



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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PRESS RELEASE

13 November 2017

STATEMENT ON THE RECENT INCIDENT WHERE 86 GOATS AND SHEEPS WERE KILLED BY LIONS IN KUNENE REGION

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is aware of the unfortunate incident where eighty six (86) goats and sheep were killed by lions in Torra Conservancy, Kunene Region. Officials of the Ministry were immediately dispatched to the area when informed about the incident. A pride of ten to fifteen lions are in the area and killed these livestock.

Our preliminary investigations show that with the current first rains received in the Kunene Region, this has stretched the movements of wild animals in the area making it difficult for lions and other predators to find their natural prey. Human wildlife conflict can also be attributed to climatic/weather changes where human and wild animals compete for the available resources. Wild animals will always move with the available water in the field.

We have also noted that the kraal where the goats and sheep have been killed has not been strong and not built in accordance with the predator proof requirements. While the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has a role and function to support local communities and farmers to develop and implement appropriate human wildlife conflict management and mitigation plans, it is the responsibility of all citizens, farmers, organizations and organs of State that engage in land uses that can be affected by human wildlife conflict to take measures to avoid such conflict.

Every person has a general duty of care to take reasonable measures to prevent or minimize damage being caused or to be caused by wild animals.

Addressing Human-Wildlife Conflict requires striking a balance between conservation priorities and the needs of people who live with wildlife. Human wildlife conflict needs to be

managed in a way that recognizes the rights and development needs of local communities, recognizes the need to promote biodiversity conservation, promotes self-reliance and ensures that decision-making is quick, efficient and based on the best available information. In this regard, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has taken a decision to capture and translocate this pride of ten to fifteen lions to areas where they will not cause any conflict with people.

Arrangements are underway by the Directorate of Wildlife and National Parks to move these lions. If there are challenges in capturing specific individual lions of this pride, then such individuals will be destroyed, but our first priority is to translocate these animals.

We will continue to keep to other ways to prevent and mitigate such conflicts and therefore manage the situation. A variety of approaches can be implemented in order to manage the conflict efficiently and effectively. These include prevention strategies which endeavor to avoid the conflict occurring in the first place and take action towards addressing its root causes, and protection strategies that are implemented when the conflict is certain to happen or has already occurred, as well as mitigation strategies that attempt to reduce the level of impact and lessen the problem.

One of the strategies is to have a determined number of animals that can be removed when there are such problems. Response to the conflict should be quick but based on the best available information. Population numbers should be maintained to scientifically accepted carrying capacities.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism takes issues of Human Wildlife Conflict Management seriously. It is a complex and serious problem that if not addressed appropriately treated with the necessary understanding and respect, and managed effectively, can harm if not destroy conservation efforts and tourism benefits for the country. We recognize this threat and in this regard we are currently finalizing the review of the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management which has been endorsed by Cabinet and will now go to Parliament for final consideration and approval. Under this Policy, a Human Lion Conflict Management Plan for North West Namibia has been developed and will be implemented fully.


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