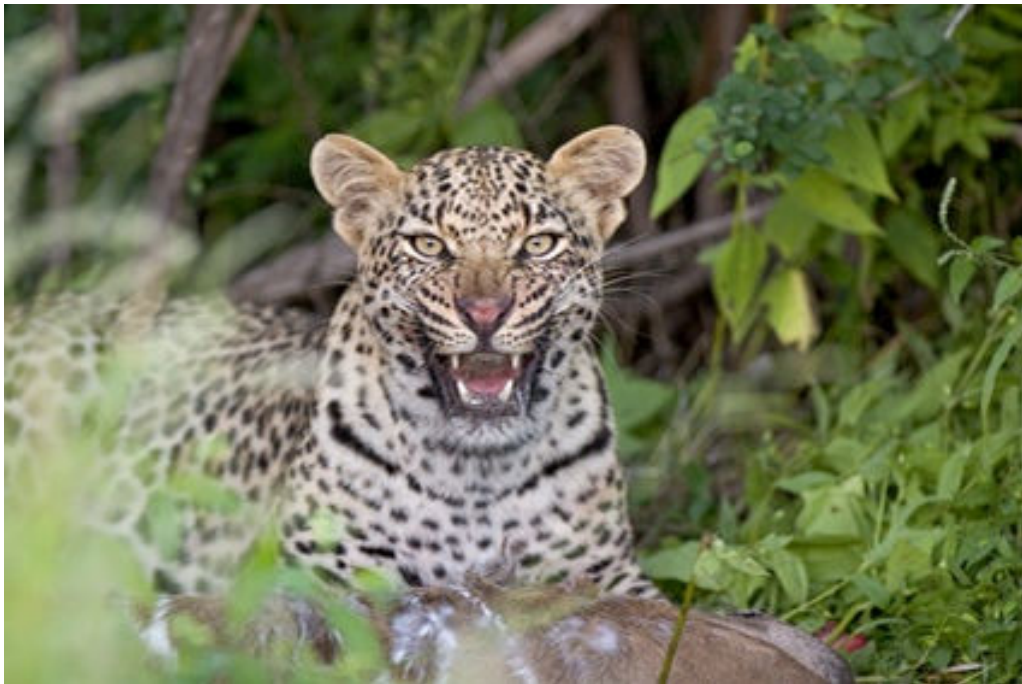


ZIMBABWE'S REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES (CITES) LEOPARD (*PANTHERA PARDUS*) QUOTA



**ZIMBABWE PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY (ZPWMA)**

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Decisions on Leopard adopted at the CITES 17th Conference of Parties (CoP 17)

Decisions taken at the 17th CITES Conference of Parties in South Africa in October 2016 requested range states to review their current leopard quotas “and consider whether these quotas are still set at levels which are non-detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild”. The table below shows the CoP 17 Decisions 17.114-17.117 regarding the quotas for leopards that were discussed and adopted in 2016.

This document contains Zimbabwe’s response to those decisions.

Table 1. Decisions 17.114-17. 117 on Quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use

17.114	Quotas for leopard hunting trophies	<i>Directed to Parties with quotas established under Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP16)</i>	Parties, which have quotas, established under Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP16) on Quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use are requested to review these quotas, and consider whether these quotas are still set at levels which are non-detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild, and to share the outcomes of the review and the basis for the determination that the quota is not detrimental, with the Animals Committee at its 30th meeting.
17.115		<i>Directed to the Animals Committee</i>	The Animals Committee shall consider the information submitted by the relevant range States under Decision 17.114 and any other relevant information, and, if necessary, make any recommendations to the range States and to the Standing Committee relating to the review.
17.116		<i>Directed to the Secretariat</i>	The Secretariat shall, subject to external funding, support the reviews to be undertaken by range States, referred to in Decision 17.114, upon request by a range State.
17.117		<i>Directed to the Standing Committee</i>	The Standing Committee should consider any recommendations of the Animals Committee made in accordance with Decision 17.115, and make its own recommendations, as appropriate, for consideration at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Background

Leopards are an important component of naturally functioning ecosystems in Africa. However, because of their nocturnal habits and cryptic behaviour, a lack of data on population dynamics and distribution impedes informed conservation of the species and its habitats. The global population of the species has been recently upgraded from ‘near threatened’ to ‘vulnerable’ on the IUCN ‘red list’, largely due to uncertainty over population numbers and loss of leopard habitat across the species’ range. Furthermore, leopards (usually males) in some countries including Zimbabwe are hunted for sport and exported as hunting trophies each year.

