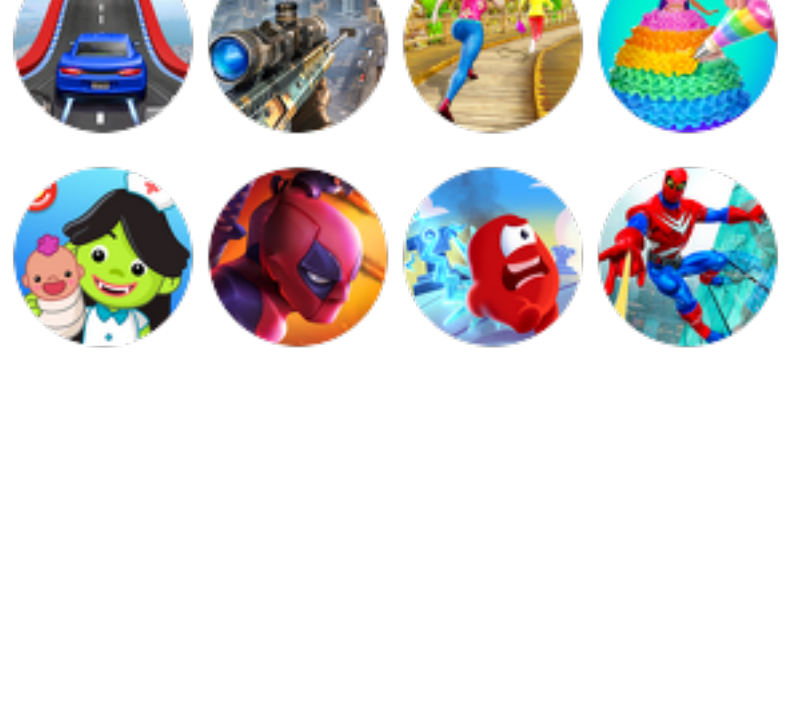
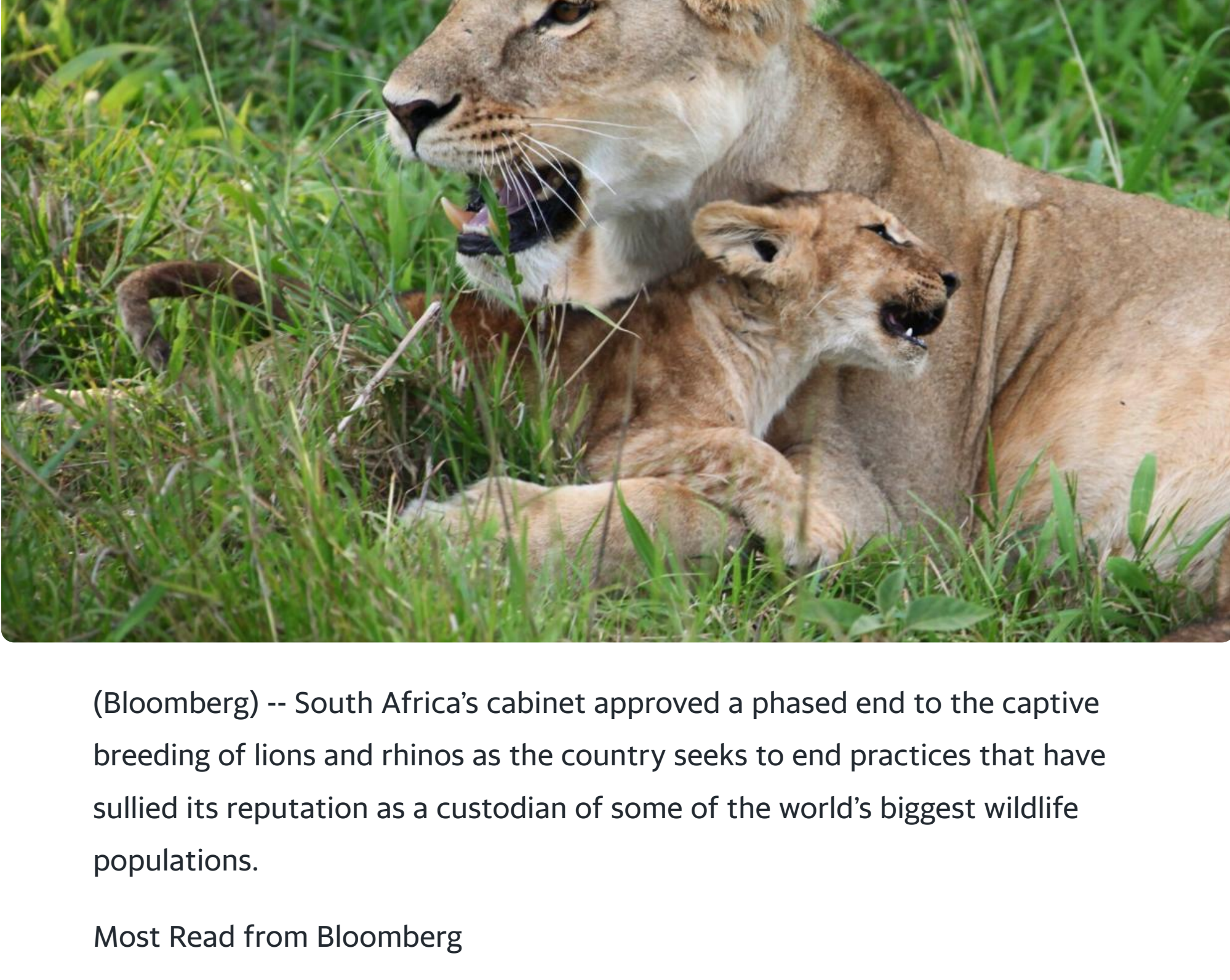


