider the leopard as destructive, dangerous, and a nuisance predator with no economic value, and which should be exterminated. Persons who have hunted and killed leopards are highly regarded, feared and treated as family, clan or tribal heroes.

One of the opportunities Uganda has is that the leopard belongs to the category of "populations with full compensation", that is its populations are able to compensate easily a reasonable harvesting.

3. Population status and distribution

The leopard (*Panthera pardus*) occurs in all Uganda's Forested and savannah wildlife Protected Areas and habitats within the "cattle corridor" (areas that fall in the districts of Isingiro, Mbarara, Kiruhura, Rakai, Ssembabule, Mpigi, Mubende, Kiboga, Luwero, Nakasongola, Masindi, Soroti and Karamoja region); in addition to other savannah areas of northern, north-western and southern Uganda.

The populations of predators are in general limited by the food resources, and in Africa these resources are determined by the biological productivity, which in turn is determined by rainfall (*Martin & De Meulenaer, 1988*). Uganda is endowed with rich biodiversity as a result of unique and suitable climatic conditions.

The total Sub-Sahara leopard population was estimated through mathematical models at around 700,000 with a confidence interval between 600,000 and 850,000 (*Martin & De Meulenaer, 1988*).

The leopard population in Lake Mburo National Park (370km²) is estimated to be 27-36 individuals and more leopards are resident on private ranches outside the park. Currently management is conducting night surveys to establish leopard populations on private land. The population in other

bigger National Parks like Queen Elizabeth, Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley is quite higher than Lake Mburo National Park.

4. Threats to the leopard

4.1 Livestock farming

The major threat to the survival of the leopard in Uganda is its conflict with livestock farmers. The pastoralists and livestock ranchers share the same habitat as the leopard outside Protected Areas, and whenever it kills goats, sheep or calves it is also killed by local people. A survey carried out in Kiruhura District by the Lake Mburo Conservation Area problem animal control unit reveals that a total of 19 leopards were killed during the period 2003 to March 2006; as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Recorded leopards killed on private land outside Lake Mburo National Park

Year	No. poisoned	trapped	shot	total
2003	4	0	1	5
2004	3	1	0	4
2005	2	3	0	5
January – March 2006	2	1	2	5
Total	11	5	3	19

4.2 Habitat fragmentation due to human activities

Leopard habitat has been fragmented due to the establishment of modern livestock farms and crop cultivation. The leopard conflict with both farmers and local communities is complicated by lack of incentives to promote tolerance towards this species and/or to some extent offset costs incurred by farmers when leopard kills livestock (ref. Table 1 and Table 3).

Furthermore, in an attempt to address increased levels of poverty in rural areas, the Government has encouraged citizens to actively participate in agricultural production (80% of Ugandans depend on subsistence agriculture). This has created demand for more land, thus infringing on leopard habitats which are turned into farmlands.

4.3 Conflicting land use option

Whereas it is possible for most of the wild animals to co-exist with livestock farmers, the crop farmers are likely not to tolerate wild animals. The pieces of land, which used to act as game and cattle corridors in 1960s and early 1970s, have been encroached by crop cultivators, thus directly threatening survival of the species within the affected ranges.

5. Utilisation of the leopard in Uganda

5.1 Traditional and cultural use

Uganda's cultural leaders and traditional medicine practitioners since time immemorial have been using leopard skin and other products for cultural purposes. During the pre-colonial era, local communities would use their traditional/indigenous knowledge to avoid over-exploitation of the leopard e.g. cultural ceremonies such as installation of kings, which required the use of leopard skin were periodical hence seasonal use of leopard skin. However during the colonial rule legislation on wildlife management did not adequately cater for cultural utilisation of the leopard and how this could be sustainable and well regulated.

5.2 Eco-tourism

Uganda is a popular ecotourism-driven tourist destination in the Eastern Africa region. Eco-tourism related to leopard viewing is carried out within protected areas. However this is not the case with leopards residing on private land because of their secretive and/or stealth habits and the nature of their fragmented habitat.

