



The Hon Greg Hunt MP

Minister for the Environment

MC14-034767

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

5 JAN 2015

Dear Mr Borsak

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hunt', written over a horizontal line.

I refer to your letter of 28 November 2014 concerning Australia's importation of African lion specimens. I regret the delay in responding.

I appreciate you drawing my attention to the inconsistencies between trade data for African lion specimens available through the trade database of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the African lion import data reported to me in departmental briefing and in correspondence from Mr Jason Wood, MP. In response to your letter, I requested the Department of the Environment to review the data in question to confirm the source of and reasons for any discrepancies.

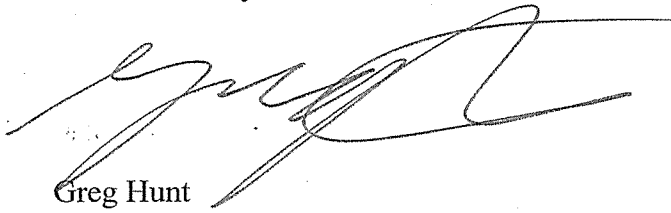
The Department has advised that information you appear to have obtained via the CITES Trade Database is based on the best data available on wildlife imports and exports to and from Australia. Any discrepancies between the information available through the CITES Trade Database and figures presented in the tables prepared by the Department are primarily a consequence of differences in the way the data has been extracted from the different databases.

The data extracted by the Department from internal databases in response to a request by Mr Wood, and subsequently provided in briefings to me, specifies the number of permits issued for the import of lion specimens. In contrast, data available through the CITES Trade database specifies the number of permits acquitted after trade has occurred. As there are a number of permits issued that are not acquitted (as a consequence of permit holders cancelling travel, unsuccessful hunts and other factors), the number of permits issued is often greater than the number of permits acquitted. I am further advised that human error also caused some inaccuracies in the data prepared by the Department. I am assured me that rigorous processes have now been established to ensure that inconsistencies of the kind you have identified are resolved for future data reporting on wildlife trade.

In relation to the timing of any decision regarding trade in African lion, I expect to receive comprehensive advice from the Department in early 2015. I expect that this advice will present the breadth of information provided by African lion range states, businesses, hunters, conservation organisations, researchers and others through consultations conducted by the Department.

Thank you again for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hunt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Hunt