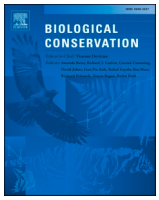
Biological Conservation 290 (2024) 110435

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Biological Conservation

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/biocon



Is trophy hunting a real sport?

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Trophy hunting
Sport hunting
Safari hunting
Fair chase principle
Humane treatment of animals
Safari operator
Professional hunter
"Client"

ABSTRACT

One of the most confusing and least academically understood fields of the tourism industry at global level is ironically the lucrative and highly priced phenomenon of big game hunting which is often carried out as a means of recreational sport. Colloquially known variously as ***trophy hunting***, ***sport hunting*** or ***safari hunting***, the practice of big game hunting represents one of the fastest growing and perhaps most controversial aspects of both sport and income generating activities involving wildlife exploitation. The multi-billion-dollar industry, which is often targeted for criticism by animal rights groups that oppose killing of animals on moral grounds, is examined critically from a pro-hunting perspective. In a bid to establish whether trophy hunting qualifies as a true sport or not, the study unravels how human lust for money has reduced trophy hunting into a mafioso-like syndicate with little or no scruples for sporting and conservation principles which are essential ingredients to qualify hunting as a true sport. This study is therefore a milestone not only in putting together major principles upon which trophy hunting bases its claims as a sport, but also in unravelling secretive abuses of wildlife that deny trophy hunting the status of sport that its original hunting philosophers had envisaged.

1. Introduction

The thematic question of whether trophy hunting qualifies to be perceived as a real sport or not is a mouthful academic exercise, which for all intent and purposes cannot be summarily answered with a yes or no. This is because the field and philosophy of trophy hunting, also colloquially known as ***sport hunting*** or ***safari hunting***, has never been subjected to proper academic definition of terms and sporting principles and evaluate the extent to which sportsmen observe them. This paper therefore seeks to venture into the grey areas of the multi-billion-dollar industry of hunting so that principles and institutions of big game trophy hunting are distinguished from many kinds of hunts that targeted many orders of species of wild fauna that have roamed the continent. As a starting point, it needs acknowledging that hunting and collection of wild life has been the major source of livelihood for indigenous people of Africa who, like the history of all other people in the pre-agricultural era, depended on hunting and collection of natural resources for subsistence. Thus since time immemorial, Africans evolved a spiritually-controlled system of harvesting of wild animals and plants including different forms of hunting which enabled them to satisfy their basic and recreational needs such as food for nourishment, bones for tools, fur and hide for clothing and medicine among others (Freese, 1996; Kasere in Alyanak, 1996).

Nevertheless, though the African hunting system seemed to work well (Bonner, 1993; Kasere in Alyanak, 1996), infiltration to Africa by early European hunters disrupted the effectiveness of the conservation system and provided for open and hardly controlled access to the African wilderness which in some way typified what Gareth Hardin described as the tragedy of the commons. Hardin's theory postulates that when a group of people have uncontrolled access to a commonly used natural resource, the resource will be degraded "because the rational economic behaviour of the individual generates an overall deterioration of the resource base" (Kalen and Tragardh, 1998). This open access resulted in overhunting of many species such as buffalo, rhinoceros and elephant. But the final nail in the coffin for African tradition of conservation and sustainable hunting came with the advent of colonialism when white settlers established protected areas and made hunting a preserve for their visiting kith and kin from the West while promulgating laws that virtually barred indigenous Africans from hunting. This is why, as of today, Africa has become a popular hunting destination by people of the West who hunt big game animals including pachyderms, big cats, many species of the antelope, large birds such as ostriches and even crocodilians.

But while history of pragmatic hunting by both indigenous Africans and European tourists has been well analysed and documented by academics in the past, this paper seeks to examine in greater detail the concept and practice of hunting big game animals for sport which though cited as a popular tourism venture by people of European

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2023.110435
Received 24 September 2022; Received in revised form 14 December 2023; Accepted 15 December 2023
Available online 4 January 2024

descent in Africa, has not been subjected to more serious academic scrutiny and analysis before. Thus in its bid to establish whether trophy hunting can pass for a true sport, the paper starts off with a theoretical discussion of what constitutes a sport, and then proceeds into a more complex exercise to distinguish three terms namely ***trophy hunting***, ***sport hunting*** and ***safari hunting*** which are often used synonymously to describe big game hunting for sport. And not only does the paper get into finer details to identify and streamline the basic principles and etiquettes that hunters must follow when hunting for sport, but also uses, among other literary accounts the well-publicized shooting incident of Cecil the lion as a case study to illustrate and clarify roles played by different actors such as safari operators, professional hunters and others who organise and accompany the sporting client during his/her hunting expeditions. It needs reckoning that the lion named Cecil was controversially shot and killed in Zimbabwe in 2012 by an American hunter and dentist Walter Palmer under local supervision of Mr. Theo Bronkhorst (Professional hunter) and Honest Ndlovu (Safari Operator). But far more significantly, the paper uses existing literature to evaluate the extent to which sporting principles and etiquettes are observed in practice and how the pursuit of super-profits has contributed in undermining strict observance of sporting and conservation principles thus making big game hunting more commercial than a sporting.

2. Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been applied as appropriate in this study. And owing largely to the sensitive and conceptual nature of the theme of study, the research relied mostly on qualitative methods in juggling through compendiums of literature published on both soft and hard copies. Apart from many books, I also accessed over 50 in-house magazines and journals for hunters which have not been widely used by outsider academics before. The inhouse journals which were published during the 1995–2020 period, include the *African Hunter*, *African Outfitter*, *African Hunting Gazette and Safari*: *The Journal of Big Game Hunting*; and others. In the magazines, hunters mostly showcase the animals they hunted and also narrate their experiences on different hunts conducted. However, quantitative methods were applied in some limited circumstances to get views of local communities on their understanding on how hunts are carried out and how they benefit from such operations. A total of 60 participants were interviewed from 3 districts in the Zambezi Valley namely **Binga**, **Hurungwe** and **Guruve**. The participants, who were mainly household heads and representatives, included 5 current and former councillors, 1 ex-Campfire Staffer and 3 safari employees.

3. Definition and characteristics of a real sport

A detailed examination of sports literature shows that there does not exist in the sporting fraternity a criterion to define and determine a true sport. Even though it is typical for sport theorists to define sport as an organised, competitive and skilful physical activity which asks for devotion and fair play (Atherton et al., 2012; SCRIBD, 2022), it must be observed that the competitive element has not been established as the single most decisive factor in defining a sport. It also needs observing that while most sports are games, some games such as snooker have not been embraced as sports (Bailey, 1982). And while some sports evolved more for recreation and also for one's physical fitness and exercise, others evolved more to reward the winning competitor. With all the emotions, competition, commercialisation and diversity that now characterise sport, an attempt to come up with a universally acceptable straitjacket definition of 'sport' becomes chimerical. This is because the evolution and characteristic features that determine the sporting element in sports are not ubiquitous in all forms of sports practised today.

Nevertheless, despite lack of consensus in defining sport "with any exactness"(Bailey, 1982: 9), there seems to be consensus that for any event to pass for sport, it must have clear universally understood and enforceable canons and principles that guide sportspersons for fair play (Atherton et al., 2012). It is with this in mind that the article investigates whether there is in existence generally acceptable and applicable canons and principles that guide sport hunting for trophy, and whether such principles are generally observed by sportsmen during their hunts. But before doing that, there is need to first define the concepts *trophy hunting*, *safari hunting* and *sport hunting*. This is because the concepts, though interchangeably used as synonyms in general parlance, seem to resonate different meanings that suggest that the three are not synonymous.

