

NATSHOOT POSITION ON “THE HUNT”

Natshoot

Policy and Position Document

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1. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

1.1- Definitions

Animal Welfare

Wild Animal Welfare primarily concerns the immediate physical and psychological condition of an individual animal. It focuses on whether the animal is free from unnecessary suffering, pain, injury, stress, hunger, thirst, fear, or disease. Welfare assessments are generally individual-centred and are often based on the internationally recognised “Five Freedoms” or more modern welfare frameworks that evaluate nutrition, environment, health, behaviour, and mental state. In wildlife management, welfare issues arise during hunting, capture, translocation, culling, veterinary treatment, confinement, rehabilitation, or human–wildlife conflict situations. For example, an elephant injured in a snare or a predator suffering from starvation due to drought would be considered a welfare concern.

This is seen to be a short-term analyses of condition of the individual animals.

Animal Wellbeing

Wild Animal Wellbeing, by contrast, is a broader and more holistic concept. It includes welfare but also considers the animal’s ability to live naturally within a functioning ecosystem over the long term. Wellbeing incorporates ecological, behavioural, and population-level factors such as habitat quality, social structures, reproductive success, genetic diversity, ecological balance, and access to natural resources. It therefore examines whether wildlife populations can thrive sustainably within healthy ecosystems. For example, a lion population living in a stable ecosystem with adequate prey, natural behavioural opportunities, and low human disturbance may be regarded as having good wellbeing, even though individual animals may still experience occasional natural hardships such as predation, injury, or competition.

This is generally a long-term quality of life and ecological functioning

Biodiversity

The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they form part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

Conservation

The responsible management, protection, restoration, utilisation, and stewardship of renewable natural resources to ensure their long-term sustainability while maintaining ecological processes, biodiversity, and environmental integrity for present and future generations.

Damage-Causing Animal

A wildlife species or individual animal that, under specific circumstances, causes significant damage to agricultural production, livestock, property, infrastructure, biodiversity, human safety, or ecological management objectives, as recognised within applicable legislation and management frameworks.

Natural Resources

Components of the natural environment that have actual or potential value to humans and ecosystems, including wildlife, plants, water, soil, minerals, air, and ecological processes.

Non-Renewable Natural Resources

Natural resources that exist in finite quantities and cannot be replenished within a human timescale once depleted. Examples include minerals, fossil fuels, and certain geological resources.

Renewable Natural Resources

Natural resources capable of replenishing themselves through natural biological or ecological processes. Examples include wildlife populations, fisheries, forests, vegetation, water resources, and other living natural systems.

Sustainable Utilisation

The responsible and scientifically managed use of renewable natural resources at levels and in ways that do not result in their long-term decline, thereby maintaining their potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

Sustainable Offtake

The harvesting of wildlife or other renewable natural resources at scientifically determined levels that maintain healthy populations, ecological functioning, biodiversity, and long-term sustainability.

Wildlife Stewardship

The responsible care, management, utilisation, and protection of wildlife and their habitats in a manner that promotes conservation, ecological sustainability, and responsible use.

1.2- Acronyms

CBD

Convention on Biological Diversity

CITES

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

DCA

Damage-Causing Animal

IUCN

International Union for Conservation of Nature

NEMBA

National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004)

POPIA

Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013)

UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

2. NATSHOOTS POSITION ON “THE HUNT”

Natshoot recognises that the term “hunting” is often narrowly interpreted as the single moment in which a trigger is pulled or an arrow is released. For this reason, Natshoot prefers the broader and more meaningful term - “*The Hunt*.”

For Natshoot, *The Hunt* represents the complete process, responsibility, heritage, and ethical framework surrounding the sustainable utilisation of huntable wildlife. It encompasses far more than the final act of harvesting an animal.

The concept includes the development and application of essential skills such as firearm handling, firearm safety, marksmanship, and the selection of suitable calibres and equipment for the intended species. It further includes responsible hunting methods, a deep understanding of the ecology and behaviour of huntable species, and the ethical considerations attached to when, where, why, and how wildlife is harvested.

Importantly, *The Hunt* also extends beyond the harvest itself to the respectful and responsible utilisation of the animal. This includes carcass handling, skinning, meat processing, trophy preparation, and the effective use of venison and other natural products derived from the animal, whether feathered or furred. Within the principles of sustainable utilisation, every harvested animal carry value and must be treated with respect.

The hunt in a broader framework reflects the environment and heritage within which hunting takes place. It embodies the traditions, conservation values, knowledge systems, and stewardship responsibilities associated with responsible hunting practices and the sustainable management of wildlife resources.