Leopards are found inside and outside Protected areas in Zimbabwe. Hunting of leopards in Zimbabwe is regulated by national laws and offtake quotas as well as a CITES Resolution (Res. Conf. 10.14 (rev. CoP 16), and is carefully monitored by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) Scientific Service, which is the Scientific Authority of Zimbabwe. The hunting generates revenues and conservation incentives for the protection of leopard habitat and prey base and the reduction of conflicts between leopards and rural communities. Accordingly, leopard hunting has been an important part of the conservation of leopards in Zimbabwe.

Conservation Status of Leopards

Worldwide, leopards are allegedly thought to be declining in large parts of their range due to a number of factors. The greatest threats are identified as habitat loss and fragmentation, and persecution from increasing human populations. Secondary threats include illegal wildlife trade, harvesting for ceremonial use of skins, prey base declines, and poorly managed hunting. The impact of these threats is acknowledged to vary by region. (Stein et al. 2016). The recent IUCN ‘red list’ assessment described the leopard populations of Southern Africa, which includes Zimbabwe, as the “healthiest of their entire range.” The red list also acknowledged that ungulate populations (leopard prey) have increased in Southern Africa.

The leopard is listed under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Species listed under CITES Appendix I are species for which international trade for non-commercial purposes is permitted but is strictly controlled by a permit system. The Conference of the Parties (CoP) may also establish export quotas for non-commercial trade that are recognised as not detrimental to the species by Resolution or Decision. Trade in hunting trophies is permitted but is regulated and subject to the conditions set out in the quota resolution or decision. Export quotas for leopard hunting trophies and skins for personal use are specified in a Resolution of the CoP, Resolution Conf. 10.14 (Rev. CoP16). The leopard quota system was introduced at the fourth meeting of the Conference of Parties (Gaborone 1983) with Resolution Conf. 4.13. Zimbabwe was one of the first countries to obtain an export quota under this resolution. That quota was increased to 500 export tags in 1992, which is the current quota.

In Zimbabwe, the leopard population is believed to have a wide occurrence and to be healthy and stable. Although the leopard is difficult to census because of its cryptic and nocturnal nature, the population is monitored by a number of projects, as described below. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the species in the country.