What seems to emerge from the interchangeable use of these three terms is that the field of hunting, like the field of environment and sustainable development in general has also been inundated by an influx of euphemistic jargon that maybe manipulated to coat certain negative acts on environment to make them appear more user friendly than they actually are. The problem was particularly highlighted by Johns and DellaSala (2017) in an article entitled *Caring, Killing, Euphemism and George Orwell: How Language Choice Undercuts Our Mission*. The authors were critical about the tendency by scientists to adopt scientific concepts that either greenwash or tone down anthropogenic activities so that they appear more decent and acceptable than they really are. Johns and DellaSala (2017) discussed many concepts such as culling and harvesting to demonstrate how the concepts are coated with undertones that make killing of wild animals seem more pleasant than the actual act is. The article by Johns and DellaSala (2017) therefore becomes useful in highlighting the need to clearly define concepts such as ***trophy hunting***, ***sport hunting*** and ***safari hunting*** which are recklessly used as synonyms in the hunting industry. It is also on similar note that trophy hunting as a form of sport may need to be re-defined and perhaps renamed so that the sport is distinguished from other sport hunts such as angling, bird hunting and others which have their own distinct principles and methods of operation that distinguish them from recreational big game hunting.

Thus, for the purpose of this study, a **3P** diagnostic tool has been formulated to show how the concepts ***trophy hunting***, ***sport hunting*** and ***safari hunting*** differ in terms of their emphasis on "**Product**", "**Place**" and "**Principle**" respectively. Thus, despite the general practice of interchangeably using the three concepts, the **3'P'** academic model implies lack of congruency on the meanings of the concepts.

4. Trophy hunting from a 3P perspective

When one talks about trophy hunting from the **3P** perspective, the '**P**' of significance is the product which essentially refers to the object of the hunt which is to secure a trophy. As described in various sources of literature referred to, a "trophy" is a part of the animal such as the horns or head and is usually kept or disposed by the hunter. According to Andy Ryan cited by Vivien Bullen: "Trophies include pelts, heads, antlers or other body part of the game. Parts are sent to a taxidermist, who cleans, stuffs and preserves the remnants into the trophies we often see mounted in lodges and homes across the country." As explained by Van Heerden (1999: 32); "The head hanging on the wall, or the rug mount on the floor" may be both memories evoked from trophy hunting. What needs noting is that when someone needs a trophy to decorate his sports bar, the person may or may not acquire the animal through sporting procedures or principles. He can acquire the trophy by purchasing it at an auction or can go out in the bush to trap or poison the animal without having bagged it through fair chase sporting procedures. Thus, by focusing on the product (trophy) in the context of three Ps, trophy hunting may not be defined the same as sport hunting unless the focus of trophy hunting is specifically to bag the animal by sporting means.

5. Sport hunting from a 3p perspective

When applying the 3P model to the concept of sport hunting, the "P"

of emphasis shifts from acquiring trophy as an end product to the application of principles of sport hunting to bag an animal. In other words, the success of trophy hunting is no longer strictly based on obtaining trophy by any means, but on how one applies sporting principles be they canons or ethics as a means of the hunt. The guiding **3'P'** question shifts from what product is sought, to what principle is used to obtain the trophy? As espoused by the early Spanish Philosopher, Jose Y Gasset, sport hunting is trophy hunting which observes etiquettes of fair chase and humane killing of animals (Hurt and Ravn, 2000). In describing trophy hunting for sport, Gasset emphasised more on the pleasure derived by a hunter for having hunted and observed sporting principles than in the ultimate bagging of the product (trophy) itself. In Gasset's words, "One does not have to hunt in order to kill." On the contrary, "one kills in order to have hunted" (Hurt and Ravn, 2000: 296). Gasset's philosophy is the major factor that distinguishes sport hunting principles from pragmatic forms of hunting that seek to secure a product as an end in itself. In other words, trophy hunting becomes sport hunting only when the hunter adheres to sporting principles, but not when "it is simply a matter of acquiring a trophy at any cost" (Coetzee M, African Outfitter, 2007: 7).

6. Safari hunting from a 3P perspective

And where the concepts *trophy hunting* and *sport hunting* evolved to emphasise the product and principle respectively, the concept of safari historically evolved to emphasise Africa as a place or destination for visit or hunt, and was later adopted to refer indiscriminately to many kinds of hunts that a safari operator could offer (Williams, 1996). As explicitly stated in literature, the concept safari derives from Swahili word meaning journey or travel (Theroux, 2002; Williams, 1996). The concept lexically derives from Arabic word *safara* meaning to unveil or discover (Williams, 1996). Thus, in terms of the **3P** diagnostic analysis, the term safari emerged to symbolise a "place" to the southern frontier that Europeans could visit. Theroux (2002: 3) postulates that the term safari appropriately described European sight viewing visits to Africa that have been taking place for about 2500 years. According to Theroux (2002), the term safari originally had nothing to do with animals. Antony Williams (1996: 3) however explained how the word safari emerged as reference to wildlife related visits when "Europeans adopted the word in the late nineteenth century to describe their sporting expeditions into the heartland of Africa." As such, the term safari today "still conjures up images of those travellers and hunters, the smell of wood smoke, the thrill of the chase, and the heart stopping, adrenalin pumping encounters with wildest Africa still relatively untouched by the synthetic values of a developed world" (Williams, 1996: 3).

Thus, although the term safari originally referred to nature-based visits to Africa, the term safari hunting later evolved to refer to any of many kinds of hunts provided by a safari operator which also include trophy hunting or trophy hunting for sport. Apart from generating most of its income by hosting sport hunting clients who come mainly from abroad to hunt wild game for sport or trophy, a safari hunting operation may undertake many other hunts such as problem animal control (PAC), culling, cropping and others which are not necessarily done for sporting purposes or to acquire trophy. For example, a national park may undertake a hunting exercise called culling to reduce or control the size of a herd of animals (Child, 1995). It can also undertake cropping or harvesting of animals for commercial sale of meat (Riney, 1982) or to remove animals with certain undesirable traits. PAC as well is often carried out by contracted professional hunters to shoot and kill menacing animals that cause havoc to people. And although both PAC and cropping can occasionally be sold for sport hunting, it would be wrong to group all safari hunts under the umbrella of sport hunting because different methods that may not be sporting may be used to take animals to suit objectives of the wildlife sanctuary sanctioning the hunt.

It is on the basis of the application of the **3P** diagnostic tool that some definitions proffered by established hunting writers seem problematic. For example, the definition given by Hurt and Ravn (2000: 296) who define safari hunting as "taking a paying customer into the field for the purpose of sport hunting…" seems problematic in that it overlooks the fact that not all safari hunts are done for sporting purposes since others are done for the purposes of culling, cropping or PAC. On a similar note, the definition by Wits academics Traill and Owen-Smith (2015) who define trophy hunting as "the selective removal of animals from a population based on a desirable trait" seems more appropriate as reference to culling rather than hunting for trophy or sport.

This goes to show that when one uses the **3P** diagnostic tool, the most conspicuous thing that comes from the interchangeable use of the three concepts *trophy hunting*, *safari hunting* and *sport hunting* is that such interchangeable use is illogical. It is perhaps on the basis of the need to distinguish these three concepts that big game trophy hunting should be re-named for easy reference and distinction from a host of many other forms of sport hunting.

