HOME

Botswana to Allow Trophy Hunters to Kill Elephants for $43,000 per Head

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Botswana had its first auctions for the right to hunt elephants after they lifted the ban last year. This country has around 130,000 elephants, which is the biggest population in the world.

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The government sold 7 licenses for their hunting and each of the licenses allows hunting of 10 elephants in so-called 'controlled hunting areas'.

The officials revoked the ban from 2014 claiming the human-elephant conflict and the negative influence of the livelihoods was growing.

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The removal of the ban was quite popular with a lot of people in rural communities; however, it was very criticized by conservationists.

How Did these Auctions Work?

At the auction that took place in the Gaborone capital, 7 packs of 10 elephants were sold.

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Only the companies that were registered in Botswana were allowed to bid. They placed a refundable deposit of $18,000.

The government issued a quota for the killing of 272 elephants in 2020.

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This hunting would help the areas that are most affected by the conflict between humans and wildlife, according to wildlife spokeswoman Alice Mmolawa.

What Was the Reason for the Lifting of the Ban?

A lot of rural communities believe that going back to commercial hunting will help keep the elephants away from people's villages and bring a much needed income in places where high-end tourism isn't possible.

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However, those who oppose the lifting of the ban claim that this may also drive away the luxury-safari goers who're opposed to hunting.

The wildlife director of Africa for the global conservation lobby charity Human Society International, Audrey Delsink considers these auctions deeply concerning and questionable.

Delsink explains that hunting can't be considered a long-term tool for mitigation of the human-elephant relationship or a method to control the population.

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Moreover, an environmental economist from South Africa, Ross Harvey, said that there's no scientific data that backs up the claim that there are too many elephants in Botswana.

In fact, Harvey adds that Botswana's elephants haven't actually elevated in the last 5 years, but the population is stable. These elephants are pivotal for their ecology.

Back in 2014, the then-president Ian Khama introduced the ban to help fight off the decline in wild animals population.

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