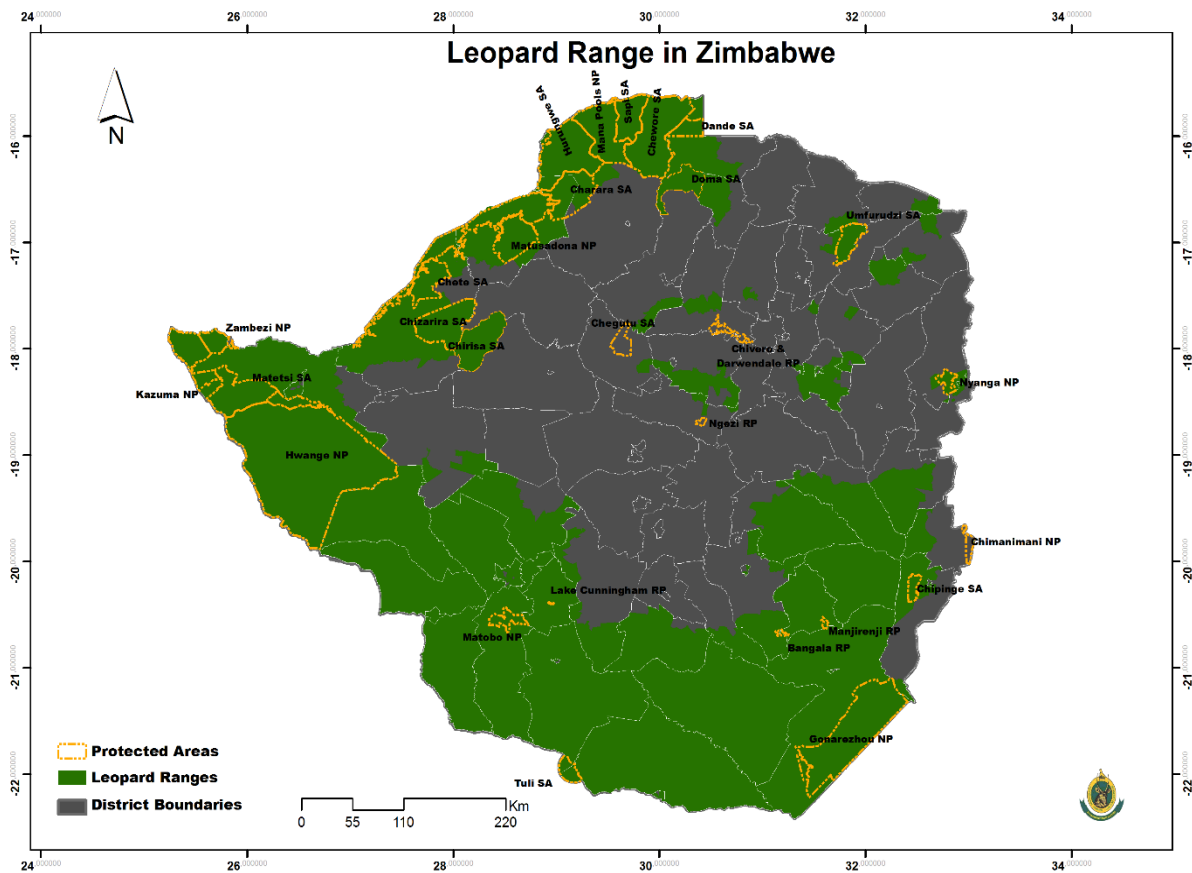


Figure 1 Leopard Distribution in Zimbabwe

In 2013 A national leopard survey was completed by the WildCru (University of Oxford) research team in conjunction with ZPWMA and the Zambezi Society. The national survey involved camera trapping and spoor surveys along 14,400 km of transects, at 28 sites comprising 48,123 km² or 12% of the country (Figure 2). The result of that survey suggested that key factors influencing the density of leopards include the level of human disturbance, the region, the density of spotted hyaenas *Crocuta crocuta* and the density of lions *Panthera leo*. The survey results suggested that population densities in Zimbabwean protected areas were similar to those reported in protected areas elsewhere in comparable habitat (Bailey 2005, Balme et al. 2010), but the species occurs at lower densities in areas that have been impacted by human disturbance.

In Zimbabwe high densities of leopards occur in protected areas which are composed mostly of the National parks and Safari areas as shown in figure 2. Leopard populations are also high in private conservancies such as Bulye and Save Valley Conservancies, where the populations are well-studied.

