

CoP17 Prop. 4. [Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Togo] Transfer of African populations of Lion *Panthera leo* from Appendix II to Appendix I

The African Lion *Panthera leo* is estimated to number 20,000 animals and the species does not have a restricted range. Although there has been an estimated decline of 34% to 43% over the past 21 years (three generations), the rate of decline appears to be slowing because of the rising proportion of stable or increasing populations, mainly in southern Africa. Lion populations elsewhere in Africa are in decline and warrant stronger management and enforcement action by the range States concerned.

The species is present in many protected areas, both fenced and unfenced, operating under a range of management regimes. The major factors adversely affecting *P. leo* populations are killing (often pre-emptive) in defence of human life and livestock, habitat loss, and prey base declines. Where not appropriately managed, trophy hunting may have an adverse effect on populations although well-managed, controlled and sustainable offtake for international trade is recognized as a conservation tool which can provide both livelihood opportunities for rural communities and incentives for lion conservation. South

Africa is by far the largest exporter of *P. leo*, with a significant portion of the trade comprising trophies from captive-breeding operations. Illegal trade has been reported but is believed currently to be at a relatively low level.

Lion bone exports from South Africa have increased dramatically in recent years, with a total of 1160 skeletons legally exported (about 10.8 t of bones), 91% of them destined for Lao PDR. However, there is little evidence that this trade is currently adversely impacting wild Lion populations in South Africa, nor that any significant levels of legal or illegal trade are leaving other range States.

Overall there is not a strong justification for this proposal in terms of current or projected threat from trade, nor is there any clear indication that the listing would be in the best interest of the conservation of the species.

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