Need to rename Big game trophy hunting to distinguish it from other hunting sports.

With so many varied forms of sport hunting, and confusion arising from interchangeable use of the terms ***sport hunting***, ***trophy hunting*** and ***safari hunting***, it is my proposal that academics should come up with a more appropriate nomenclature that distinguishes big game hunting for sport from many other forms of utilisation of animals for sport. This is important so that criticism of bad conservation practices for each kind of sport hunt should not be misconstrued as applicable to all kinds of sport hunting. It needs observing that though the term sport hunting in modern day Africa is almost exclusively associated with big game trophy hunting, there also exist in the world many kinds of outdoor recreational hunts which subscribe to the concept of sport hunting but are not necessarily the same as big game trophy hunting for sport. The list of these sporting forms is long and includes among them many geographically-centred practices that cannot all be discussed here. For example, Wyatt, 2021 contributed an interesting article on wild boar hunting in the United States, which illustrates how the hunt provides for both fun and food, but not necessarily for attainment of trophy. Other hunts that can be mentioned in passing include hare and fox hunting which are traditional pastime activities in Britain. The two also differ with big game trophy hunting in that they were not primarily intended for obtaining measurable trophy for both competition and mounting on walls.

However, two particularly significant kinds of sport hunting worth noting because of their prevalence in Southern Africa are ***angling*** and ***bird hunting***.

7. Angling

As observed by Fitter (1986: 36), angling is a form of fishing which, "has probably brought more human satisfaction than any other sport connected with wildlife." One of the most sought out freshwater species of fish by anglers in Southern Africa is the tiger fish which is often classified by scientists in the family *Characidae* alongside its various relatives who include the dangerous Piranha of South America. Freshwaters of Southern Africa are home to about six species of tiger fish that are used for angling. These include Zimbabwe's well-known species (*Hydrocynus vittatus*) which is a common resident of the Zambezi River which weighs around 15.5 kg (Bell-Cross, 1976). According to an interview with a tour operator, it is mainly because of the fish's aggressiveness, size and attractive features that International Tiger fish Tournaments at Lake Kariba have become an annual event. Although angling normally involves measuring specimens of fish which are often returned in water, there is no doubt that angling for trophy is a common practice worldwide as evidenced by many trophies of fish mounted on walls in homes, sport bars, shops among others (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Angling for tiger can also be for wall mounting like big game trophy hunting.

8. Bird hunting

Although there are many kinds of bird hunting sports which often vary with species of bird pursued, Mackie, 1996 identified about three kinds of bird shooting practiced mainly by people of European descent in Zimbabwe. The first is a driven shoot which consists of numerous beaters driving birds onto the guns positioned behind blinds or hides. The success of this kind of hunting, according to Mackie, 1996, depends really on large numbers of birds, some knowledge of a bird's habitats, terrain and cover. The second and perhaps most common form of bird shooting in Zimbabwe is what Mackie describes as "the walk-up rough shooting" where a number of guns, usually in extended line walk the bush. The third is the traditional method of flighting. The method is applicable, usually to waterfowl and sand grouse moving between feeding grounds or to water in the evenings or early mornings (Mackie, 1996).

And just like in other kinds of hunting such as wild boar hunting described by Wyatt, 2021, there seems to be no hard and fast rules developed for bird hunting. This seems to suggest that different forms of sport hunting can be sub-divided into different categories just like athletics have javelin, shot puts, and other categories. Although manifestly an exciting sport perhaps latently justified as a form of cropping or population control of pest birds that devastate maize and other food crops in commercial farms, dove shooting, according to ecologists, should be controlled to guard against over-hunting.

In light of the existence of many forms of sport hunts, it is my proposal that big game hunting for sport should be renamed Trophy sport hunting. This broader concept has not been commonly used in wildlife literature but was once subtly mentioned by Campbell in Campbell et al. (1996) without attracting attention. It must be reiterated that the term trophy sport hunting is just a proposal. As such, the interchangeable use of the three terms ***trophy hunting***, ***safari hunting*** and ***sport hunting*** may have to persist even in this paper. It is however important to note that when mentioned in this study and unless stated otherwise, the three terms will be mostly referring to Trophy Sport Hunting whose historical background and principles and etiquettes are briefly outlined below.

9. Historical development of trophy sport hunting as a culture for European elitism in Africa

The history of trophy sport hunting, as conceptualised by Campbell in Campbell et al. (1996), is intimately tied in Africa to the development of a recreational culture especially among the upper aristocratic classes of Europe and the United States. These upper-class members, for lack of a better terminology, sought pleasure, adventure and a sense of chivalry from hunting wild game in risky natural environments for fun as opposed to utilitarian gain. As such trophy sport hunting has no bearing to hunts that were traditionally practised in Africa which were mainly for subsistence. What is however important to observe for the purpose of this discussion is that recreational hunting "has been an embryo of conservation in Africa" (SCI Chapter, *Zimbabwe Hunter*, Jan 1997: 39) otherwise without it land given to wildlife would have been put to other economic uses (Kalen and Tragardh, 1998). As argued by the SCI Chapter, "Hunters were the first people to give value to wildlife and to bring game back onto former natural areas rich in wildlife that had been converted into livestock farms" (SCI Chapter, Jan 1997). While this statement seems Eurocentric in ignoring how Africans had long attached value to wildlife before the advent of colonialism (Kasere in Alyanak, 1996), the central point being reiterated is that the colonial approach to conservation provided the starting point for all wildlife conservation efforts that exuded through into post-colonial Africa (B Dickson, in Hutton and Dickson (2000).

According to MacKenzie (1998) as cited in Dickson (2000), these colonial policies were shaped by economic interests, beliefs about race and social order and views on the appropriate way to relate to the natural world. Mackenzie observes that hunting went through several stages, but particularly significant was the emergence of the idea that hunting was to be pursued as a sport, rather than for more pragmatic reasons such as ivory trade (which was rampantly carried out by European traders) or subsistence hunting (which was commonly pursued by African people). The important point to observe is that sport hunting did not only evolve as a European culture for and by white Europeans, but also as a class stratification phenomenon among the white people themselves; or as Dickson (2000, 165) puts it, "as a social differentiation within the settler communities."

Closely linked to the development of sport hunting in the colonies was a growing belief in the conservation of wild game species. Since heavy hunting by Europeans prior to colonialism and in the early days of colonial rule in the 20th century resulted in considerable reduction of animal numbers, it became the task of the empire itself to preserve wild animals to ensure a supply of quarry for European (sport) hunters (Dickson, 2000) and to accord visiting Europeans and settlers a sense of being in the Garden of Eden while viewing species that were long extinct back home in Europe (Kalen and Tragardh, 1998). This led to the colonial governments in embarking on conservation measures that were extremely insensitive to the socio-economic needs and security of indigenous African communities (Bonner, 1993; Dickson, 2000; Kasere in Alyanak, 1996). From a racial point of view, the colonial governments saw conservation of wildlife species in what Lord Curzon described as "the white man's burden" (Bonner, 1993; Dickson, 2000). It is important to observe is that the hunting industry developed as a tool for racism and social stratification among the settler white members of the community in Africa (Dickson, 2000).