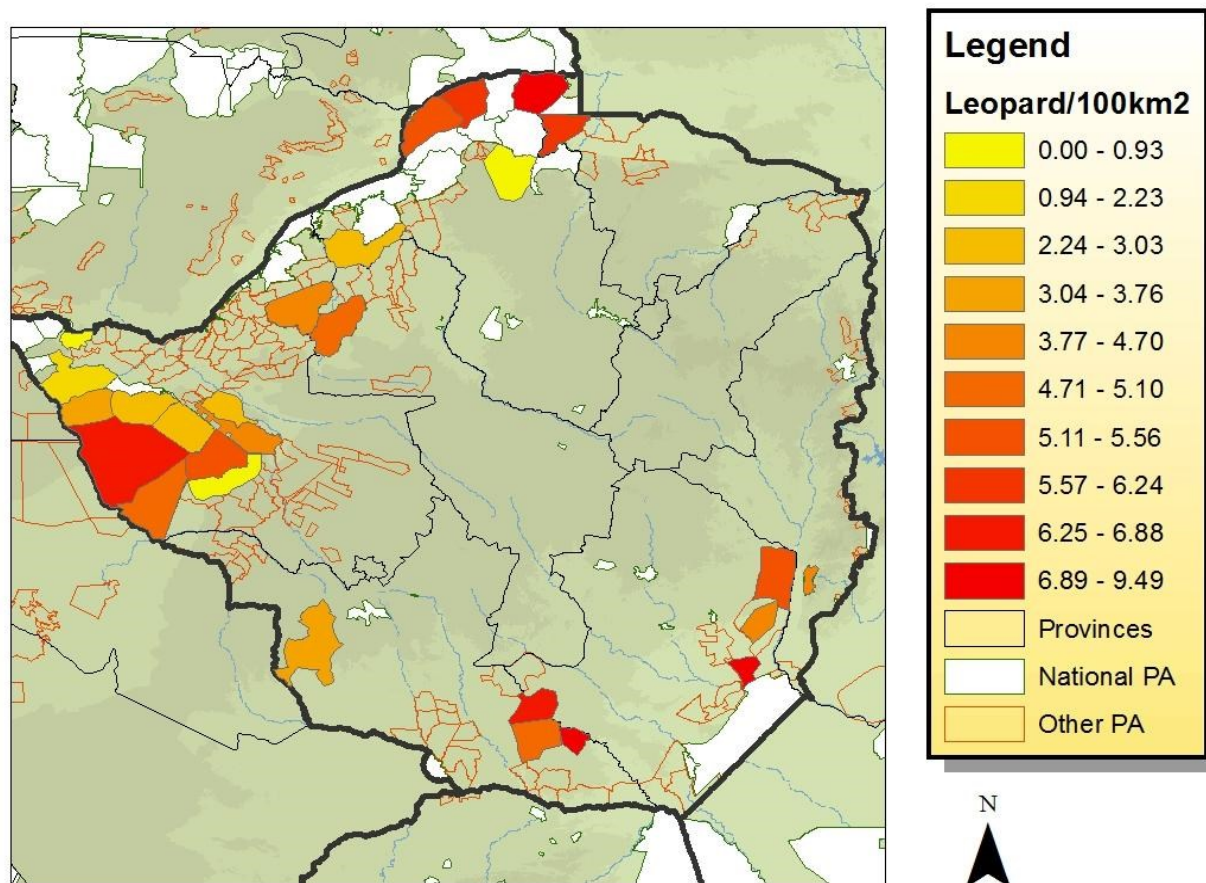


Figure 2. Results of the national leopard survey (surveys were restricted to the areas shaded in yellow, orange and red)

Leopard Monitoring Projects in Zimbabwe

ZPWMA in association with Zimbabwe Professional Hunting Guides Association (ZPHGA)'s Special Projects Committee and Safari Operators Association of Zimbabwe (SOAZ), has concluded the first phase of a new project aimed at establishing a new benchmark population estimation for Zimbabwe's leopard (*Panthera pardus*). With guidance from an independent researcher and invaluable assistance from donors and volunteers, the team has put in motion an action plan to cover the known range of leopard in Zimbabwe using hard ground work in the form of spoor transects, independent data submissions in the form of trail cam pictures, historic quota and off-take trends and scientific interpretation of these to ultimately produce a document that can be used by stakeholders, to effectively manage the future of the species.

In addition to the new ongoing survey, there are several projects that have been done and are still ongoing to monitor leopard populations:

- A detailed study of leopard population ecology and impact of trophy hunting in Save Valley Conservancy (Dusty Joubert)
- A comparison of leopard trophy size across the country (Phumuzile Sibanda, NUST student)- BSc study

- Leopard population density and home range size in the Mangwe District of Zimbabwe (Tanith Grant) – MSc study
- Detailed ecology of leopard ecology in Bulyebe Valley Conservancy (Byron duPreez)- PhD study
- Use of hunt return forms to monitor offtake at the national level and compilation of historical data (R. Mandisodza-Chikerema, ZPWMA)
- Management of leopard populations in the Gwanda district of Zimbabwe: Matching benefit to cost and mitigating human-leopard conflict (Marwell Zimbabwe Trust and Gwanda Rural District Council)
- Leopard trophy monitoring – ZPWMA and Panthera

Aims and Objectives of Studies

- Undertake a research and management project to estimate leopard populations
- Measure the impacts of trophy hunting on leopard behavioural ecology and population dynamics
- Provide public information and disseminate findings and information
- Produce survey manuals and train personnel in predator monitoring

Leopard Quota Setting and Utilization

Zimbabwe has an annual CITES export quota of 500 leopards (hunting trophies and skins) for personal use. Zimbabwe has always abided by this quota. Zimbabwe's CITES export quota is not the same as the national hunting quotas set in an annual participatory quota-setting process of stakeholder workshops and ZPWMA oversight. As shown in Figure 2, Zimbabwe's adaptive quota setting system uses inputs from monitoring data and input from a variety of stakeholders including ZPWMA field and research staff, local communities, hunting operators, and non-government biologists or researchers. The aim of these workshops is to produce adaptive and sustainable offtakes which benefit both the wildlife resource and the stakeholders.

Leopard quotas are allocated to state and private land-owners through a quota allocation system done once a year. The participatory method is used where all stakeholders gather and deliberate on sport hunting quotas (using best available information), which includes population data, trophy quality data, consideration of habitat and land tenure factors, and consideration of a range of additional inputs.