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Lion and Rhino Breeding Ban Approved by South African Cabinet

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(Bloomberg) -- South Africa's cabinet approved a phased end to the captive breeding of lions and rhinos as the country seeks to end practices that have sullied its reputation as a custodian of some of the world's biggest wildlife populations.

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Plans to end lion breeding began more than a decade ago as the practice of releasing tame big cats into small enclosures and having them shot by hunters for a fee spawned the term 'canned hunting' and attracted international condemnation.

More recently, the collapse of a rhino breeding program left the fate of an eighth of the world's southern white rhinos, or 2,000 of the beasts, in limbo before their gradual relocation was funded by billionaires.

The cabinet also agreed to limit hunting of leopards and hold off an a push to resume the international trade of elephant ivory. The rhino and lion breeding bans have been opposed by the operators of wildlife ranches.

"South Africa's priority is to secure the survival of species in the wild," Barbara Creecy, South Africa's environment minister, said in a statement on Thursday. "This policy position has been developed to clarify policy intent in respect of conservation and sustainable use of white and black rhinoceroses, lions, elephants and leopards."

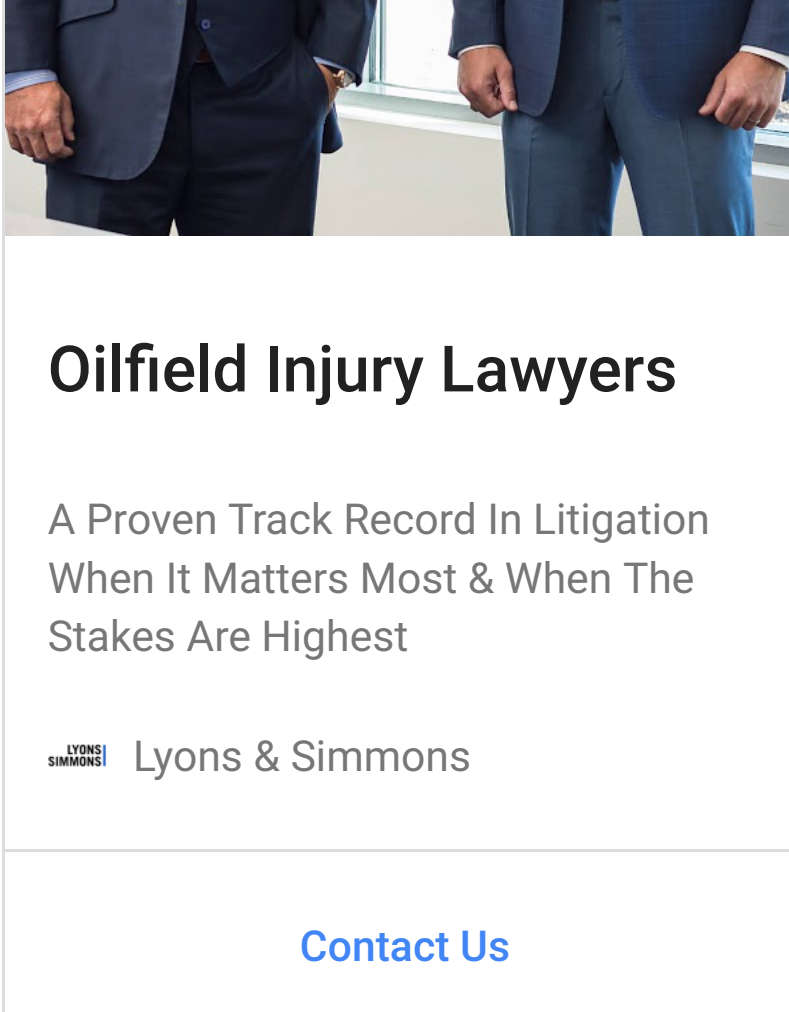
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