In this context, Natshoot aligns closely with the writings of renowned philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who writes:” *...to the hunter the death of the game is not what interests him; that is not his purpose. What interests him is everything that he had to do to achieve that death- that is, the hunt. Therefore, what was before only a means to an end in itself* (thus he talks of the hunt being the focus and not the death of the quarry). *Death is essential because without it there is no authentic hunting; the killing of the animal is the natural end of the hunt and that goal of hunting itself, not of the hunter. The hunter seeks this death because it is no less than the sign of reality for the whole hunting process...one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted...*”

Natshoot therefore maintains that *The Hunt* carries a meaning far greater than the isolated act of harvesting an animal. It represents a responsible conservation-based activity grounded in responsible conduct, sustainable utilisation, wildlife stewardship, and the preservation of South Africa’s hunting heritage for future generations.

3. DEPARTURE

Natshoots stance on *the hunt* is embedded within **Natshoots Hunters Code**. This code serves as a continual affirmation of Natshoots conservation ethos, founded on the principle of **conservation through sustainable utilisation**.

The principle is founded upon four core values within the context of social, economic and environmental responsibility in all aspects of *The Hunt*:

- **Respect for life:**
Respect for all life and act in ways that protect wildlife, habitats, and the ecosystem.
- **Respect for nature:**
Respect for the total natural environment, including harvested species, their habitats, and its ability to maintain healthy and sustainable populations.
- **Respect for the law:**
Respect for and adherence to the stipulations of relevant legislation, regulations, proclamations, ordinances, and permit requirements governing hunting, conservation, firearm ownership, and wildlife utilisation.
- **Respect for fellow hunter:**
Respect for the national and international hunting fraternity, including landowners on whose property's *the hunt* take place, as well as their staff, and the values they represent.

Natshoot's position on *The Hunt* is furthermore grounded in the internationally recognised principles of conservation through sustainable utilisation. These principles have long been supported and promoted by leading international conservation bodies, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

This foundation is reflected in several internationally recognised conservation frameworks and policy documents, including:

- **World Conservation Strategy (IUCN 1980)** - acknowledgment of the direct link between sustainable use and sustainable development;
- **Our Common Future (UNEP 1987)** - report of the World Commission on Environment and Development; - "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs";
- **Caring for the Earth (IUCN 1991)** - strategy for sustainable living through sustainable use;
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP 1992)** - "...the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources, including appropriate access, appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, and appropriate funding to implement these principles".

Within this international conservation context, it is particularly significant that the IUCN formally acknowledged, during the World Conservation Congress held in Bangkok in 2004, that hunting in Southern Africa plays an important role in biodiversity conservation through the sustainable use of renewable natural resources.

Natshoot therefore maintains that *the hunt* is thus, implicitly and explicitly, clearly in line with the international Conservation etiquette promoted by IUCN and UNEP, which in turn is accepted and promoted by the international hunting community

3.1- UNDERTAKING

With the above in consideration, Natshoot acknowledges its responsibility to uphold and further the international heritage of hunting in its most responsible, ethical, and accountable form. Natshoot therefore endeavours to maintain an environment within which its members may continue to practise the valued tradition of responsible hunting, as supported by heritage, conservation principles, and the sustainable utilisation of wildlife resources.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Natshoot evaluates its position on all aspects related to *The Hunt*, as well as current and future matters associated with hunting and sustainable utilisation, against the following guiding principles:

- Adherence to, and promotion of, the principles of “**ethical hunting**” (see 4.1) as contained within the Natshoot Hunter’s Code. These principles are founded on value-based conduct, responsible actions, and ethical decision-making to which all Natshoot members are expected to subscribe in every aspect of *the hunt*.
- Adherence to, and promotion of, **fair in the chase (responsible hunting practices)**, evaluated against the shared values of respect for life, respect for nature, and responsible conduct in the pursuit of wildlife.
- Adherence to, and promotion of, **the principle of achieving the quickest, most effective, and humane harvest possible**, guided by the Natshoot values of ethical conduct, animal welfare, and respect for wildlife.

- Adherence to, and promotion of, **the responsible utilisation of harvested wildlife resources**, ensuring that animals harvested through the hunt are utilised respectfully and without unnecessary waste.
- Adherence to, and promotion of, **the ecologically sustainable use of renewable natural resources**, while supporting the maintenance of healthy, **viable populations** of indigenous wildlife species and the **conservation of their habitats and biodiversity**.
- Adherence to all **relevant legal requirements** governing *The Hunt*, as prescribed by national, provincial, and local authorities, with all members accepting **appropriate disciplinary measures** where such laws or regulations, are found to have been disregarded or transgressed.
- Adherence to, and promotion of, a **responsible hunting etiquette** through members' recognition that they act with **accountable responsibility as ambassadors for both the national and international hunting fraternity** whenever they participate in, or undertake, *The Hunt*.

5. SPECIFIC CONCEPTS & ISSUES RELATED TO THE HUNT

Natshoot's position on the following concepts and issues related to *The Hunt* is guided by its commitment to responsible hunting, conservation through sustainable utilisation, responsible wildlife stewardship, and adherence to sound scientific and legal principles. Therefore, Natshoot upholds the following positions on below concepts and issues related to *the hunt*. Natshoots shared value regarding hunting and sustainable utilisation.