The national hunting quota may be set higher than the CITES export quota for a number of reasons, including to facilitate marketing and address human-wildlife conflict in communal areas, among other reasons. However, hunting offtakes are always much lower than the national quota or CITES export quota.

Overall quotas allocated and actual offtake have been reduced in recent years as a precautionary measure. This precautionary approach demonstrates Zimbabwe's commitment to sustainable hunting. The suggested quotas must also be recommended by ZPWMA and then approved by the Minister.

Figure 3 below shows the quota setting process for trophy hunting offtakes in Zimbabwe.

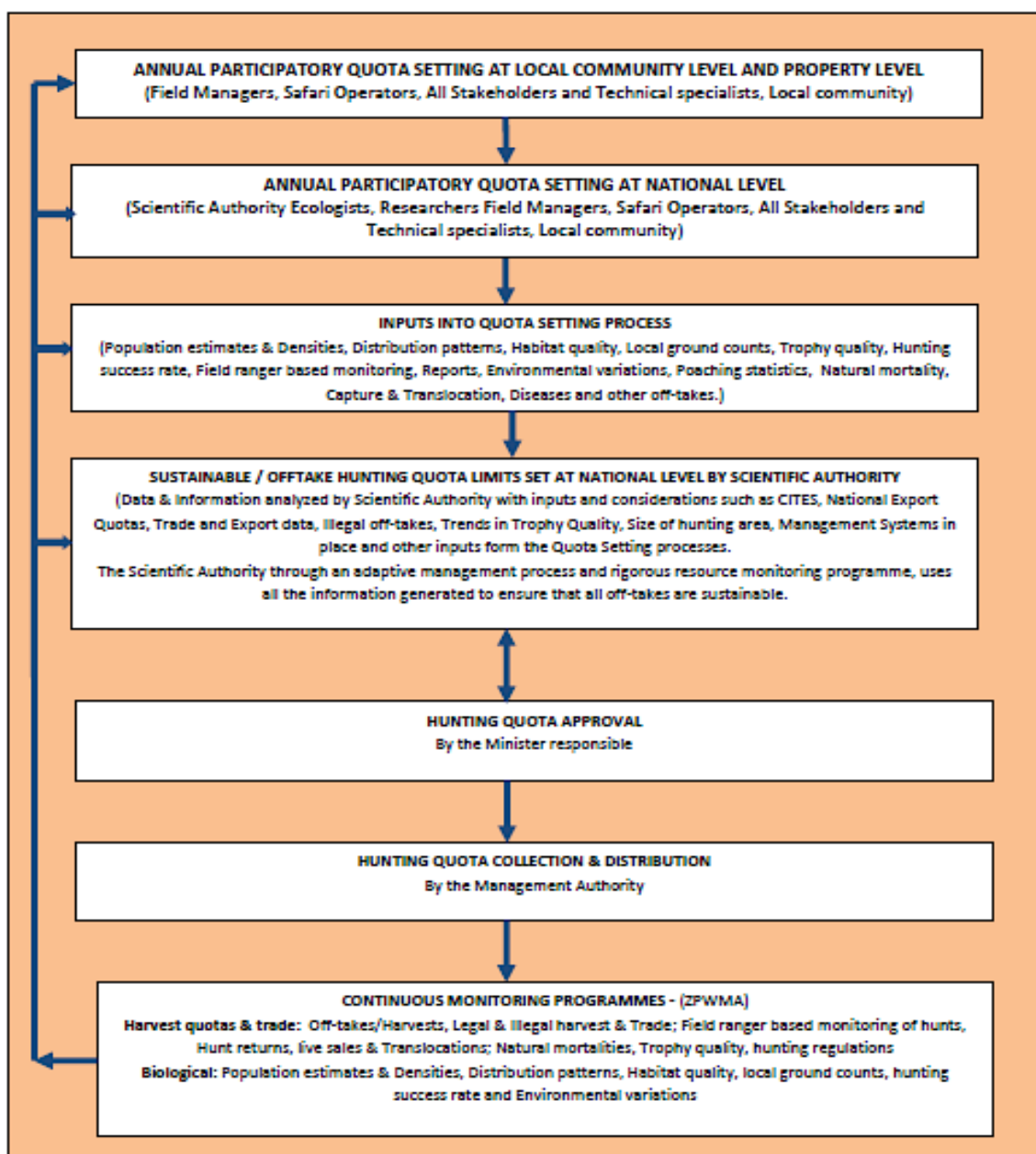


Figure 3 Quota Setting Process

Table 2 below shows the CITES quota allocation from 2010 to 2017 and the actual offtake for the same period.