Although Uganda is currently implementing revenue sharing scheme (20% of gate entrance fee) to fund development and conservation initiatives around Protected Areas, local people who are affected by the leopard do not realise adequate economic benefits from wildlife conservation to offset the conservation costs that they incur. Furthermore, this scheme is limited in scope in that communities far away from protected areas or with no gazetted protected areas or with protected areas that are not visited by tourists do not benefit from revenue sharing.

6. Proposal to subject the leopard to sport hunting

In order to effectively contribute towards the above issue of opportunity cost associated with the leopard-other land use conflict, there is a need to harmonise leopard conservation and livestock industry, so as to save the leopard populations outside wildlife conservation areas, and even other predator populations in Uganda. To contribute to mitigation of this rather complicated conflict, it is proposed that the leopard population in the country be downlisted from Appendix I to II and subject to sport hunting for trophies and skins for personal use. The revenue generated from the programme (animal fees) shall be used to offset costs incurred by livestock farmers and general support to its conservation.

This is in line with Resolution Conf. 9. 21 (Rev. CoP13) on the interpretation and application of quota for species included in Appendix I.

7. Justification

Problem leopards that kill livestock are in turn killed by local communities without any economic value realised from them. The reports of damage caused by leopards involving livestock are on the increase and widespread. Worse still the capacity of the Uganda Wildlife Authority to directly compensate the affected farmers is highly limited even though it is legally provided for. Therefore sport hunting of leopard would make it more valuable (value addition) than being poisoned or killed and left to rot. It would also generate tangible economic benefits that would motivate local people to protect it instead of regarding it as vermin. In other words most farmers are likely to tolerate leopard on their property if it has a commercial value for them.

Conservation of leopards existing on private land is likely to be improved because of economic value that will have been realised. The outputs of the current sport-hunting project outside Lake Mburo National Park are good testimony. In 2000 the Government piloted a sport-hunting programme for ungulates in livestock ranches and rangelands surrounding Lake Mburo National Park, in an attempt to add value to the wildlife after years of massive decline. The population of impalas, for example, had declined from 16,000 in 1992 to just 1,600 in 1999 (Lamprey, 2006). Since the introduction of the programme, ungulate populations have been steadily rising both inside the Park and in the neighbouring ranches, and poaching has drastically reduced, with the sport-hunting operator and communities actively patrolling the hunting areas. This is to a large extent because the communities and land owners seeing value in the wildlife, with 65% of the hunting fees going to the communities and 10% going to the land owner. It is believed that the leopard has not yet benefited from this protection because it is not included in the hunting quota and is still regarded only as a scourge or vermin for the livestock, hence the continued killing.

Government Policy on wildlife use right is to encourage the general public and private sector to engage in game ranching and farming as one of the ways to sustainably utilise and add value to wildlife resources. However the leopard causes more conflicts between wildlife managers and farmers/private investors once it attacks or kills wild animals in established game ranches. Therefore establishing a leopard sport-hunting quota will generate economic benefits that are will positively influence the attitude of communities, game ranchers and local governments towards the leopard or other large predators.

In adopting Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP13), the Conference of the Parties recommended that "the system adopted in this Resolution be continued, with any increase in a quota or any new quota (i.e. for a States not previously having one) requiring the consent of the Conference of the Parties, in accordance with Resolution Conf. 9.21 (Rev. CoP13), adopted at the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and amended at the 13th meeting (Bangkok, 2004)".

8. Control systems in place

8.1 Uganda is a party to CITES, Lusaka Agreement on cooperative enforcement directed at illegal trade in wild fauna and flora, IUCN, CBD, CMS, AEWA, Africa Convention and East African Community; with effective domestic legislation (measures) to penalise anybody engaged in illegal hunting of and/or trade in any game. Any form of wildlife utilisation in Uganda, including sport hunting, is subject to the evaluation process of granting of a Wildlife Use Right license under the Uganda Wildlife Act. Wildlife Use Right, such as hunting would only be granted to a professional hunter/operator with proven experience. This would ensure professionalism in the operations, and therefore effectiveness of the programme.