10. Canons and etiquettes of trophy sport hunting

Findings from a careful scrutiny of literature reveal that the main principles, canons and etiquettes that make trophy hunting a sport can be grouped into six interlinked categories as follows:

(a) Fair Chase Principle

The fair chase principle is the main basis for regarding trophy sport hunting as a sport. Reference has since been made elsewhere in this article to the philosophy of Spanish philosopher Jose Y Gasset from whom most of the principles of trophy sport hunting derive (Hurt and Ravn, 2000). It has generally come to be accepted that true sportsmen are those who understand fair chase as a method of acting and as a normative set of formal and informal rules which imposes certain restraints upon a hunter that have to be observed (Reiger, 1975). The philosophy expounded in fair chase is that sport hunting is not just about killing an animal, but the sporting manner involved in hunting. Fair chase can therefore be defined as that ethical, sportsmanlike and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild big game in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper advantage over such animals (Reiger, 1975). Fair chase prescribes and proscribes behaviour that guides chasing and taking of quarry. Usually, hunters are forbidden to kill an animal while it is drinking or procreating; they should not make use of electronic gadgets or communications to attract, locate or observe game, or guide the hunter to such game; may not use dogs to hunt big

cats; may not use beam lights to daze animals at night and so on (Nesbitt, 1984; Riney, 1982).

(b) Humane treatment and shot placement to reduce unnecessary suffering

A deep assessment of literature shows that the second most basic principle of Trophy Sport hunting is humane treatment of quarry. Big game hunting for sport places a sense of ethical duty among hunters to treat animals more humanely before, during and after the hunts. This is why many sport hunting magazines and journals are inundated with articles aimed at educating hunters on shot placement on body parts of an animal in order to dispatch it "quickly and cleanly and with minimum of suffering" (Coogan, 2011: 167). According to a shot placement specialist who wrote under nom de plume Doctari (*Zimbabwe Hunter*, Apr, 1996), knowledge of an animal's anatomy is important for a hunter in order to determine his/her shot placement. Doctari, 1996 notes that the anatomy of the whole cat family of felines which includes lions and leopards differs from that of an elephant, buffalo and the antelope family in general. In the felines, the heart is situated well back in the chest cavity, quite some way behind the shoulder and front leg bones. In his article in the Zimbabwe Hunter (Doctari, 1995) noted that the heart's rearward thoracic position is further accentuated by the fact that the felines shoulders and front legs are positioned slightly further forward than those of the other game animals which are right at the front of the chest cavity (Figs. 2 and 3).

Shot placement specialists observe major differences between felines and other commonly sought out quarry such as buffalo, zebra, elephant and many others. For example, the buffalo's vital organs namely the brains, heart and lungs are well protected by the animal's boss; it's incredibly thick and tough skin and its broad, thick and hard overlapping ribs (Doctari, July 1995). Its skin is thickest in the frontal area as protection to its chest. The heart lies beneath, slightly above and in front of the elbow joint and beneath and above the forearm. The lungs are "D" shaped, and extend from the sternum to the dipping spinal column

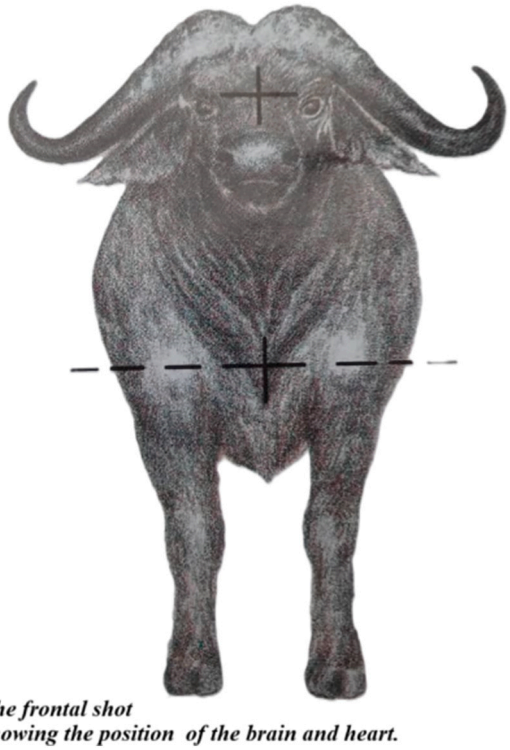

Fig. 2. Buffalo shot placement.
Source: Doctari (July 1995).

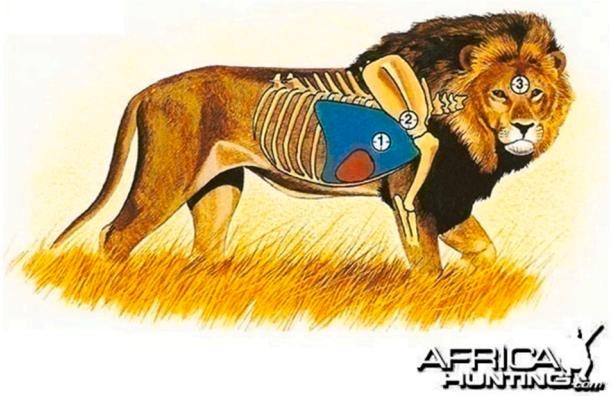

Fig. 3. Big cat shot placement.
Source: Africa Hunting (July, 2009).

(Doctari, July 1995). "A full broadside-on, through the vital triangle heart/lung shoulder shot is the one most often recommended for both buffalo and various antelope species, but with lion, such a shot will place the bullet well in front of the heart and only the small frontal 'V' shaped lobe of the lungs may be hit" (Doctari, Zimbabwe Hunter, 1997). Doctari emphasised that "a good shot in the right place is worth more than half a dozen in the wrong" (Doctari, *Zimbabwe Hunter*, July 1995: 18).

An important point to note is that humane treatment is a broad ethical subject which emphasises good and humane treatment of quarry before, during and after conducting the hunt for sport. During that time, animals should not be abused, harassed or traumatised while their ecology must be respected and not unnecessarily disrupted (Riney, 1982).

(c) Respect of host country rules

Sportsmen in trophy hunting are also expected to observe rules put in place in different countries to control trophy hunting. In Zimbabwe for example, hunting is not permissible in national parks. In Zimbabwe, Section 18 (2) of Statutory Instrument 362 of the Parks and Wildlife Act states clearly that "…no person shall, within the Parks and Wildlife Estate, hunt any animal by night or use any dazzling light for the purpose of hunting" (Heath, Feb 1999).

(d) Expertise to identify right species, sex and age of quarry

Among a host of things that a hunter should be able to do is to be able to identify species – their coloration, habits and the sounds they make. He must also be capable of distinguishing males from females and be able to determine their age, spoor, size of tusk, horns and other features (Van Heerden, 1999).

(e) Physical fitness and ecological knowledge

As a matter of principle, a hunter in trophy hunting for sport must be physically fit to undertake a hunt as well as being equipped with basic knowledge about the wilderness which constitutes his field of play.

(f) Records and measurements

The competitive aspect of trophy sport hunting which also forms part of the sport's ethics is its well-developed tradition of record taking and measurements. Big game is rated by size and records are periodically published by organisations such as the Boone and Crockett Club; the Safari Club International and Rowland Ward. According to the USAID Mid-Term Evaluation (1998), trophies are measured and recorded using the Rowland-Ward system in most places, but the Safari Club

International (SCI) system is gaining acceptance and may become the dominant one.