5.1- ETHICAL HUNTING

Natshoot aligns with the well-known principle expressed by Aldo Leopold, widely regarded as one of the founding figures of modern wildlife management:

“Ethical behaviour is doing the right thing when no one else is watching - even when doing the wrong thing is legal.”

Natshoot further recognises that ethical values are often shaped by cultural, traditional, and societal perspectives. Within a diverse and multicultural society such

as South Africa, Natshoot maintains that no single cultural, social, or religious value system should be regarded as inherently superior to another.

Accordingly, Natshoot has developed its Hunter's Code as a framework of shared values and principles that define the organisation's Ethics of the Hunt. The Hunter's Code provides clear guidance regarding Natshoot's understanding of the standards of ethical conduct expected from all members when participating in *The Hunt*.

The Natshoot Hunter's Code is therefore founded on broadly shared principles of responsibility, respect, conservation, lawful conduct, sustainable utilisation, and ethical wildlife stewardship, rather than being limited to the values or perspectives of any single cultural or religious worldview. Through this approach, Natshoot seeks to promote an inclusive, responsible, and conservation-focused hunting ethic that supports both South Africa's diverse heritage and the sustainable use of its wildlife resources.

Irrespective of any formal code of conduct, Natshoot recognises three core ethical responsibilities that transcend cultural, social, or personal differences in hunting practices. These include:

- The responsibility of every Natshoot hunter to conduct *The Hunt* strictly within the boundaries of applicable laws, regulations, permit conditions, and recognised conservation requirements with permit.
- The responsibility of every hunter to utilise hunting firearms, calibres, ammunition, archery equipment, or other lawful hunting methods that are appropriate for the size and species of game being hunted, and that are capable of achieving a quick, humane, and effective harvest within the practical shooting abilities of the hunter.
- The responsibility of every hunter to conduct *The Hunt* fairly, responsibly, and with honest recognition of their own physical capabilities, limitations, and responsibilities towards fellow hunters, guides, landowners, and hunting assistants.

Natshoot further acknowledges that the concept of "ethical hunting" may at times be interpreted differently across cultural, regional, or philosophical perspectives.

However, the organisation maintains that ethical hunting must always remain grounded in lawful conduct, responsible wildlife stewardship, humane harvesting practices, conservation principles, and respect for both wildlife and fellow participants within *The Hunt*. Therefore, one can use the term "Legal Hunting" - as this leaves no option for different interpretations. Thus, a strict adherence to the Legal requirements of *the hunt*.

5.2- SUSTAINABLE USE

The principle of sustainable utilisation refers to the responsible use and consumption of renewable natural resources in a manner that allows these resources sufficient opportunity to regenerate and maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems. Sustainable utilisation therefore ensures that wildlife, plant species, and other renewable natural resources remain available for future generations through responsible management and scientifically informed use.

Within this context, harvesting should be conducted at levels that are repeatable over time without negatively impacting the long-term viability of wildlife populations or the ecological integrity of their habitats. Sustainable utilisation further recognises humanity's responsibility to manage renewable natural resources in an accountable, ethical, and conservation-driven manner.

5.2.1- Sustainable Off-take (Harvesting)

Every ecosystem and property has a finite ecological stocking density — the ability to sustainably support a certain number of animal and plant species over time, including during periods of environmental stress such as droughts or reduced rainfall. In wildlife management, this is commonly referred to as carrying capacity, grazing capacity, or stocking density.

Because all privately and state-owned wildlife properties in South Africa operate within fenced boundaries, wildlife populations are unable to disperse naturally beyond these areas as numbers increase. Effective wildlife management therefore requires landowners and conservation managers to regulate population growth through responsible wildlife sales, translocation, or sustainable harvesting practices.

Sustainable offtake refers to the responsible harvesting of surplus animals in a manner that maintains ecological balance and supports the long-term health of habitats and wildlife populations. This approach assists in preventing habitat degradation, resource competition, and declining ecosystem health.

Within the principles of conservation through sustainable utilisation, responsible offtake contributes directly to maintaining ecologically viable populations of indigenous species, preserving habitat integrity, supporting biodiversity conservation, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of South Africa's wildlife resources.

5.3- PRESERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The concept of preservation emerged strongly during the early 20th century and was notably reflected in the 1916 Congressional Act of the United States, which established the National Park Service with a mandate focused on, among other objectives, the *“preservation of native animal life.”*

Historically, preservation was based on the principle that natural systems should remain largely untouched by human influence, utilisation, or intervention. The primary objective was to protect and maintain nature in a pristine or original state, with minimal human interaction or consumptive use. In some instances, preservation also sought to restore ecosystems to conditions considered representative of their natural historical state.

This preservation-focused conservation philosophy dominated many international conservation approaches until the mid-20th century, where management practices often emphasised strict protection and the exclusion of human use from natural environments.

