

Lion that was protected is killed by American hunter

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff on 08.04.15

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In this undated photo provided by the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Cecil the lion rests in Hwange National Park in Hwange, Zimbabwe. Photo: Andy Loveridge/Wildlife Conservation Research Unit via AP

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Tourists from all over the world visit Africa every year. Some are not just interested in seeing the sights. They come to go lion hunting. For them, nothing beats the thrill of hunting the mighty king of the jungle.

Lion hunting may sound exciting to some people, but for others, it is cruel and wrong. So many lions are killed every year that they are starting to die out.

Many people around the world are now furious at an American dentist who paid to go lion hunting in Zimbabwe. The dentist, Walter James Palmer, killed a popular lion named Cecil. The lion lived in a national park and it was against the law to hunt him. He was supposed to be protected.

Palmer seems to have tricked Cecil into leaving the park. Reports say that he lured Cecil with a dead animal that had been tied to a car.

As soon as Cecil left the park Palmer shot him with a bow and arrow. He then tracked the wounded Cecil for 40 hours and finally killed him with a gun.

Hunters Pay A Lot Of Money For Big Game

People against the hunts say the time has come for tourists to stop hunting for sport. Across Africa, big animals like lions, tigers, elephants and rhinos are dying out.

Some African countries allow such hunting, though. For example, South Africa, Namibia and Tanzania all do. The countries say they need the money that hunting brings in and that some of that money goes to protecting animals. Hunters pay tens of thousands of dollars for the right to hunt animals.

People who support tourist hunting in Africa say there are rules that limit hunting and actually protect animals. Others say those rules are often ignored.

"It Goes On All The Time"

Ian Michler is a South African who is fighting to protect endangered animals. He says what happened with Cecil is common all over Africa.

"Cecil is not the first lion that has been lured," he said. "It goes on all the time. "

Michler made a movie about lion hunting, called "Blood Lions." He said that in South Africa, imprisoned lions are raised just to be hunted. Around 1,000 are killed every year by hunters who pay an average of \$20,000, and sometimes up to \$50,000. The kills are hardly sporting, he said. The lions have nowhere to run and do not stand a chance.

Today, perhaps fewer than 20,000 lions live in the wild. Just 20 years ago there were almost twice as many. Things are getting better for lions in southern Africa, but in West and East Africa they are in serious danger of dying out.

The Most Deadly Hunter On Earth

The Zimbabwean government says the killing of Cecil was unusual. Most hunters follow the laws, it said. The government added that hunting keeps the populations of certain animals from getting too large. Overpopulation is certainly not a problem for lions, though. Lions are an endangered animal.

When Cecil was killed he was wearing a satellite collar. The collar gave off signals that allowed scientists to see where he was going. Scientists have so far put such collars on more than 100 lions. The hope is that learning more about lion habits will help efforts to protect the big cats.

In the meantime, lion hunting is still common all over Africa. This year, Zambia announced that it will once again allow hunting lions and other big cats. It had made such hunting against the law two years ago.

A company called Central African Wildlife Adventures offers tourists the chance to go lion hunting in the Central African Republic. The company website tries to make lion hunting sound exciting. It pictures the hunted and hunter as equals. One is the King of the Beasts. The other is man, the most deadly hunter on Earth.

Quiz

- 1 Which are two main ideas of the article?
- (A) A hunter killed a popular and protected lion; the hunter tricked the lion into coming out of his home area by using a dead animal.
 - (B) A hunter killed a popular and protected lion; people disagree over whether hunting endangered lions should be allowed.
 - (C) Hunting endangered lions is still allowed in some countries; some Africans are fighting to keep hunters from killing lions.
 - (D) Scientists are studying endangered lions to learn more about how to protect them; many people visit Africa to hunt.

- 2 Which section from the article is summarized by the sentence below?

Some people are working to protect endangered lions in Africa, but the lions are still in trouble.

- (A) Introduction [paragraphs 1-5]
 - (B) "Hunters Pay A Lot Of Money For Big Game"
 - (C) "It Goes On All The Time"
 - (D) "The Most Deadly Hunter On Earth"
- 3 Which person or group in the article would likely be MOST upset about the killing of Cecil the Lion?
- (A) Zimbabwean government officials
 - (B) scientists studying lion habits
 - (C) Lion-hunting tourist groups
 - (D) Walter James Palmer
- 4 According to the article, what would be a likely effect of making lion hunting illegal throughout the world?
- (A) Some people would fight harder to protect lions.
 - (B) Some hunters would use bows and arrows to hunt lions.
 - (C) Some countries would lose money.
 - (D) Some people would visit more national parks.

Answer Key

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