11. Demystification of key roles played by different personnel in trophy sport hunting

One of the most confusing aspects of trophy sport hunting is concerned with identifying and distinguishing roles played by different participants in administering and hunting of quarry. These roles evolved over time to facilitate conservation and sustainable utilisation of quarry that will not have adverse effects on the environment. Yet there is widespread lack of understanding among academics and laymen about who is who in the hunting industry and the roles played by usually gun-carrying local personnel including safari operators, professional hunters, trackers and many others who only participate in trophy sport hunting to assist the hunter or client. It is important for every sporting event that people should distinguish a sport participant or player from facilitators and administrators who will not be playing on the field. For example, in motor racing people can clearly distinguish those who service the racing car when it breaks down from the actual driver who will be competing and sitting on the steering in competition with other drivers. Thus, the man or competitor who will be sitting on the steering in trophy hunting for sport is the "client" who will also be referred to as *the sporting client* or *sporting tourist* throughout this study. Thus, in trophy sport hunting, the person that should be hogging the limelight as the sportsperson or player will be the "client", usually from abroad, who himself would be solely expected to shoot the quarry. The safari operator is the licensed local host who provides the playing ground for a client to play (hunt) while a professional hunter will be a local hunting and administrative expert who manages the sport hunting expedition. He ensures observance of conservation and environmental laws as well as safety for all people especially the visiting tourist.

An important point to bear in mind is that it is the well-trained professional hunter who manages the hunting expedition and ensure that all goes well for the "client" who will have paid for all costs to hunt an animal as well as fees to cater for his daily subsistence. If we can use the well-publicized hunting expedition that was involved in the shooting of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe as illustration, the sporting tourist or client was American Dentist Walter Palmer who paid US$55000 to the safari operator to hunt the lion (Clifton, 2015). Mr. Honest Ndlovu and Mr. Theo Bronkhorst were the local safari operator and local professional hunter respectively.

Confusion about roles played by local experts, vis-à-vis international clients in sport hunting, manifested more clearly in comments made by journalists, academics and even politicians at the aftermath of the shooting of Cecil the lion in 2015. In a scathing attack of trophy hunting that killed Cecil the lion, Magaisa (2021) showed confusion when he described clients such as Dr. Palmer as "glorified poachers… also called professional hunters", who hailed from Europe, America and Asia. In fact, many of the paying clients who come to hunt are not necessarily professional shooters or hunters. Hence the need to stay longer at a hunting camp so that they can be properly groomed before being accompanied to hunt. The well-trained professional hunter, according to Coogan (2011: 167) will not only provide "expertise and guidance for the hunt, camp, vehicle, gear, and equipment", but will also take the client in the field and bring him/her back in one piece.

The most important point to note with regards to roles played by different actors in trophy sport hunting is that none of all other participants in the hunting expedition except the "client" qualifies for the status of "player" or "sportsman". This means that in trophy sport hunting, the paying client is the only one who will be hunting to shoot and bag quarry. It is not the duty for the professional hunter to shoot for him/her. The role of the professional hunter seems well captured by Mark Butcher who said: "I am a Professional Hunter. I am not a person who hunts for sport. My clients are the sportsmen", (Butcher, 1999). The local professional hunter is there to guide, control and to protect the client when the actual hunt is conducted. He, like other personnel accompanying the client, can only shoot to stop a rogue animal that turns to charge at either the client or any other member of the expedition. Otherwise as a local expert of the physical and geographical bush where the hunt takes place and also being an expert of local policies and laws, it is the responsibility of the professional hunter (and safari operator where necessary) to ensure among other things that the hunting client observes the laws of the country.

This means that vicarious liability for violations of national conservation laws by an international "client" lies with the locally trained professional hunter and not the visiting sport hunting "client". This explains why the Government of Zimbabwe had no justifiable grounds for seeking to extradite or press charges on Walter Palmer (the hunting tourist) after he had shot and bagged Cecil and took his quarry back to his home country. Thus, Palmer was correct in saying: "I relied on the expertise of my local professional guides to ensure a legal hunt" (Feeney, 2015). Put in simple terms, it meant that Palmer had no legal liability for enticing a collared lion (Cecil) from Hwange National Parks (where hunting was not allowed) into Ndlovu's farm (where hunting could be allowed). As a hunting tourist from abroad, Palmer could not know the legal boundaries between Hwange National Parks and Ndlovu's farm. He also could not be expected to know that Cecil was a known collared lion that was not liable for hunting.

It must however not be misconstrued that a hunting client or sportsman should not be answerable to anyone for violating canons of the game. Just in the same way football as a sport is governed by associations at national and international level such as FIFA to enforce canons involving maladministration and foul play, similar structures must also be in place to discipline sport hunters and their administrators should they act in ways that bring the game of sport hunting into disrepute. However, a more careful scrutiny shows that there are no clearly established bodies to enforce sport hunting principles at both national and international level. Virtually all institutions in existence are membership organisations established mostly to protect the hunting, marketing and commercial interests of different participants in the field of trophy hunting. Besides, one does not have to be a member of these organisations to participate in the hunts.

12. Critical appraisal of trophy hunting operations

A critical appraisal of safari operations must start by acknowledging the existence of emotional opposition to hunting by organisations such as animal rights groups who have always opposed hunting. Their opposition was based not so much on the basis of objective assessment of the extent to which hunting operations fare in observing sport hunting and conservation principles, but on strong sentiments against killing of animals.

It therefore needs underscoring that the critical appraisal of trophy sport hunting that unfolds in this article is not inspired by animal protectionist sentiments against hunting. The departure point for the production of this article is the belief that wildlife utilisation, albeit through consumptive or non-consumptive tourism is essential. The article recognises the symbiotic relationship between conservation and development which places sustainable utilisation at the centre of anthropogenic activities. The cardinal objective of this critique is to evaluate the extent to which trophy hunting in practice adheres to sporting principles such as humane treatment of quarry; fair chase and others which were built on the basis of achieving conservation as an ultimate goal.

Can one talk of humane treatment of quarry in hunting?

Perhaps one of the most jugular criticisms ever levelled at trophy sport hunting regards claims made by hunters that sport hunting accords humane treatment to animals that are killed without their knowledge that they are participating in a sport in which they (animals) are being offered a fair chance of escaping. It must be noted that there has emerged at global level a big population particularly among the young generation of people who see nothing humane about gunning down

animals for sporting fun. If the word humane is taken to literally mean compassion, then the issue of compassion in gunning down an animal for fun becomes a contradiction. Even some seasoned hunters such as Mark Butcher admit that humaneness in hunting might be a farfetched ideal (Butcher, African Hunter, 1999). Quoted verbatim, Butcher (Feb, 1999: 43) said: "Sport hunting is not really a humane sport – full stop. We inflict pain on animals". However, Butcher reiterated the need for humane treatment of animals during hunting expeditions saying, "We are obligated to be as humane as possible and get the killing done quickly and efficiently" (Butcher, 1999: 43).

Pursuit of super-profits as reason for non-observance of sporting and conservation principles.

