



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
UNITED KINGDOM

The Director-General: Environmental Affairs
Attention: Ms Magdel Boshoff
Private Bag X447
Pretoria 0001
South Africa

mboshoff@environment.gov.za

October 2011

Dear Director-General,

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act (10/2004): Proposed amendments to the norms and standards for the marking of rhinoceros horn and hunting of white rhinoceros for trophy hunting purposes

Response from Humane Society International

On behalf of Humane Society International, I submit the following comments in response to the Proposed Amendments to the Norms and Standard for the Marking of Rhinoceros Horn and Hunting of White Rhinoceros for Trophy Hunting Purposes (General Notice 685, Gazette number 34650), for your consideration.

Humane Society International (HSI) is the international arm of The Humane Society of the United States, one of the world's largest animal protection organisations — backed by 11 million people. HSI is creating a better future for animals and people through advocacy, education, and hands-on programmes. Celebrating animals and confronting cruelty worldwide, you can find out more about us at www.hsi.org.

Summary

The significant and alarming rise in demand for rhinoceros horn for the illegal Chinese medicine trade in the East Asia, has resulted in a concomitant rise in the poaching of rhinoceros throughout their range in recent years. South Africa, home to more than 70% of the world's remaining rhinos, has suffered greatly increased levels of poaching in both National Parks and on private farms and reserves, in spite of increased efforts to protect these animals.

In addition to poaching, there has been an alarming increase in the number of people from East Asia receiving permits to shoot southern white rhinos in organized trophy hunts, and subsequently export the horn as a “trophy” under the CITES Appendix II annotation for this species. These ‘hunts’ are organized by criminal syndicates, and the ‘trophy’ horns are ‘laundered’ into the illegal medicines trade, where their value is extremely high. There have

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also been a number of reports that suggest complicity among South African private rhino owners, vets and officials in this process; South African National Parks reported that 162 people were arrested in connection with rhinoceros poaching during 2010, including the owners of high profile South African trophy hunting outfits, and veterinarians (<http://www.sanparks.org/about/news/default.php?id=1585>).

HSI welcomes South Africa's initiatives to tighten controls on the export of rhinoceros horn through its proposed amendments to the norms and standards for the marking of rhinoceros horn and hunting of white rhinoceros for trophy hunting purposes.

However, while welcoming these proposals, HSI urges South African authorities to introduce without delay a moratorium on the trophy hunting of rhinoceros, in order to allow time for an effective permitting and marking system to be put in place. This call is supported by more than 31,000 people who signed a petition calling for a hunting moratorium which was presented to South African authorities in Johannesburg recently (attached), and by the large number of organisations that signed HSI's joint letter to the Minister in September 2011 (also attached).

Please find below HSI's additional comments on sections of the proposed norms and standards.

SECTION	PROPOSED TEXT CHANGES <i>Underlined text is new, bracketed text is deleted.</i>	HSI COMMENTS
1.1	All live rhinos sold and transported after the commencement of these norms and standards that have not been micro-chipped before, whether on privately <u>owned</u> or state land must be micro-chipped with one micro-chip in each of the horns. All individual detached rhino horns in private or state possession must be micro-chipped in accordance with [Regulation 70 of] <u>the prescriptions of the Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) Regulations, published in Notice No. R. 152 of 23 February 2007, as amended [(TOPS).], or any subsequent regulations amending or replacing the said regulations.</u>	<p>We welcome the initiative to micro-chip the horns of all live rhinos.</p> <p>Regarding detached horns, we believe it is vital that private live rhino and rhino horn owners co-operate with the government by declaring their horn stocks, so that authorities can determine the size of the national stockpile and whereabouts of rhinos and rhino horns.</p> <p>However, we are not convinced that micro-chipping is useful for detached horns because once the rhino horn has been chopped into pieces or ground into powder, any micro-chips therein will simply disappear. Therefore some other measure to mark and identify horn in order to prevent it from entering the illegal trade should be considered.</p> <p>In addition, the role of the destination countries as regards micro-chips is not made clear. The micro-chips should be designed so as to be easily read by officials in the destination country(ies) and these officials should contact DEA to confirm that the horn or live animal has been imported.</p>
1.2	When an application for the	The exact position at which the