YEAR	CITES QUOTA	ACTUAL OFFTAKE
2010	500	179
2011	500	160
2012	500	174
2013	500	178
2014	500	186
2015	500	181
2016	500	146
2017	500	133

Table 2. Leopard Quota Allocation and Actual Offtake 2011-2017

Adaptive Management for Leopard Utilization

Zimbabwe adaptively manages leopard hunting, including monitoring of quotas, offtakes, and trophy quality. In the last few years, ZPWMA has held two participatory workshops to discuss and adapt current practices to inform its non-detriment determinations and to ensure sustainable hunting of leopards.

In this respect the following chart informs the adaptive management and leopard hunting in Zimbabwe.

Managing leopard hunting in Zimbabwe

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Long-term Goal: Sustainable leopard hunting supported across a range land uses that contributes to maintaining wildland, biodiversity conservation, rural livelihoods and the national economy



□

Purpose or Immediate Objective: To achieve a well-regulated, viable and sustainable leopard hunting operation in Zimbabwe that will comply with the requirements of a rigorous, formal non-detrimental finding



Key Components	1. Monitoring population status and trends of leopard populations	2. Criteria for leopard trophies	3. Evidence-based adaptive management of quotas for hunting leopards	4. Reviews of policy and legislation governing leopard hunting	5. Coordination, collaboration and programme management
Strategic Objectives	Objective 1. The status and trends of hunted leopard populations are regularly monitored and used to inform sustainable harvesting of leopards	Objective 2. Develop criteria for the taking of trophy leopards and monitoring protocols that will serve to sustain leopard populations and maintain trophy quality	Objective 3. Enhance an adaptive and participatory quota setting system that can be adjusted annually on the basis of a range of evidence	Objective 4. Policies and legislation are reviewed and adapted to provide effective regulations and incentives to sustain leopard hunting in Zimbabwe	Objective 5. Ensuring effective coordination and collaboration with national and international stakeholders to achieve these strategic objectives, including, accountability, monitoring and evaluation

Outputs	Output #1: Annual population status and trends for each sub-population of leopards determined	Output #2: Criteria for trophy leopards adopted and trophy quality monitored, analysed, and reported annually	Output #3: Evidence-based adaptive quota setting operating for each population	Output #4: Policy and legislation (if needed) for leopard hunting reviewed and adopted	Output #5: Government and private sector coordinating structures to oversee and review adaptive management of leopard hunting established and operating
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Key Activities that are required to achieve the Outputs and Key performance indicators

Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a team that will carry out spoor surveys in areas not already being covered Camera traps on all baits and results submitted Develop coordinated research and monitoring programme Establish current distribution of leopards in Zimbabwe Data analysed and reported annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for trophy quality agreed and adopted Review and finalisation of hunting report form Train professional hunters and safari operators in providing information Data analysed and reported annually Design an on-line data reporting system Penalties implemented Extending a pamphlet on leopard ageing to include additional features Database on illegal off-takes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a committee to review trophies and quotas Conduct an annual review of trophies and quotas for each hunting area and adjust quotas as necessary Score each trophy taken and produce a report Produce an annual report (one for committee and one for public) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing policies and their impacts Submit recommendations for any changes needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a steering committee (or subcommittee existing ZPWMA/SOAZ/ZPHG) to oversee the implementation of the leopard hunting management plan Fund raising
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During a participatory workshop on leopard management held on 2016, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, ZPWMA established adaptive criteria for managing the offtake of leopard trophies. This test system awards points and adjusts an area's quota based on the age of the leopard hunted. Hunting young leopard results in a reduced quota. Hunting no leopard or older leopard results in the maintenance of the current quota or, in some instances, the award of additional points that may lead to an increase in the area's quota. The initial points system is described in Figure 4. This system is recently being implemented, and compliance will be monitored through the submission of trophy photographs, hunt return forms, and other data requested by ZPWMA.

