



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

Private Bag 13306
Windhoek

Tel. no. 061 – 284 2840
Fax. No. 061 – 22 99 36

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT ON THE RECENT INCIDENT WHERE 172 SHEEP WERE KILLED BY LIONS IN ERONGO REGION

A report was received by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism on the 15 January 2018 that one hundred and seventy two sheep were allegedly killed by lions at Brandberg, Erongo Region near the White Lady Lodge.

Following this report, the Ministry immediately deployed officials to the scene to verify and investigate the incident.

Our preliminary investigations shows that two (2) lions have been seen in the area close to the lodge and are suspected to have killed the one hundred and seventy two sheep. Lions have however established themselves in the Brandberg area over the years coming from the Ugab River system. The area is therefore a good wildlife habitat with tourism activities on the increase.

The 172 sheep killed are part of the 600 to 700 sheep kept and owned by the owners of the White Lady Lodge in an area where they operate a tourism business. While we are concerned by so many sheep being killed by wild animals in one night, we are shocked about lodge operators keeping livestock in a tourism business area and very close to their lodge. This is a wildlife habitat area where the lions should be roaming. We have also confirmed that the lodge owners were assisted by some people in the area to construct lion proof kraals for the protection of the livestock but these kraals have been built to low standard and poor quality which could not prevent this incident. We advise that all predator proof kraals should be built with specific standards and specifications, which are available

and can be provided by the Directorate of Wildlife and National Parks, Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

In this regard, officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism remain in the area for further monitoring of this pride and possible further action to be determined if necessary.

In order for the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to manage human lion conflict, measures are being put in place and implemented in accordance with the North West Human Lion Conflict Management Plan and the National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management. This includes improved livestock husbandry, early warning systems and establishing rapid response units.

Despite our efforts to manage human wildlife conflict with the objective of bringing those to sustainable and acceptable levels, it appears that human lion conflict incidences are on the rise. High rainfall variability associated with the recently experienced drought influence the distribution of predators and prey species, as well as the movements of people and their livestock, and we see conflict incidences in areas where they are not expected. We therefore request the public to be vigilant and report any sighting of these predators in areas where they are not expected, to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism or the Conservancy offices.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism has a role and function to support local communities and farmers to develop and implement appropriate human wildlife conflict management and mitigation plans. However, it is the responsibility of all citizens, farmers, organizations and organs of State that engage in land uses that can be affected by human wildlife conflict to take measures to avoid such conflict.

Furthermore, this incident should not be linked to the lions that the Ministry translocated to the Erongo Mountain Rhino Sanctuary. Those lions are still in Erongo Mountains and the capturing operation is currently underway.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism takes issues of Human Wildlife Conflict Management seriously and will endeavor to ensure that such cases are minimized and managed in the most effective manner.

Romeo Muyunda
MET Spokesperson