It would seem that a major reason that may force safari operators and professional hunters not to enforce conservation and sport hunting ethos are the huge amounts of moneys paid by clients to them. There is no doubt that hunting is big business in Southern Africa and safari operators invest heavily in it to generate as much profits as possible. Though varying with country and marketing abilities of safari hunting operators or outfitters, it is known that hunting clients, who come mostly from Europe and the U.S. pay trophy fees no less than US$20000 – US$40000 and daily subsistence fees of $1000 per day up to 21 days to hunt an elephant in Zimbabwe, and perhaps far more in other countries such as Tanzania where, if elephant could be hunted, "a $50 000 fee for a mature bull elephant with ivory of over 30 kg a side would not be unrealistic" (Hurt and Ravn, 2000: 307). The recently published figure of US$55000 paid by Palmer to shoot Cecil the lion (Clifton, 2015) shows how crazy the prices paid to safari operators are to hunt big game. One can therefore imagine how much a safari operator can generate from a typical full quota granting him rights to hunt over 40 species of animals with one species such as the elephant alone typically granting him 7 bulls per quota.

It may be worthwhile to take cognisance of comments made by W P Lyman in the Zimbabwe Hunter, (March 1997) to understand the commercial fiasco that sport hunting had turned into. In his abortive bid to call for the establishment of a committee to judge and control the ethics of hunters in Zimbabwe, Lyman, who was apparently an avid hunter, noted that the objective of making money had become a strong factor that rubbished the whole issue of ethical hunting (Lyman, 1997). According to Lyman, (1997: 34), "if you have sufficient money, you can buy as much hunting … and as many animals as you want". Lyman went on to demonstrate malpractices that afflicted the hunting industry in Zimbabwe and made an eye-catching statement towards the end of his article which suggested that those who broke hunting ethics in sport hunting seemed to outnumber those who chose to respect them. In Lyman's words, "As regards Ethics in the hunting profession, there will always be those who abide by them but I feel they are in the minority, and they are ruled by the money they can make at any cost" (Lyman, 1997:

A cursory study of most articles written and published by the hunters in their own in-house journals raise doubts on whether host safari operators or professional hunters can actually force a highly paying client to abide with sport hunting and conservation principles during hunting sessions. Despite Mark Butcher's insistence that he would not stand by and watch a paying client abuse sport hunting and conservation principles by using wrong ammunition or shooting animals from unacceptable long ranges (Butcher, 1999), many published articles show that big game trophy hunting in Africa since the dawn of colonialism perhaps up to the present, was always predominantly commercial, and not sporting. This is because there is nothing in literature that shows at what point in history in Africa that hunters who always hunted elephants for ivory, ever converged to renounce unscrupulous commercial harvesting of big game species in order to assume a new sporting dimension that would subscribe to a well agreed ethical code of conduct for sport hunting.

The chronicles by Eustice Sapieha (African Outfitter, May 2010) also eloquently demonstrate the point that hunting in Africa had never been transformed into a sporting discipline that obliged hunting clients to observe principles of fair chase. Put in simple terms, Sapieha's publication testifies to observations of heavy infiltration in the trophy hunting industry by thousands of tourist hunters mainly from abroad who, as observed by Coetzee M (Sept 2007), have no regard for fair chase principles even in their own countries of domicile.

13. Non sporting adventure: The way hunting always was

In his book entitled *The Way it Was*, Sapieha (African Outfitter, May 2010: 34) chronicled, among other things, his sad experiences of how safari operations were conducted in Africa in the past. In the book, Sapieha narrates how he hosted a number of international hunting clients some of whom were "not worth a shot at a noble animal". One European client hereby identified as *X*, was one of the most annoying trophy hunters Sapieha ever hosted. Not only did *X* assume the role of educating Sapieha on how to manage his safari operation, but was also an incompetent shooter and a very abusive client to the African trio of Maasai lads who Sapieha employed as guides. Even though the client had shot more animals than the two permitted on his official licence, the man was not so good a hunter when it came to the Big Five which included the buffalo and lion which he sought (Sapieha, May 2010). After having shot the buffalo which had to be finished off by Sapieha himself soon after *X* had sought refuge into the side-by bush), *X* later abandoned the hunt of the lion despite the fact that a zebra had already been shot and wasted to serve as bait for the sought out quarry. All this goes to show that sport hunting principles were not enforced in Africa before as they are probably not enforced now. It is also clear that clients, because of their paying power, always had their way in shooting more animals than they were authorised to bag.

It is also interesting to observe that Sapieha's dealings with the other hunter – who can be identified as *Y* in this paper, raises moral sport hunting questions of how far a paying client can be aided in journeying through difficult circumstances of the wilderness to hunt the quarry that a client can later claim. Though being a friendly client, *Y*'s hunting problem was his overweight of 300 or more pounds which made it hard for him to walk (Sapieha, May 2010). After the safari operator had organised a canoe to ferry the client across a river to shoot an elephant, there was no way to fit more than one buttock of him into one of the little dugouts (Sapieha, May 2010). The most rational solution was to tie two canoes together so that the client had to stick one buttock in each. After crossing the river, there emerged yet another challenge of how to get the client to walk to the spot where the elephants had been spotted. The burden yet again fell on the three Maasai guides who had to fasten a rope to the client's belt so that one of them pulled him from the front while another pushed him from the back (Sapieha, May 2010). Although in the end Y managed to shoot the elephant that Sapieha described as having been "waiting to be shot", the practices of aiding physically challenged clients raise questions of how far"fair chase" principles can be enforced where wealthy clients pay heavily to hunt.

While the Sapieha case illustrates lack of observance of sporting principles in hunts that were conducted in Africa before hunting was banned in some counties in East Africa, a further assessment of literature on past and current hunts is awash with many challenges that make it difficult for trophy hunting to pass for a sport. To begin with, there has never been any environmental concern raised over hundreds, if not thousands of wild animals such as the zebra, baboon, even hippo that are killed for the purpose of being used as bait to entice a lion or leopard to come and feed at a friendly spot where it can be easily shot by a client as quarry. The problem is that most of the animals used as bait are not accounted for through an authorised quota system to ensure environmental sustainability. This goes to show that a safari hunter can kill any animal outside the quota at any time without any obligation to account for it. The practice of using other animals as bait also raises questions on the principles of fair chase embedded in sport hunting. This is because fair chase principles are premised on testing the ability of a client or hunter to use his natural psychomotor skills to track, locate and shoot

quarry in its natural wild environment. The practice seems to contradict Jose Y Gasset's principles of fair chase (Hurt and Ravn, 2000) in that a leopard for example has to be induced by a carcass of zebra to move out of its natural camouflage to come at a more open and convenient place for a hunter to shoot it. Such inducement cannot in all fairness be interpreted as giving an animal a fair chance of escaping.

Fair chase has also been defeated by the wide use of forbidden gadgets and vehicles which is also rampant when hunting the African elephant and other species. In his contribution on the theme of "Hunting Ethics versus Big Bucks", Duncan Wood reminded fellow hunters about gross violations of sport hunting principles that became rampant in Zimbabwe. According to (Wood, 1999), elephants in sport hunting in Zimbabwe, just like lions and leopards were being shot using deadly flashy lights dubbed "bulala lamps". Wood (1999: 37) also observed that sport hunting was now characterised by use of "tape recordings of squealing pigs being placed at lion and leopard baits, drums of molasses being put on the edges of National Park boundaries to entice elephant out into the hunting areas and aircraft being used to spot game which are in radio contact with hunters on the ground" (Wood, 1999: 37). All these are indications that "fair chase and ethical hunting is taking a back seat at the expense of the mighty US dollar" (Wood, 1999: 37).