5.4- CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND ITS RESOURCES

As human populations expanded and communities across the world continued to depend on renewable natural resources for food security, livelihoods, economic activity, and social wellbeing, the concept of preserving nature in a completely untouched or pristine state became increasingly difficult to sustain and afford as a model.

As a result, the concept of conservation found place as being a more practical and balanced approach — one that recognises the responsible and sustainable use of renewable natural resources as an integral component of long-term environmental management. This approach introduced a more realistic framework for managing the relationship between humans and the natural environment in both developed and developing nations.

Within this context, conservation refers to the responsible management, utilisation, protection, and stewardship of natural resources in a manner that benefits both humans and their environment. The primary objective remains the long-term health and sustainability of ecosystems, including wildlife populations, fisheries, habitats, biodiversity, and ecological processes.

Natshoot aligns with conservation as the responsible, science-based management and sustainable use of renewable natural resources as a practical and effective means of ensuring long-term biodiversity conservation, healthy wildlife populations, habitat protection, and ongoing ecological sustainability of South Africa's natural heritage.

5.5- PUT AND TAKE

Natshoot accepts that the “put-and-take” model may be applied in a limited and carefully regulated manner where it supports the transfer and utilisation of wildlife from areas where hunting is not permitted, but where the sale and sustainable utilisation of wildlife is allowed.

However, this must be approached with strict caution, as it represents a narrow operational boundary within wildlife management systems. Its application must not compromise the ecological integrity, genetic health, or carrying capacity of either the source or receiving environments.

In line with Natshoot's conservation-through-sustainable-utilisation philosophy, any such system must ensure that both areas — the origin and destination of wildlife — remain ecologically sound, sustainable, and capable of maintaining viable wildlife populations over the long term. Commercial viability may support conservation outcomes, but it must never override ecological sustainability or responsible wildlife stewardship. Natshoot thus supports a well-managed “put & take” system

5.6- CANNED HUNTING

Canned hunting is understood to mean: (a) the harvesting of an animal on a small and restricted area of land that does not afford the animal an adequate opportunity to successfully escape its pursuer(s); or (b) the harvesting of an animal that is, for any reason, under the influence of a tranquillising or sedating substance.

5.6.1- Tranquilising substances

Natshoot is firmly opposed to, and unequivocally condemns, the harvesting of any animal that is under the influence of a tranquillising or sedating substance, regardless of the dosage or degree of sedation.

Such practices are inconsistent with Natshoot's guiding principles of responsible hunting, fair chase, and responsible wildlife utilisation. They undermine the integrity of

The Hunt and conflict with the organisation's established standards relating to humane, lawful, and accountable hunting practices.

In Natshoot's view, such conduct may also constitute a serious breach of ethical and legal hunting standards and could, in certain circumstances, amount to unlawful or unacceptable practice within the context of wildlife management and utilisation.

5.6.2- Size of hunting area

Due to South Africa's long-established system of private land ownership and fenced wildlife properties, misconceptions are often created that all hunting conducted on fenced land constitutes "canned hunting." This perception is factually incorrect and fails to recognise the realities of wildlife management, habitat size, animal behaviour, and the role of privately owned game ranches in South Africa's conservation success.

Fencing has formed part of agricultural and wildlife management practices in South Africa for decades, serving purposes that include property demarcation, livestock management, disease control, wildlife protection, security, and sustainable wildlife utilisation through game ranching. The overwhelming majority of South Africa's wildlife occurs on privately owned/managed land, where fencing plays an important role in maintaining wildlife populations and ecological management systems, as well as a finite capacity.

Natshoot maintains that the mere presence of fencing does not, in itself, constitute canned hunting, nor does it automatically remove the principles of responsible and ethical hunting. Any area of land that is capable of sustainably supporting and maintaining wildlife populations without causing harm to the environment or the broader ecological systems within that property may be utilised for wildlife ranching and sustainable utilisation purposes leading to conservation of species.

The management of such areas requires careful ecological oversight to ensure that wildlife populations remain both viable and sustainable, while also preventing overpopulation and habitat degradation. This balance must be maintained through responsible wildlife management practices, including wildlife sales, translocation, population control measures, and the sustainable harvesting of scientifically determined quotas.

Furthermore, South Africa's wildlife ranching model has become one of the country's most significant conservation success stories. The commercial value attached to wildlife through sustainable utilisation has incentivised landowners to retain vast areas under natural habitat rather than converting them to intensive agriculture or other land uses detrimental to biodiversity conservation. This has contributed substantially to the

expansion of game species numbers, habitat restoration, and the conservation of numerous species.

Natshoot therefore maintains that the ethical standing of *The Hunt* should not be judged solely on whether a property is fenced, but rather on whether the hunt adheres to the principles of a responsible hunt, ecological sustainability, responsible wildlife management, and humane harvesting practices.

