



## A sample for CITES: early results from South Africa's Mammal Red List

September 2016

Start

As stakeholders prepare to convene at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg for the 17th [Conference of Parties \(CoP17\)](#) to discuss proposed changes to the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#) appendices, a sample of assessments from the soon-to-be completed national Mammal Red List (due date November 2016) has revealed reasons to be concerned about illegal trading of wildlife.

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), supported by collaborations from the universities of Cape Town and Pretoria's MammalMAP and the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), are releasing key assessments early (including African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*, African Lion *Panthera leo*, Black Rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis*, Bontebok *Damaliscus pygargus pygargus*, Cape Mountain Zebra *Equus zebra zebra*, Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*, Leopard *Panthera pardus*, Southern White Rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum simum* and Temminck's Ground Pangolin *Smutsia temminckii*) to highlight issues surrounding trade in threatened species. This important work reflects the conservation status of these mammals in 2016, and, worryingly, exemplifies the intensifying threat of illegal hunting and international wildlife trafficking.

The Red List is a globally recognised tool, established in 1963 by the IUCN to categorise the risk of extinction for the world's species. The last comprehensive review of the mammals of South Africa was released in 2004 and an updated review of the status of each mammal is currently being produced. Currently (2016), of 84 CITES-listed mammal species or subspecies within South Africa, two are Critically Endangered, six are Endangered, 13 are Vulnerable and six are Near Threatened in the revised national Red List.

"The new Red List highlights some real conservation success stories, often driven by cooperation between conservationists and the private sector" says Matthew Child, Coordinator of the EWT's Mammal Red List Project. "Although previously found in only three subpopulations, today the endemic Cape Mountain Zebra has been listed as Least Concern (down from Vulnerable), largely due to their population growth on game farms and wildlife ranches. The African Lion is also listed as Least Concern (downlisted from Vulnerable). South Africa is the only country where numbers of wild lions are stable in formal protected areas and increasing through the expansion of private protected areas. More generally, the increasing number of properties proclaimed as biodiversity stewardship

sites is also helping to conserve important patches of habitat and reflects the love that South Africans have for our wildlife.”

Despite these victories, several species have become more threatened, due largely to persecution, poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife. Examples include Leopards (uplisted from Least Concern to Vulnerable), Temminck’s Ground Pangolin (uplisted from Near Threatened to Vulnerable), and the Southern White Rhinoceros (uplisted from Least Concern to Near Threatened). The main intensifying threats are illegal hunting for bushmeat, traditional medicine and cultural regalia; and the escalating threat of international wildlife trafficking through criminal syndicates. Some species, such as the White Rhinoceros, are threatened chiefly by intensifying poaching and trade, while others, such as Pangolins, are threatened by both trade and use of their body parts on multiple scales, from subsistence use in traditional medicine to local commercial use in bushmeat markets and international exports on an industrial scale to Asian markets.

“Conservationists will continue to strive to protect all our species and landscapes, and the Red List is a valuable tool for achieving this”, says SANBI’s Prof. John Donaldson, Chair of South Africa’s Scientific Authority. “Identifying which species are declining from trade and why helps to assess whether trade is detrimental to the survival of particular species and informs decisions regarding listing on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The release of Mammal Red List data is therefore an important precursor to the upcoming Conference of Parties.”

The revised Mammal Red List, which will be undertaken by the Endangered Wildlife Trust, forms part of a series of national Red List projects recently completed by SANBI and partners, which include Butterflies, Reptiles and Birds; all of which include examples of species threatened by illegal trade. The Mammal Red List, which covers 338 assessments, was made possible by over 400 experts who provided their data and expertise to inform each assessment. It was funded via the South African National Biodiversity Institute (through a grant by the Norwegian Government that aims to build capacity in the southern Africa region for undertaking assessments), the Endangered Wildlife Trust, the Department of Environmental Affairs, E Oppenheimer & Son and De Beers Group of Companies. The full 2016 Mammal Red List findings will be released in November 2016. Assessments for the key CITES listed mammals to be deliberated upon during CoP17 are available at the following link: <https://www.ewt.org.za/Reddata/reddata.html>

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Additional Information and Useful Links

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/>

[www.sanbi.org](http://www.sanbi.org)

<http://mammalmap.adu.org.za/>