Celebratory practices of abuse of animals in articles posted by hunters themselves in their own in-house publications show a determination by hunters to want to abuse wild animals as much as possible. An article written by E P Joseph entitled "Shoot him in the arse" published in the Zimbabwe Hunter, Vol.2 No.4, (1997: 34) in which a zebra was shot right on its anus by a hunter suggests an attitude of cold negation of principles of humane treatment of animals. And as if that is not problematic enough, trophy hunting also seems to have no precautionary measures put in place to prevent unnecessary suffering in animals shot at by unskilled first-time hunters during their shooting lessons. Lack of such provisions has serious environmental consequences because many animals may be injured because of lack of proficiency by learners who might lack dexterity to target vital parts that kill animals instantly. A 60-year-old huntress, Vivian Pearce of Tucson, was quite open and hilarious that she had been accorded a chance to shoot a hippo in Zambia when she had never hunted or used a firearm before. The hippo was needed by her husband to use as bait to kill a leopard. She then proceeded to shoot a buffalo whose body they failed to locate even after a long search that stretched for days. This was clearly in violation of the basic conservation and sporting ethic which states that when one wounds something, he/she has "a legal and moral responsibility to find it and finish it off" (Ganyana, Feb 1999: 14).

It needs observing that nervousness is a well-known factor that affects proficiency in shot placement even among seasoned hunters. It is therefore not only unethical but also extremely negligent and illogical that hunting beginners such as Vivian Pearce should be allowed to start their career by shooting a dangerous animal such as a buffalo which evokes far more nervousness than many other kinds of animals. What is even more baffling is that after failing to locate the buffalo she had previously shot, Pearce was allowed yet again on her last day of expedition to shoot another buffalo whose body they only discovered after an exhaustive search (Pearce, 2011). All these confirm that talk of humane treatment and good shot placement to kill animals instantly and avoid unnecessary suffering in them (Coogan, 2011) is often mere public relations gimmick which is hardly enforced in practice.

14. Ecological challenges for targeting male animals

Another problematic issue often raised by critics of trophy sport hunting relates to the well-known practice of selecting males for trophy. The logic of doing so seems to derive from human experience in management of livestock where a farmer would prefer to shoot an excess of male surplus to leave females needed to maintain adequate reproduction (Riney, 1982). Other than the problem often faced by hunters to distinguish males from females in some species, it has been observed that the tendency to select males with good trophy often have ecological ramifications that are often overlooked by the trophy hunting industry. Concerns have been raised by Biologists about undesirable evolutionary outcomes that may arise from the killing of "prime" individual animals which are typically males that exhibit a desirable trait, like a large mane in a lion (Traill and Owen-Smith, 2015). According to Traill and Owen-Smith, 2015, the concern has been that hunting may cause inbreeding, or drive rare species' populations in isolated protected areas to the brink of extinction. As Fitter (1986) pointed out, various deer species have been transported the world over, either to augment stocks or to improve their genetic basis, because of the deer hunter's inveterate habit of shooting the males with the finest antlers, which leaves only those with poor antlers to pass their genes to the next generation.

It has also been observed that killing of males can have negative effects on the conservation of a species as this tends to upset a population's sex ratio (Campbell, 1998). WWF observed in the case of a tiger (*Felis tigris*), which is arguably the same for the lion, that "when a male is killed, the result may be an intensive struggle among other males to take over the territory, during which cubs get killed and breeding is disrupted for a lengthy period, possible for several years" (WWF Species Status Report: Tigers in the Wild, 1999). The situation is further compounded when sport hunters show no ethical or ecological remorse in targeting males in large cats while an animal is at its weakest point of mating. In his writings, Hunter Joe Coogan (2011) stated: "I knew our chances of bagging an older, cagier lion increased dramatically by finding him 'drunk on love,' consumed by the amorous affections of a lioness."

Perhaps the shooting of Cecil the lion in 2015, which had to be lured out from its protected zone where hunting was not allowed, provides concrete and irrefutable testimony that the males of the animal had been overhunted and endangered in safari hunting areas where hunting was permitted. As argued by Wits scholars Traill and Owen-Smith (2015), the killing of Cecil represented more of a conservation issue than hunting. The authors observed that at the age of 13 or so, Cecil was far too old and had reached senescence, meaning that the animal had passed the normal breeding age for males in its species. The reason why it was being kept as breeding male for the pride for such a long time suggests that the male lions at their prime state of mating at the age of around 5 or so years had probably been wiped out through trophy hunting in lands neighbouring the Hwange National Park. Traill and Owen-Smith (2015) noted that "Oxford University researchers who had been following Cecil's life performance reported that 72% of the males they collared within the national park had been killed by trophy hunters, and 30% of the males shot were under four years old."

Another ecological challenge arises from the difficulty during hunts to distinguish males from females. This results in females being killed in error. Hilary Bradt (1989) noted how difficult it is to distinguish males from females in the spotted hyena (*Crocuta Crocuta*). This is because in the species, females also appear to possess male genitals, hence the popular myth that the spotted hyena is hermaphrodite (Bradt, 1989). Another animal whose sex is difficult to distinguish is the Red Duiker (*Cephalophini natalensis*). According to Stuart and Stuart (1999), both male and female of the species have short horns which slope backwards at the same angle with the face. A hunter's determination to carefully distinguish sexes in the animal is further compounded by the diving habits of the animal which may not give a hunter ample time to use binoculars before shooting. Duikers, whose Afrikaans name means "divers", are well-known for their ability to quickly dive away from danger as soon as they detect presence of an enemy (Gould, 2009). This is why hunters may opt to shoot it on sight before clearly establishing its sex. The problem is confirmed in an article entitled "Duiker Dilemma" by Russ Gould (2009) in which the very experienced hunter ended up shooting a female Red duiker which he mistook for a male because she carried horns.

However, the problem of distinguishing sexes also extends to some large-bodied species of the antelope including the gemsbok (*Oryx gazelle*) which is horned in both the male and female (Estes, 1993). Hunters

also face challenges in distinguishing sexes in the hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), in which both sexes also carry horns (Stofberg, 2001). It is also hard to spot the penis sheath of male because of tall grasses that often conceal the animal's under parts in its favourable grassy habitats. Even the Southern Buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), which "is Africa's most popular dangerous big game animal" presents problems of distinguishing bulls from cows when the animal is spotted foraging in its thick vegetation cover at a distance (Doctari, 1997).

All these problems raise pertinent questions of whether sporting principles for big game hunting which require hunters to target certain sexes for quarry are carefully formulated in line with conservation principles that maintain natural balance between males and females in their natural ecosystems. But far more significantly, the question that seems to arise is whether hunters can be afforded enough opportunity during hunting expeditions to distinguish sexes in many species of animals before being tempted to pull the trigger.

15. Conservation catastrophe in the hunting industry during Zimbabwe's 2000 land reform program

If reports and articles that inundated media and hunting journals are anything to go by, then there was never a worse period for hunting and wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe than the land reform period which began in 2000. Having discovered how lucrative the trophy hunting industry was, top politicians, who themselves were in charge of Rural District Councils (RDCs} and national parks began to secretly push for their own safari companies to take over most hunting contracts granted by RDCs (Interview with RDC Official). Arguing that they were still beginners and poor, top politicians who entered the hunting industry for the first time immediately stopped paying the little dividends that communities used to receive, while pressing national parks to double their quotas for high paying species such as the elephant to maximize their gains. For instance, according to a former RDC councillor interviewed, where one RDC used to be granted 7 male elephants per hunting quota, a minister, who typically put a white hunter on the front of his safari company for cover and marketing convenience, demanded an increase of male elephants per single quota to 13 animals while that of other species including the lion, buffalo, zebra, impala, kudu, eland and many others doubled.