8.2 Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the CITES Scientific Authority for animals of wild origin other than fish, has a management Information System (MIST) that is capable of tracking levels of illegal activities e.g. Poaching, and where they occur; thus enabling management to execute operations aimed at controlling illegal hunting of wild animals. UWA carries out regular aerial and ground survey to establish wild animal populations.

As the Mandated Institution and Scientific Authority designated, Uganda Wildlife Authority is able to determine trends in exploitation, to make non-detriment findings and to respond in time in case monitoring of impact of sport hunting on the leopard reveals that it is detrimental to its survival in the wild.

- a) Operational procedures for application and approval of wildlife use rights (sport hunting inclusive) are in place.
- b) Inspection checklist and procedures for monitoring/inspection of export or import wildlife consignments are in place.
- c) Under the running pilot programme, Uganda Wildlife Authority already has in place an operational Wildlife Use Rights Technical Committee that verifies proposals and participates in setting quotas and conducting non-detriment findings.

8.3 Memorandum of understanding; as the basis for the wildlife resource sustainable use partnership (*between the Government of Uganda, Local Community, Wildlife Associations and Professional Hunter/Concessionaire*)

Uganda has for the last five years been running a sport-hunting pilot project outside Lake Mburo National Park, The management of the project is based on a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Uganda Wildlife Authority, Local Governments and Local Communities on the one hand and Game Trails (U) Ltd, a professional private hunting company on the other hand.

The MoU indicates roles and responsibilities of the parties involved and puts in place strategies for monitoring hunting activities. This institutional framework shall be replicated and/or made available for hunting of leopards.

8.4 Emphasis on sport-hunting ethics

Sport hunting in Uganda is implemented based on strict code of conduct, for example no person is allowed to;

- a) Use any firearm capable of firing more than one cartridge as a result of one pressure of the trigger.

- b) Hunt any animal during the dark hours i.e. period between sunset and sunrise.
- c) Hunt any female animal, which is pregnant or accompanied by its young, or hunt the young of any animal.
- d) Hunt within National Park.
- e) The professional hunter is also obliged to fill in data sheets that capture information on sport-hunting activities.

9. Proposed quota

Uganda is proposing, as a precautionary combined problem animal control and sport-hunting based figure, a quota of 50 leopards per year, to be hunted throughout the country. The small figure is taken as a management mitigation intervention; meanwhile deeper studies are carried out into the programme, to cover the other parts of the country. The figure will be subject to review, both internally and at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, depending on the outcome of the implementation of this particular leopard population management intervention.

10. Quota management

The management of that quota will be in accordance with Resolution Conf. 10.14 and Article 3 (a - c). The Management Authority of the State of import will first confirm that the skins are not to be used primarily for commercial purposes. In other words that they are acquired by the owner in the country of export (Uganda) and are being imported as personal items that will not be sold in the country of import. Furthermore the owner imports no more than two skins in any calendar year.

The leopard skins will be tagged with a self-locking tag, which will indicate the country of export (UG), the number of the specimen in relation to the annual quota and the calendar year in which the animal was taken from the wild (utilised).

11. Challenges

11.1 Information on the current leopard population and condition

The proposal is designed to add value to the leopard as a species to reflect tangible benefits to the rural local communities, as part of an ongoing private investor, community and Government partnership programme. It has not been possible to establish the exact current leopard population in the country, as its secretive habits and wide-ranging distribution make it quite difficult to establish the actual population. However, as a measure to address this problem, Uganda, in collaboration with Predator Conservation Project, and Wesmoeth Wildlife Foundation (the Netherlands) is conducting a survey on leopard Food Habits, Habitat Relationships and Population Density in Lake Mburo National Park and the surrounding Rangelands. Notwithstanding all the above, population attributes are a function of the overall ecological processes and life support function of the rangeland(s) in question. Access of this is equally a function of availability of resources and time-frame factors, in a scenario where several leopards die every year; in the Lake Mburo National Park and the surrounding Rangelands alone.

