



The Endangered Wildlife Trust successfully prevents wildlife in South Africa from being legally managed as livestock.



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In the North Gauteng High Court (Pretoria) today, the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) successfully reviewed and set aside the decision to include/list several wild animal species as breeds in the Animal Improvement Act 62 of 1998 (“AIA”).

The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD, the erstwhile Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) published two amendments (on 10 June 2016 and 10 June 2019 respectively) to Tables 7(a) and 7(b) of the AIA Regulations whereby a number of wild animal species were declared as “Landrace breeds (indigenous and locally developed)” and/or “locally adapted and regularly introduced breeds (other declared breeds)” for purposes of the AIA. These wild animal species include: Black Wildebeest, Blue Duiker, Blue Wildebeest, Bontebok, Gemsbok, Impala, Oribi, Red Hartebeest, Roan Antelope, Sable Antelope, Springbok, Tsessebe, Rau Quagga Zebra, Cape Buffalo, Blesbok, Cape Eland, Kudu, Waterbuck, Nyala, Bosbok, Klipspringer, Common Duiker, Red Duiker, Steenbok, Cape Grysbok, Sharp’s Grysbok, Suni, Grey Rhebok, Mountain Reedbuck, Lechwe, Burchell’s Zebra, Cape Mountain Zebra, Hartman’s Mountain Zebra, Giraffe, White Rhinoceros, Black Rhinoceros, Lion, Cheetah, Deer, White-tailed Deer, Red Deer, Fallow Deer, Mule Deer, Roe Deer, and Black-tailed Deer.

Notwithstanding the EWT’s objection to any wild animals being declared a breed, either “landrace breed” or “locally adapted and regularly introduced breeds” and controlled by so-called breed societies, which the amendments to the AIA would have facilitated, the EWT was equally concerned that several of these species (notably the deer species) are not even indigenous to South Africa.

The EWT promotes the value and role of wild animals in natural free-living conditions which contribute to functioning ecosystems and to the perpetuation of our natural world. We do not support the proliferation of intensive wildlife breeding facilities which provide no demonstrable conservation benefit; accordingly:

- We recognise the value that wildlife ranching and ecologically sustainable use of wildlife brings to South Africa. This value includes overall revenues which are estimated to exceed R10 billion per year and permanent employment of ~70,000 people. Further, the profits generated from wildlife ranching act as an incentive to keep and sustain wildlife in free living conditions, resulting in increased conservation of wildlife, habitats and biodiversity within South Africa.
- We uphold the environmental rights as enshrined in section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- We support wildlife conservation practices that, within the scope of the law in South Africa, promote the ecologically sustainable use of wild animals in natural, free-living conditions.

We do not support the increasing tendency for industrial scale production and management of South African wildlife where these practises are not in line with the principles of ecologically sustainable use, have no conservation benefit, and / or where general wildlife wellbeing concerns are prevalent.

Despite a public outcry and widespread objections by interested and affected parties at the time of the publication of the proposed amendments, it was only the EWT and SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association who legally challenged these listings. As part of the EWT's mandate to tirelessly work to ensure thriving populations of wildlife in natural conditions, to the benefit of all, 7 years of work went into getting this matter to the courts.

In January 2020 the EWT launched its application in the North Gauteng High Court, seeking to review and set aside the decision to list wild animals in the AIA. Our grounds of review included legitimate, substantive, and procedural concerns, including but not limited to the fact that there was neither inclusive public participation and nor had any intergovernmental consultation and participation taken place. The amendments also failed to consider materially relevant information about the environmental impacts of this decision and that the inclusion of wild animal species as "breeds" to be managed by the DALRRD is contrary to the objects and purposes of section 24 of the Constitution, the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act 10 of 2004 (NEMBA) and the AIA itself.

The EWT is pleased with the outcome and lauds the overturning of a decision that could have ultimately seen all wildlife in South Africa becoming managed as domesticated livestock. Thank you to the Lewis Foundation for funding this litigation and to our attorney, Christo Reeders and our Advocates Peter Lazarus SC and Danielle Hugo.

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About the Endangered Wildlife Trust

Founded in 1973, the Endangered Wildlife Trust is dedicated to conserving threatened species and ecosystems in southern and East Africa to the benefit of all. We are driven by a team of passionate and dedicated conservationists

working through 13 specialised programmes across southern and East Africa, each falling under one of our three key strategic pillars: Saving species, conserving habitats, and benefitting people. Our critical work includes conducting applied research, supporting community-led conservation, training and building capacity, addressing human-wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species, and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion. The EWT works with key partners, including communities, businesses, landowners, academic institutions, and governments, to create a sustainable future for wildlife and people. Find out more at www.ewt.org.za.