AGE of trophy	< 3 YEARS	3 YEARS	4-6 YEARS	OVER 6 years	NO HUNT
POINTS Allocated	- 3	+ 2	+ 4	+ 5	+ 3

Total points = x, Divide total points (x) by 3 = next season quota (rounded down)

Figure 4. Initial Points System for Leopard Trophies

Legislation

Zimbabwe's National Legislation is very comprehensive to ensure long term survival of the leopard. Zimbabwe has a full range of national legislative and administrative measures needed to effectively implement all aspects of CITES and related Resolutions and Decisions of the Conference of Parties. ZPWMA is the authority with the mandate to conserve and protect all fauna and flora in the country. Zimbabwe's legislation is in Category 1 of CITES and therefore meets all the requirements of CITES implementation.

ZPWMA's mandate is informed by legislation and a wildlife policy that seeks to maintain a protected area network for the conservation of the nation's wild resources and biological diversity. Amongst others it seeks to create economic activity to enhance rural development and encourages the conservation of wild animals and their habitats outside the protected areas. One of the most important aspects of Zimbabwe's legislation is the devolution of authority to private and communal landholders to manage and benefit from wildlife on their land.

The leopard is a specially protected species whose conservation is regulated through a policy and legal framework and regulations which include:

- Parks and Wildlife Act; Chapter 20:14 (1996) as amended in 2001
- Environmental Management Act; Chapter 20:27
- Forest Act; Chapter 19:05
- Statutory Instrument 362 of 1990 : Parks and Wildlife (General) Regulations, 1990
- Statutory Instrument 76 of 1998 :Import and Export of Wildlife Products
- Statutory Instrument 40 of 1994 : Parks and Wildlife Act (General) Amendments
- Statutory Instrument 26 of 1998: Parks & Wildlife Act (General) Amendment
- Statutory Instrument 92 of 2009; Compensation Values for Wildlife
- Statutory Instrument 93 of 2009; Compensation Values for Trapping of Animals
- Trapping of Animals Control Act 20:16
- Licensing and Protection of wildlife properties
- Tourism Hunt Return Forms (TR2)
- Code of Ethics for Hunting in Zimbabwe

Hunting Benefits

Hunting in Zimbabwe, including leopard hunting, generates benefits for ZPWMA and other relevant government authorities through payment of concession and trophy revenues (among others), which are then invested in enforcement, conservation, and management activities.

In communal areas in Zimbabwe managed under the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), the income and other benefits generated from hunting accrue to local communities (wards) and their representative district councils.

On private land and conservancies, hunting revenues justify the maintenance of this land as wildlife habitat and fund enforcement and management activities in these areas.

In addition to the management revenue generated, trophy hunting in Zimbabwe benefits leopard by reducing threats faced by the species, including for example:

- Creating financial and other incentives for the development and retention of wildlife across Safari Areas, Forestry Areas, Communal CAMPFIRE Areas, and private Conservancies, thereby supporting biodiversity over approximately 145,000km² where hunting is a primary land use
- Reducing conflicts and increasing rural community tolerance in CAMPFIRE Areas, where hunting revenues are used to support a range of social services and offset losses of livestock (and human life) from problem leopards
- Improving rural community livelihoods in marginal areas by creating jobs
- Contributing to poaching control and protection of prey populations through support for government and community scouts and maintaining operator anti-poaching teams, thus transferring some of the costs of maintaining Safari Areas to the private sector
- Generating direct and indirect income for Zimbabwe on the whole

Conclusion: Maintenance of Current Quota

At CoP 17, the CITES Parties adopted a decision that requests range states to review their current leopard quotas “and consider whether these quotas are still set at levels which are non-detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild”.

Zimbabwe has considered its current export quota of 500 leopard trophies and skins per year. Zimbabwe has considered its national leopard population and trend, the past and current levels of offtake, adaptive management of the leopard population and of leopard hunting, benefits of the hunting, and other factors relevant to evaluating whether the sustainability of the current export quota. Based on this consideration and evaluation, ZPWMA Scientific Service, as the Scientific Authority, has advised that the current level of offtake and the current export quota is set at a level that is not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild. Moreover, the conservation benefits of regulated hunting create a net benefit for the species’ continued success in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is maintaining its sport hunting quota of 500 leopards per year. This is a conservative export quota and in the best conservation interests of the species. Zimbabwe will continue to monitor the leopard population as well as the adaptive management of the hunting program. If that monitoring shows a change in the leopard population status in Zimbabwe, then appropriate management adaptations will be made and the CITES Secretariat will be advised.