

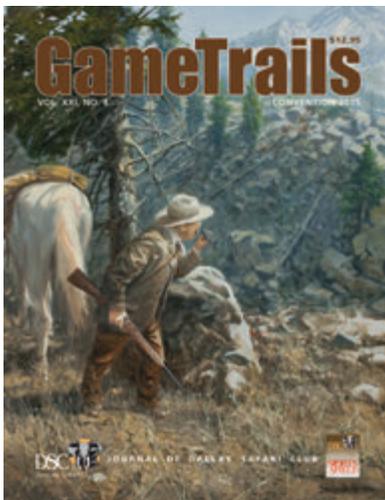
# DSC Speaks Out on Lion Hunting

BY BEN F. CARTER III



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Educating the public on the role of legal, ethical hunting and its positive effects on wildlife and conservation issues is a priority of DSC. The future of the African lion will depend on science, combined with sound conservation measures – not emotions and media bias.



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A recent situation involving a lion in Zimbabwe sparked a firestorm of controversy on both a national and international level.

The furor surrounding the situation has been fueled by emotion and the attempts to humanize a completely wild animal with a human name. Unfortunately, passionate but uninformed people, as well as media outlets sympathetic to the anti-hunting agenda, have been allowed to dominate much of this conversation.

DSC understands responsible lion hunting, based on the latest science and wildlife management principles, is an essential component of policies designed to conserve African lions and their habitat for future generations.

As with any game species in Africa, hunting, as well as the money generated by legal hunting, gives lions a tangible value that is irreplaceable in impoverished rural communities. Over the years, one irrefutable fact has been proven in Africa: when hunting goes away, so does the wildlife.

Zimbabwe, the country leading the headlines, provides a perfect example of the positive benefits of hunting-generated revenue directly supporting conservation efforts. The Zimbabwe Parks And Wildlife Management Authority is tasked with the protection of wildlife in the country. Over the last five years, approximately 50 percent of the department's operating budget has been derived solely from revenue generated by hunting.

But revenue is only part of the picture. DSC understands that sound lion management, based on science – not emotion – is the key to healthy lion populations across Africa.

In January 2013, DSC announced its definition of the ideal huntable male lion. In May 2013, an international assembly of conservationists representing 84 different countries adopted the African lion hunting policy modeled after that of DSC.

Part of DSC's position is that, "The ideal huntable male lion is at least six years of age and is not known to be part of a coalition heading a pride with dependent cubs." Extensive scientific research has clearly shown that hunting older male lions has no negative effect on populations.

DSC is pleased the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized that fact. The agency identified three main threats currently facing African lions, which are habitat loss, loss of prey base and increased human-lion conflicts.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency Director Dan Ashe said, "I want to be clear that lions are not in trouble because of responsible sport hunting. In fact, the evidence shows that scientifically sound conservation programs that include limited, well-managed sport hunting can, and do, contribute to the long-term survival of the species."

DSC has been responsible for funding scientific research on African lions for years. Understanding lion population dynamics is one of many projects supported by DSC grants, which advance conservation, education and hunter advocacy worldwide.

Educating the public on the role of legal, ethical hunting and its positive effects on wildlife and conservation issues is a priority of DSC. The future of the African lion will depend on science, combined with sound conservation measures – not emotions and media bias.

To read the official DSC stance on lion hunting or to view the video, please visit [www.biggame.org](http://www.biggame.org) or [DSCNewsCenter.org](http://DSCNewsCenter.org).





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