5.6.3- Hunting of carnivores

While the legal framework governing the hunting of large carnivores differs between provinces in South Africa, Natshoot maintains that all hunting activities must, at a minimum, comply fully with the applicable provincial and national legislation regulating the management and harvesting of these species.

Natshoot strongly condemns the release of lions or other large predators into small, restricted enclosures for immediate or near-immediate harvesting. Such practices are inconsistent with the principles of responsible wildlife management, and conservation through sustainable utilisation. In Natshoot's view, these practices cannot legitimately be regarded as part of *The Hunt* and may, in certain circumstances, conflict with accepted animal welfare and responsible hunting standards.

At the same time, Natshoot recognises that South Africa's wildlife ranching and predator management systems operate within a regulated legal framework. Where the hunting of ranch-managed lions is conducted lawfully, within sufficiently large (a minimum of 1 000ha) and ecologically suitable environments, under strict regulatory conditions, and in accordance with responsible hunting principles, such hunts must be evaluated within the same broader framework applied to other managed wildlife systems in South Africa.

Natshoot maintains that the responsible assessment of any hunt should be based on factors such as legality, ecological sustainability, animal welfare, responsible hunt, habitat suitability, hunting method, and responsible wildlife management — rather than solely on whether a species occurs within a fenced property.

The organisation therefore supports continued constructive engagement, scientific management, and responsible regulation within all sectors of South Africa's wildlife industry to ensure that conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable utilisation principles remain protected.

5.7- CULLING

While Natshoot supports the culling of excess wildlife populations on game ranches, where conducted as a population management or ecological control measure, is not regarded by Natshoot as constituting hunting and therefore does not form part of *The Hunt* as defined by the organisation.

Such activities are generally recognised as wildlife management interventions aimed at maintaining ecological balance, preventing habitat degradation, and supporting sustainable stocking levels within managed wildlife systems.

5.8- “ILLEGAL HUNTING”

Natshoot maintains that *The Hunt* is, by definition, a lawful and regulated activity conducted within the framework of applicable conservation, wildlife, and hunting legislation.

Activities involving the unlawful killing, capture, or removal of wildlife outside the boundaries of the law cannot be regarded as hunting in the responsible or legal sense of *The Hunt*. Such actions constitute illegal wildlife crime, including poaching and game theft, and should be dealt with accordingly under the relevant legal and enforcement frameworks.

Natshoot strongly supports responsible and lawful and condemns all forms of illegal wildlife exploitation that undermine conservation, biodiversity protection, property rights, and sustainable wildlife management.

5.9- HUMANE DISPATCH

The humane harvesting of wildlife should always strive for the quickest, most effective, and responsible dispatch possible through a clean one-shot harvest, utilising an appropriate firearm calibre, correctly matched ammunition, or suitably weighted archery equipment for the species being hunted.

Natshoot promotes hunting practices that minimise unnecessary suffering, avoid cruelty, and limit distress to surrounding wildlife wherever reasonably possible. Responsible hunters are furthermore expected to recognise and operate within the limits of their own practical abilities, including shooting proficiency, relevant equipment capability, environmental conditions, and relevant shooting distances, to always ensure humane and responsible harvesting standards.

5.10- DAMAGE CAUSING ANIMALS

Natshoot recognises that certain wildlife species or individual animals may, under specific circumstances, become damage-causing animals through their interaction with human activities, agricultural systems, livestock operations, infrastructure, or broader ecological management objectives. Such situations may include animals that:

- cause significant losses to livestock or other wildlife species;
- cause excessive damage to crops, cultivated trees, natural vegetation, fencing, infrastructure, or property;
- pose a threat to human safety or life; or
- occur in population densities that result in unsustainable pressure on grazing resources, agricultural production, or habitat integrity.

Natshoot maintains that the management or removal of such animals must always take place within the applicable legal and regulatory framework, and with the highest degree of responsibility, professionalism, and regard for animal welfare. Where animals are harvested or removed, every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that the wildlife resource is utilised responsibly and without unnecessary waste.

Natshoot further recognises that wildlife management practices such as culling, cropping, capture, translocation, trapping, and the management of damage-causing animals may, at times, form necessary components of broader ecological and wildlife management programmes. However, these activities must always be conducted humanely, responsibly, scientifically, and in accordance with recognised animal welfare standards and conservation principles.

The organisation does not regard the control or management of damage-causing animals, when conducted primarily as a management intervention, as forming part of *The Hunt* in the ethical and traditional sense as defined by Natshoot.

5.11- HUNTING TROPHY

Within the context of *The Hunt*, a trophy is understood to mean any horn, ivory, tooth, tusk, claw, hoof, hide, skin, hair, feather, egg, or any other readily recognisable part or derivative of a legally harvested animal, whether processed or unprocessed, that is retained as a memento or record of the hunting experience.

