



## Republic of Namibia

### MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND TOURISM

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**Press Release**  
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Editors and Journalists

#### **Condition of lions in the Kunene Region and the implication on human lion conflicts**

We are aware of the situation and current condition of some individual lions in the Kunene Region and the implications of this on human lion conflicts in the region, and specific areas.

The Ministry wish to assure the public, farmers and communities in the area that there is constant monitoring of the lion situation in the region. We have established a rapid response team to deal with the situation on the ground, and assist with lion conservation and manage possible conflict that can be caused by the lions, more especially in the most affected areas of Deriet and Mbakondja.

It is important to highlight that we are experiencing now with the lions in the northwest, especially the lions in poor body condition is natural. It results from lack of prey leading to starvation or from old age or diseases making lions weak and unable to hunt. Given the drought conditions experienced in the area, it is natural to see lions starving as there is no prey to hunt, and these results in increasing incidences of human-lion conflict where lions target domestic livestock, which is easy to hunt. Important to point out that the MEFT is working with many stakeholders and communities to respond to this challenge. There are rapid response teams in place to respond to conflict situations, and in case lions are habitual problem makers, they are removed from the area.

This situation has prompted the Ministry to start with the review and development of the "Lion Conservation and Management Plan" to determine the best long term sustainable management options on how we conserve lions in the Kunene region and elsewhere in the country where they occur, given the changing environmental and climatic conditions.

However, we have to put immediate measures in place to deal with the current situation. Where necessary and appropriate, the Ministry will move the lions to areas with enough natural prey species and good habitat for their survival, take into consideration the impact lions can have on human wildlife conflict.

We discourage any efforts and actions from members of the public or private sector to feed the lions without approval of the Ministry as this may further escalate the problem of human wildlife conflict. Furthermore, feeding of wild animals is against our conservation principles, ethics, laws and policies.

Unfortunately, in situations where the Ministry observes that a lion is physically weak, sick and no longer support itself, we will have no choice but to put such a lion down. We have thus far put down one elderly lioness (XPL 120) found in front of a farmers' goat kraal and unable to move in the Mbakondja area. This took place on the 18 April 2021. The lioness was extremely weak that it could not even attempt to attack the goats or people. The lioness' behavior was erratic and she presented advanced stages of illness. Body tissue samples were collected for further analysis. The video of this lion is currently circulating on social media.

We have also put down a female lioness at Bethanie in Doro !Nawas Conservancy in February this year. The lion was also in very poor condition. In both cases, the lionesses were old (more than 10 years) and were unable to hunt the natural prey.

Prior to this incident, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, a sub adult lion entered a farmer's kraal in Anabeb Conservancy, killing thirteen (13) goats, one (1) dog, and one (1) chicken. MEFT authorized the conservancy management to destroy this sub adult lion. This lion was in a good body condition, possibly from feeding on livestock or on the available wildlife species but finding livestock much easier to hunt, a situation we have seen taking place on a weekly basis in the Kunene Region. The Ministry has now launched a project funded by the Game Product Trust Fund to construct predator proof livestock kraals in identified hotspot areas so that we do not experience similar problems of lions entering kraals and killing livestock.

**End**

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