11.2 Negative attitude towards the species by local communities

Due to the stealth and elusive behaviour of the leopard, the species is able to devastate a wide area, involving most of the small or young livestock within home range. One of the key targets is the dog that provides security to the nomadic people who live in the wilderness. As indicated above, many of these people consider the species in the context of the "legendary beasts of the Jungle, which do not only kill livestock but also threatens people's lives, causing social insecurity. The leopard has unusual predatory habits, where when it enters a kraal of small size livestock, it strangles all of them, taking blood from all, and hardly eating completely one animal, if at all.

The interpretation by local rural communities, whose only wealth and sources of income is the livestock killed all at once, is a "wanton killer". Other main predators in the Lake Mburo National Park and surrounding Rangelands, and the rest of the current home-range of the leopard elsewhere in the country (hunting dogs and lions), have since been locally exterminated, This area was the main stronghold in Uganda for the lion and the hunting dog. While the leopard is still holding on, courtesy of its elusive and/or stealth behaviour, cultivation and industrialisation are taking a heavy toll on the rangeland, beside impacts of settlement, and this is not helped by negative attitude caused by its unusual behaviour.

The key element of the challenge is how fast the African Governments can add enough of the tangible value to this resource (*Panthera pardus*) for the rural folks, whose livelihood is threatened by it, to acquire sufficient change in attitude. Can this wait for the scientific process of determining all the population and ecological attributes, and what is the envisaged cost effectiveness?

Table 2. Livestock killed by leopard and reported to LMCA

Year	Location	Animals killed			Remark
		Goat	Sheep	Calf	
2002	Kisozi Farm	2	1	6	
	Kabingo S/County	13	0	3	
	Kikatsi	4	3	10	One leopard was killed
2004	Nshara Government Ranch	0	0	3	Three leopards were killed in Rurambira
2005	Iyolwa-Tororo	5	4	0	
	Kashongi S/County	4	0	0	
	Sanga	3	0	0	Two leopards were killed (poisoned)
2006	Rurabira Parish	12	0	2	Two leopards were killed (poisoned)
	Sanga	4	0	0	
	Kanyaryeru	6	0	0	
	Masha	8	0		
		61	8	24	

Table 3. Estimated revenue (value) from livestock killed by leopard

Animal	No. killed	Unit cost (UGX)	Estimated total cost
Goat	61	50,000 =	3,050,000 =
Sheep	8	35,000 =	280,000 =
Calf	24	150,000 =	3,600,000 =
Total			6,930,000 =

The current animal fee for a leopard when subjected to sport hunting in the United Republic of Tanzania and southern Africa region ranges from USD 2,000 to 2,500. Therefore eight leopards, which were killed around LMNP as a result of attacking and killing livestock (worth UGX 6,930,000=) are valued at a range of USD 16,000 (UGX 29,440,000) to USD 20,000 (UGX 36,800,000=).

This simple calculation reveals that animal fee generated from utilization of problem leopard would definitely surpass the loss incurred by farmers and is likely to motivate them to protect it.

Table 4. Other areas of problem leopards, since October 2005

Date	Location	Problem description
3 October 2005	Kayanja Trading Centre in Mukono (39 km to Jinja)	A leopard was reported as terrorizing livestock and people
13 December 2005	Wakyato- Luwero District	One farmer reported loss of about 10 goats to a leopard in the area
27 February 2006	Wakayato Nakaseke	One problem leopard reported
1 June 2006	Nakasongola Mandwa Farm	Problem leopard reported
6 October 2006	Katugo Village Nsambya Subcounty Kiboga District	Problem leopard Killed three calves

12. References

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