Natshoot maintains that any animal harvested from which a trophy is derived should, wherever reasonably possible and lawful, be utilised responsibly and respectfully, with

due regard for the value of the wildlife resource and the principles of sustainable utilisation.

Furthermore, Natshoot believes that the display and treatment of hunting trophies should reflect dignity, respect for the animal's life, appreciation for nature, and recognition of the conservation role that ethical and sustainable hunting contributes to wildlife management and biodiversity conservation.

Natshoot advocates responsible trophy selection practices that support sound wildlife management and long-term population sustainability. The organisation supports the harvesting of animals that are beyond their prime breeding age, as these individuals often represent mature, fully developed trophies while having already contributed significantly to the genetic strength and reproduction of the population.

Natshoot actively discourages the harvesting of dominant breeding males that are still within their primary reproductive years, as these animals play an important role in maintaining healthy population structures, genetic diversity, and natural breeding dynamics within wildlife populations.

The organisation further supports the well-established European wildlife management concept commonly referred to as the “future buck” principle — the recognition that younger breeding males should be allowed the opportunity to mature naturally, continue contributing to reproduction, and eventually develop into representative mature trophies later in life, once they have passed their prime breeding years.

This approach aligns with Natshoot's broader principles of ethical hunting, responsible wildlife stewardship, ecological sustainability, and conservation through sustainable utilisation.

Please note–

NATSHOOT supports sustainable, science-based wildlife utilisation and advises that harvest selection should be guided by the management objectives, population data, quotas, and age- and sex-structure requirements determined for the relevant species and area. Accordingly, members are encouraged to harvest animals from the scientifically identified age class required to meet the approved management objective — whether lamb/juvenile, sub-adult/adolescent, or adult — rather than limiting responsible hunting to trophy animals only. The appropriate age class is the one that contributes to population management, habitat stewardship, and the long-term sustainability of the species within the applicable legal and scientific framework.

5.12- TROPHY REGISTER

Natshoot recognises that internationally established trophy recording systems, including those administered by Safari Club International and [Rowland Ward](#), form part of the historical and cultural heritage associated with *The Hunt* and wildlife conservation and international conservation. These systems may contribute valuable biological records, historical data, species recognition, and documentation of wildlife populations and trophy development.

However, Natshoot maintains that trophy registration should never become the primary motivation for *The Hunt*, nor should it encourage competition, excessive commercialisation, or the pursuit of wildlife solely for record-book status. Ethical hunting must remain grounded in respect for life, fair chase, conservation through sustainable utilisation, and responsible wildlife stewardship.

Natshoot therefore supports the responsible registration of legally and ethically obtained trophies where such practices promote appreciation for wildlife, conservation awareness, biological record keeping, and the heritage of hunting, provided that the dignity of the animal and the principles of sustainable utilisation remain paramount.

The organisation further maintains that the true value of *The Hunt* lies not in scores or rankings, but in the broader experience of ethical participation in nature, responsible conservation, and the sustainable management of wildlife resources.

5.13- GAMEBIRDS (Wingshooting)

In alignment with its principles Natshoot maintains that gamebird hunting should be conducted on the wing, utilising appropriate shotgun calibres and suitable shot sizes for the species being hunted.

Natshoot discourages hunting practices that fall outside accepted responsible wing shooting standards, except in specific lawful and practical management situations where alternative methods may be necessary and appropriate. Examples may include the controlled harvesting of species such as Spur-winged Goose under agricultural damage-control or management conditions where the use of small-calibre rifles is legally permitted.

Natshoot further strongly opposes the unlawful hunting of gamebirds outside regulated hunting seasons, the exceeding of prescribed bag limits, or hunting without the necessary provincial licences and permits. The organisation supports strict adherence

to all provincial hunting regulations, annual gazetted seasons, and legal requirements governing wing shooting activities.

The organisation also condemns irresponsible or excessive shooting practices where gamebirds are used merely as targets for recreational shooting practice or where hunts are conducted solely to promote excessive bag numbers or competitive killing. Such practices are inconsistent with Natshoot's principles of responsible hunting, respect for life, responsible utilisation, and conservation-based stewardship.

While Natshoot recognises that gamebird management regulations and enforcement may differ between provinces, the organisation maintains that these challenges do not justify non-compliance with hunting legislation, seasonal restrictions, licensing requirements, or responsible hunting standards. Responsible wing shooting must always remain conservation-driven, lawful, humane, and sustainable.

Please note– *Natshoot understands that game birds can be destructive and, while following the legal framework, can then be treated as damage causing animals.*

5.14- HOUNDING AND USE OF BIRD DOGS

Natshoot supports the use of hunting hounds, provided that such packs are managed with strict discipline during the hunt and are used solely to flush and spoor game (commonly referred to as *hounding*).

Similarly, Natshoot supports the use of trained bird dogs in wing shooting, on condition that these dogs are properly trained and responsibly utilised to locate, point, and retrieve gamebirds.

