



Press Release

*(Embargo will be lifted on October 25, 2019 at 0500 Hong Kong time)*

## **Viable alternatives to trophy hunting exist, say scientists**

October 24, 2019

A [recent letter in \*Science\*](#) cited a lack of alternatives to trophy hunting. The authors suggested that bans on imports of hunting trophies would undermine biodiversity conservation efforts, but offered weak evidence of any positive conservation gains specific to trophy hunting.

In a response—soon to be published in the October 25, 2019 issue of *Science*—a group of scientists summarize evidence of negative effects of trophy hunting and offer more viable and equitable options.

These authors emphasize that the proposed trophy import bans provide impetus to shift to more sustainable practices, including land-use and ownership reforms, diversified tourism, and environmental investments, that do more to benefit and empower local communities.

The authors come from across the globe and work in high biodiversity countries. Despite pressure in some regions not to comment on trophy hunting, 71 signatories supported the letter.

Dr. Jorgelina Marino of the University of Oxford and co-author of the letter said: “To safeguard the future benefits of nature for all, governments and conservation organizations must embrace sustainable and equitable options. Trophy hunting fails on both counts in most cases”.

Dr. Mucha Mkono of the University of Queensland and co-author of the letter said: “Trophy hunting is not the long-term solution to Africa’s wildlife conservation challenges. Responsible governance, characterised by accountability, rigorous, evidence-based policies and actions, and appreciation of wildlife value beyond the economic, is.”

Dr. Katarzyna Nowak from The Safina Center and lead author of the letter said: “As public opinion in major consumer countries shifts away from trophy hunting, more support can be lent to innovative, more ethically acceptable, economically viable conservation approaches and activities that also, and importantly, [bolster local culture](#), women’s participation, and [self-determination](#) of wildlife-wealthy communities.”

Professor Andrew Dobson of Princeton University said: “Trophy hunting is at odds with more sustainable photographic and cultural tourism and too rarely brings lasting benefits to local communities.”

Professor David Lusseau of Aberdeen University and co-author of the letter said: “Many people want to more actively participate in conservation. One way for them to do this is to put money toward conserving habitats and species by leveraging financial strategies, such as decentralized markets made possible by blockchain. This is a more equitable and inclusive approach to biodiversity conservation.”

Alternatives mentioned by the authors are already rooted in real examples such as [GainForest](#), [elephant coin](#), Kariba REDD+ in Zimbabwe and [Chyulu Hills REDD+](#) in Kenya, [sustainable enterprise development](#), coexistence approaches such as those of [Lion Guardians](#) and [Ecoexist](#), and conservation-compatible agriculture for example [It’s Wild in Zambia](#).

Dr. Hannah Mumby of the University of Hong Kong and co-author added: “The public are showing willingness to make big shifts in behavior in response to environmental concerns. We can harness this momentum and will to change by extending the precautionary principle to the hunting arena.”

Original paper in *Science* reported by BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-49524189>

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