According to an NGO representative interviewed, the conservation situation was further compounded by the economic crisis that gripped Zimbabwe during its turbulent land reform period which made it virtually impossible for decades to carry out population surveys to ascertain the conservation status of all key species including the elephant and lion that were popular targets for trophy hunting. It is often overlooked that the Zimbabwean government had long lost capacity to carry out population surveys for mega fauna before the outbreak of the land reform in 2000. The country used to depend on USAID funding of CAMPFIRE which enabled the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to carry out population surveys for wildlife on behalf of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (USAID, 1998). But as well articulated in the USAID Mid-term evaluation, by 1998, WWF had long complained that the service was too risky and costly for them to continue to provide (USAID, 1998: 85). This means that even before the lapse of USAID funding by 2002, the Zimbabwean government had long lost its capacity to conduct proper ground and aerial surveys to determine conservation status of the country's fauna to justify doubled quotas for hunting that top politicians demanded for their safari companies throughout the land reform period and beyond (Fig. 4).

And in what seemed to be a bid to help top politicians to avail animals to clients for huge and unsustainable trophy hunting quotas they continued to obtain for safari areas where populations of game species were virtually depleted, the Parks and Wildlife Authority announced in 2011 that they intended to raise funds for the authority by hunting in protected areas where hunting, according to conservation laws of the country, was not allowed. The decision riled many serious conservationists, including chairmen of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, Mr. Johnny Rodrigues (Mr X Files, Impisi Issue, 2013) and the Zambezi Society, Mr. Dick Pitman (*African Hunter*, Askari Issue: 48) among others. And as if international hunting clients were heartless aliens without any scruples for wildlife conservation and sporting principles, Rodrigues sounded out the most terrifying news saying: "We are also hearing unconfirmed reports that paying overseas hunters are once again, as did happen in previous years despite denials by the wildlife authorities, being allowed inside Hwange National Park to hunt" (Mr X Files, Impisi Issue, 2013).

It must be noted that the invasion of the trophy hunting industry by top politicians created so much alarm and despondence in the conservation sector considering that the ministers responsible were the ones to whom RDCs and national parks reported. Don Heath and Ira Larivers both wrote in several issues of the *African Hunter* acknowledging the destructive effects of land invasion on the wildlife industry by top politicians before and during the course of the land reform period. While Heath (2000: 3) blamed politicians for over-hunting to "'wipe out' quotas", Larivers (African Hunter, Jesse Issue: 4) mourned on how corruption had established itself in the Zimbabwean government where "unlicensed or irregularly licensed safari operators" were taking clients on hunts in the country, often within the Parks and Wildlife Estates. It

Fig. 4. Population surveys for the elephant and other mega-fauna essential for sustainable hunting.
Source: CAMPFIRE information Resource Centre.

also emerged that the communities, who used to receive benefits from CAMPFIRE before top politicians had taken over and stopped paying their dividends, resorted to sabotaging conservation efforts of the country. The sabotage manifested when communities took to cyanide poisoning of wildlife which killed more than 100 elephants as well as an unspecified number of "lions, hyenas, vultures, buffalo and kudu" in Hwange National Park (Larivers, 2016: 1).

One animal that was heavily poached in a syndicate allegedly involving top politicians was the rhinoceros. With the value of rhino horns staggering as high as US$60000 per kg in Asian markets", (Mr X Filles, 2010), the rhino was heavily targeted for poaching in Zimbabwe's national parks to a point of a crisis. Dzingirai et al. (2014) noted that about 22 black and white rhinos were poached in 2010 alone. According to The Mr. X Files (2010), in 2009 when rhino poaching reached unprecedented levels during the land reform era, "a Chinese national was arrested at a roadblock with rhino horn, and he implicated three cabinet ministers". According to The Mr. X Files (2010), "The police investigated, but the docket was mysteriously lost and the investigating officer transferred." It did not take long for the news on Zimbabwe's conservation crisis to spread to the international scene. A report published by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), showed that since 2006 to the time of compilation of the report in 2010, 95 % of all poaching recorded on the continent of Africa occurred in Zimbabwe and South Africa (African Hunter, Vol.16 No. 3, 2010: 33). This led the Tropical Game Commission (TGC) to issue a directive calling on the Zimbabwean Government to "stop destruction and mismanagement of its wildlife" (African Hunter, Vol.16 No. 3, 2010: 32).

16. Concluding remarks

To wrap it up, the question of whether big game trophy hunting is a real sport or not has been comprehensively tackled in this paper from both a 'theoretical' and a 'practical' dimension. From a theoretical dimension, the paper probed literature and established that even though there is no universal criterion to define a sport is, a recreational event would distinguish itself as a sport if it has an established body of principles or canons, which players must follow in order to play, and if necessary, to compete and win. After coming up with a 3P diagnostic tool to define and distinguish between three terms namely ***trophy hunting***, ***sport hunting*** and ***safari hunting*** that are often used synonymously, the study observed that big game trophy hunting, which should rather be termed trophy sport hunting to distinguish it from other kinds of recreational sport hunts, has guiding principles that revolves around fair chase and humane killing of animals.

But notwithstanding the outcry from animal rights groups and some members of the green movement who raise fundamental questions on the morality and environmental soundness of shooting wild animals for the sporting fun of it, a closer examination on the practice of trophy hunting in Africa has casted so much doubt on whether the so-called principles of fair chase and humane treatment of quarry among others are actually observed in the sport of Kings. This is because there does not seem to be in place a universally applicable code of ethics and institutional mechanisms that bind and monitor all hunting clients and their hosts to observe hunting principles. The situation is further compounded by the secretive nature that shrouds trophy hunting activities which are neither officiated by referee nor opened for the viewing pleasure and observance of spectators. The secrecy does not only conceal what appears to be fragrant abuse of conservation and sport hunting canons, but also serve as a veil that protects safari operators from commercial hunting and abuse of animals which forced countries such as Kenya to ban hunting. No wonder the in-house magazines for hunters themselves are inundated with open declarations and celebrations of transgressions of fair chase and humane treatment of animals which often go without condemnation and punishment for fear of upsetting a paying client. Violations include among others the use of forbidden methods to take quarry; aiding physically challenged clients to hunt; mistaking females for males; shooting some animals like zebras on sensitive parts; shooting male lions while the3 + y are mating and many other deplorable things that seem forbidden under sporting ethics and etiquettes of big game trophy hunting for sport.

All malpractices highlighted that bedevils the wildlife industry especially uncontrolled hunting and poaching that occurred during the land reform period in Zimbabwe should serve as a big wakeup on the need for international intervention to fix the hunting industry so that sport hunting principles are not only well formulated but also enforced. The symposium that was held in London in October 2006 to, among other things, try to come up with a code of conduct for trophy sport hunting (Coetzee, 2007) is a step in the right direction to cure the ills that have brought the sport hunting industry into disrepute thus raising questions whether hunting should qualify the status of a real sport. This is important to ensure that those who choose to play and compete in a game of shooting animals for recreational fun, can only win by sustainable and humane means. Otherwise if hunters cannot win by sustainable and humane treatment of wild animal in fair chase, then conservation cannot win at all.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Stephen Kasere: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The author solemnly declare that there is no conflict of interest arising from the writing this article.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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