Natshoot unequivocally condemns the use of single dogs or packs of dogs to kill game.

5.15- TRADE IN WILDLIFE

Natshoot supports the sustainable, responsible and accountable national and international trade in wildlife in all its forms, as this has been proven to be the mainstay of conservation of large numbers of game, and of biodiversity through habitat conservation of different game species all over the world. The fact that wildlife is given a value other than being nice to look at, is the most important aspect contributing to the growth of game numbers in this country, in Europe, and in the USA. The trade in wildlife has also made significant, considerable, and proven contributions towards an adherence to the concept of conservation through sustainable use.

5.16- THE REGULATORY ENVIROMENT

Natshoot expresses concern regarding the inconsistency and lack of coordinated management relating to conservation, wildlife utilisation, hunting regulation, and private wildlife management across the various provinces of South Africa. The organisation believes that effective conservation and sustainable utilisation require clear, practical, scientifically informed, and consistently applied regulatory frameworks at both national and provincial levels.

Natshoot supports the establishment and maintenance of a responsible and effective regulatory environment as part of government's mandate in the management of wildlife resources, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable utilisation. The organisation further supports the role of government and conservation authorities in enforcing wildlife legislation, hunting regulations, permit systems, and conservation-related legal frameworks that uphold South Africa's internationally recognised conservation standards.

At the same time, Natshoot remains concerned about ongoing service delivery challenges relating to the issuing of hunting permits, transport permits, wildlife management documentation, and other regulatory processes in several provinces. The organisation believes that improved administrative efficiency, coordination, consistency, and implementation remain essential for effective conservation governance and responsible wildlife utilisation. Natshoot will continue to engage constructively with relevant authorities and stakeholders to advocate for practical, effective, and implementable improvements within these systems.

Natshoot further supports sincere and scientifically grounded efforts aimed at developing realistic, balanced, and enforceable regulations relating to *The Hunt*, wildlife management, and the implementation of legislation such as the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity act (Act No.10 of 2004) Regulations.

The organisation expects all members to comply fully with the applicable legal requirements governing hunting, conservation, wildlife management, firearm ownership, and sustainable utilisation, irrespective of challenges relating to administration or implementation.

Natshoot maintains that the following core principles should form the foundation of wildlife and hunting regulations within South Africa:

- Sustainable utilisation of renewable natural resources should remain the overarching principle guiding wildlife management and hunting regulations, ensuring long-term ecological sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

- Healthy and ecologically viable populations of indigenous wildlife species should be maintained, while invasive alien species should be responsibly controlled, with habitat conservation and ecosystem integrity remaining key priorities.
- Economic incentives that encourage conservation on privately owned land should be supported, including cooperation between landowners, hunters, conservation authorities, and local communities in the management of wildlife species and habitats.
- Greater uniformity, consistency, and coordination in wildlife legislation, permit systems, enforcement, and implementation should be pursued across all nine provinces of South Africa to support responsible conservation management and legal certainty for stakeholders involved in wildlife utilisation and *The Hunt*.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

6.1- Introduction

Natshoot recognises that social media and digital communication platforms have become an important tool for communication, education, advocacy, and the promotion of conservation through sustainable use.

Social media provides hunters, sport shooters, conservationists, landowners, and the public with opportunities to share experiences, exchange information, promote responsible firearm ownership, and contribute to conservation awareness.

However, social media also has the potential to damage the reputation of hunting, conservation, Natshoot, and individual members when used irresponsibly.

Natshoot therefore encourages members and staff to exercise sound judgement, professionalism, and respect when communicating through any public platform.

6.2- Guiding Principle

Natshoot supports the constitutional right of every South African to freedom of expression.

At the same time, Natshoot recognises that rights carry responsibilities.

Members and staff should understand that statements, photographs, videos, comments, and other online content may have consequences beyond the intended

audience and may influence public perceptions of hunting, conservation, firearm ownership, and Natshoot itself.

Natshoot recognises and supports the right to freedom of expression as protected under Section 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. However, such rights are not absolute and are subject to lawful limitations, including those relating to hate speech, incitement to violence, unlawful discrimination, harassment, defamation, privacy rights, and other forms of unlawful conduct.

Members and staff remain personally responsible for any content they publish, share, endorse, or distribute through electronic media.

Members are therefore encouraged to conduct themselves online in a manner consistent with the principles of:

- Respect for Life;
- Respect for Nature;
- Respect for the Law;
- Respect for People; and
- Conservation Through Sustainable Use.

6.3- Representation of Natshoot

Only duly authorised representatives may communicate official Natshoot positions, policies, or statements on behalf of the organisation.

Unless expressly authorised:

- Members speak for themselves and not for Natshoot.
- Personal opinions should not be presented as official Natshoot policy.
- Members should avoid creating the impression that they represent Natshoot in an official capacity when they do not.

6.4- Protection of Privacy and Personal Information

Members and staff shall respect the privacy rights of others.