	possession of rhino horn is submitted to the issuing authority, information on the circumference, inner length and outer length of each individual detached horn, as well as the weight thereof, must be provided by the applicant. In addition to this information the applicant must photograph each horn. Photographs must be of a good quality for easy identification of horns. The photographs must accompany the application. These requirements are applicable to all individual detached horns obtained after commencement of these norms and standards.	circumference of each individual detached horn should be measured, needs to be specified. We would suggest, for example, that it should be measured at the exact mid-point between the tip and the base.
1.4	Rhino horns originating from natural mortalities, <u>or obtained as a result of dehorning of rhinos</u> , or horns already in legal private possession[s], and which are not micro-chipped, must be micro-chipped by the permit issuing authority and all relevant information as prescribed above, must be captured from the date of commencement of these norms and standards. Mortalities must be reported to the <u>issuing</u> authority as soon as possible after the death of the animal. [Micro-chipping of individual detached rhino horns must be done by the relevant issuing authority.] The owner of the rhino horn is responsible for the costs incurred by the issuing authority to purchase the micro-chips.	A time limit by which mortalities should be reported to the issuing authority should be set.
1.5	The <u>provincial issuing authorities must keep the</u> above information [must be kept in a provincial] <u>on the TRAFFIC rhino horn stockpile database</u> and any changes resulting from translocation, export out of a province, natural mortalities, hunting etc. must be reflected in such database. The National Department of Environmental Affairs (<u>DEA</u>) [and Tourism (DEAT) will develop the database and] must [keep] <u>maintain</u> [a] <u>the</u> national database.	The mechanisms by which the provincial issuing authorities are to police whether the information provided for inclusion on the TRAFFIC rhino horn stockpile database is correct and up-to-date, should be specified.
2.3	All applications for the hunting of rhino received by the issuing authorities must be referred to the Directorate: Regulation and Monitoring Services at DEA[T] for recommendation within the time frame as [provided for in terms of	There is no reference in the requirements as to how the bona fide nature of prospective trophy hunters will be established.

	Regulation 8 of] <u>prescribed in the TOPS Regulations</u> . This will enable DEA[T] to compile a database for hunters and ensure that a hunter does not hunt more than one animal in different provinces <u>within a 12-month period [per year]</u> .	
2.4	Rhino hunts <u>must</u> [should, where possible,] take place under the supervision of a conservation official, <u>preferably an environmental management inspector</u> from the province concerned, subject to a permit being issued in the name of the hunter. Such official <u>or inspector</u> , whose contact details must be provided by the issuing authority, must be informed by the permit holder of the date and place of the hunt at least 24 hours before it takes place.	The official position of the conservation official should be specified. Details of the official concerned should be specified on the hunting permit, and on the subsequent paperwork accompanying the trophy, in order to reduce the possibility of corruption.
2.6	A person [will not be allowed to] <u>may not</u> export the horns of a rhino hunted as a trophy in personal baggage, [and horns may not be separated from the rest of the trophy immediately after the hunt. All parts of the trophy, including the horn must be transported to the taxidermist.] <u>The horns must be transported from the address where the hunt took place directly to the taxidermist or similar facility to be processed and prepared for exportation. The horns must be transported to the taxidermist or similar facility by the professional hunter who accompanied the hunter; or the hunting outfitter who organized the hunt; or the hunter. In the case where the hunter transports the horns, it must be transported under supervision of the relevant professional hunter or hunting outfitter.</u>	The chain of custody of the horn resulting from a trophy hunt needs to be watertight. Allowing the hunter or hunting outfitter to be in sole possession of the horn may introduce the possibility of corruption (e.g. through the substitution of larger horns). Therefore, we would argue that the conservation official should maintain possession of the horn until it has reached the taxidermist and/or been micro-chipped by an official from the issuing authority. A register of approved and inspected taxidermists should be established for the purpose of reducing any possible corruption.
2.9	The TOPS hunting permit must be signed by the hunter before commencement of the hunt. The owner or the manager of the game farm must sign off the permit after termination of the hunt, to confirm the success of the hunt. <u>The official or environmental management inspector who attended the hunt must immediately after the hunt provide DEA with information relating to the hunt and the relevant micro-chip</u>	The conservation official responsible for overseeing the hunt should also be required to sign the TOPS permit.

	<u>numbers.</u>	
3.4	<u>The DNA sample must be sent to the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort, as soon as possible after it has been taken.</u>	A copy of the DNA profile, associated with the micro-chip details, should be sent to a reputable laboratory, as well as to Customs and the CITES Management Authority, in the destination country(ies).

Thank you for considering our comments. In closing, we reiterate our view that the only way to prevent the export of rhino horns declared as trophies but actually destined for the illegal trade is to implement a total moratorium on rhino hunting and rhino horn exports, including trophies. We look forward to the outcome of your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Mark Jones BVSc MSc MRCVS, Veterinary Surgeon
Executive Director
Humane Society International/UK
5 Underwood Street
London
N1 7LY
Tel: 0207 4905288
mjones@hsi.org

For and on behalf of Humane Society International

Attachments:

Petition
Joint letter to the Minister