When sharing hunting events or occasions and presentation of hunting photos, and hunting content online, members should be mindful of obligations arising from the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), which protects personal information and privacy rights.

Members should avoid:

- Publishing personal information without consent;
- Publishing identifying information of private individuals without lawful justification;
- Sharing confidential information;
- Publishing information that may compromise the safety or security of individuals, properties, or wildlife resources.

It is important that all Natshoot staff and members remain mindful and respectful of all conservation protocols before taking and publishing media.

6.5- Compliance with South African Law

Natshoot members and staff are expected to comply with all applicable South African legislation when using social media and electronic communication platforms.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa;
- The Cybercrimes Act;
- The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA);
- Defamation law;
- Equality legislation;
- Any other applicable legislation.

Members should recognise that unlawful conduct online may result in civil, criminal, or disciplinary consequences.

6.6- Engagement with Anti-Hunting Activism

Natshoot recognises that members may encounter criticism of hunting and sustainable use.

Members are encouraged to:

- Respond with facts rather than emotion;
- Remain courteous and professional;
- Promote scientific and conservation-based information;
- Avoid personal attacks;
- Avoid conduct that escalates conflict unnecessarily.

Where appropriate, silence and restraint may be more effective than confrontation.

7. NIGHT-HUNTING

Hunting at night is prohibited in all provinces of our country, unless one has a permit for night hunting, or can prove control of damage causing animals.

Hunting time is generally taken to be half an hour after sun rise to half an hour before sunset.

Technological advances have increasingly become part of modern hunting, wildlife management, conservation, and damage-causing animal control. Thermal imaging devices, night-vision equipment, digital optics, laser rangefinders, ballistic calculators, and other electronic aids are now widely available and used throughout South Africa and internationally.

Natshoot recognises that technological innovation can contribute positively to wildlife conservation, responsible harvesting, animal welfare, research, anti-poaching efforts, and the management of damage-causing animals. At the same time, Natshoot acknowledges that certain technologies may raise questions relating to responsible hunting, fairness of the chase, animal welfare, and public perception.

Natshoot supports the lawful, and responsible use of thermal imaging, night-vision equipment, digital optics, and related technologies where such use:

- Complies with applicable legislation;
- Promotes humane harvesting;
- Reduces unnecessary animal suffering;
- Supports conservation objectives;
- Assists wildlife management;
- Enhances hunter safety;
- Remains consistent with the principles of Conservation Through Sustainable Use.

Natshoot does not support the unlawful, reckless, or irresponsible use of technology and maintains that ethical judgement, respect for wildlife, and personal responsibility remain the foundation of all hunting activities.

Technology may assist the hunter, but it can never replace the hunter's responsibility to act ethically, lawfully, and with respect for life.

South Africa's wildlife management framework consists of national legislation as well as province-specific ordinances, proclamations, regulations, permit requirements, and conditions that may differ significantly between provinces. NATSHOOT therefore advises all members to familiarise themselves with, and comply fully with, the legal requirements applicable in the province where the hunt will take place. Prior to undertaking any night-hunting activity, members should ensure that all necessary permits, authorisations, landowner permissions, and equipment-related requirements have been obtained and that the intended activity is lawful within the relevant jurisdiction. Compliance with both national and provincial legislation is fundamental to ethical, responsible, and sustainable hunting practices.

8. WILDLIFE DISEASE AND BIOSECURITY

Natshoot supports science-based, risk-based, and legally compliant approaches to wildlife disease management and biosecurity that balance conservation objectives, animal welfare, ecological integrity, public health, and socio-economic realities. The organisation acknowledges that hunters, landowners, wildlife managers, conservation authorities, veterinarians, researchers, rural communities, and government agencies all have a shared responsibility to contribute towards the monitoring, management, and prevention of wildlife diseases.

Members are encouraged to act as responsible participants in wildlife conservation by remaining alert to unusual wildlife mortalities, abnormal animal behaviour, signs of disease, or suspected disease outbreaks, and by reporting such observations to the appropriate authorities. Members should never attempt to diagnose diseases themselves but rather support professional veterinary and scientific processes.

Natshoot further encourages responsible biosecurity practices, including compliance with applicable legislation governing animal health, wildlife movement, disease control, veterinary requirements, and meat safety. Members should take reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of disease through the responsible handling of wildlife, carcasses, equipment, vehicles, and other materials that may present a biosecurity risk.

9. Links

South Africa Predator Association (SAPA) -

<https://www.sapredators.co.za/>

SA Wingshooters Association - <https://www.wingshooters.org.za/>

True Green Alliance (TGA)- <https://www.truegreenalliance.co.za/>

Sustainable Use Coalition (SUCO)- <https://suco-sa.org.za/>

Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA)-

<https://www.wrsa.co.za/>

**South African Taxidermy and Tannery Association
(SATTA)-** <https://satta.org.za/>

