



## forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: 02/1/5/2

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 3225 {NW4299E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 34 of 2023

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 13 October 2023

**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

- (1) With regard to the Ministerial Task Team (MTT) in captive lion and closure of the captive lion industry (details furnished), what (a) is the status and progress of the MTT to date and (b) are the reasons for the removal within a few hours of a much welcomed and applauded social media post by her department announcing the closure of the captive lion breeding and highlighting the cruelty and reputational risks;
- (2) whether the removal of the social media post indicates that her department has reneged on its intention to close the captive lion breeding industry; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the reasons;
- (3) whether her department has been put under pressure by the captive lion breeders to not close the industry; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether she intends to use the wellbeing clause of the National Environmental Management Laws Amendment Act, Act 2 of 2022, which allows for the Minister to declare some activities as prohibited when welfare risks are high, to declare the captive lion breeding a prohibited activity in the near future; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

**3225. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

- (1) (a) The Ministerial Task Team (MTT) has engaged in an extensive consultation process with a number of relevant stakeholders. These include engagement sessions with representatives of both national and provincial governments: meetings with industry associations, lion sanctuaries, the South African Veterinary Council, South African National Biodiversity Institute, National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Wildlife Veterinarians, numerous NGOs, South African Traditional Health Practitioners, relevant National Departments as well as academics and experts.

The MTT has also undertaken audit of facilities which includes details of the facility, practices and uses within that facility, the skills of workers and potential other land-use options within the biodiversity economy. Furthermore, a detailed audit was compiled of all the relevant policies and regulations for the nine provinces to understand the wider policy and regulatory variances across South Africa. A multiple verification process with provinces was instituted, and the final verification is expected by the end of October 2023.

The MTT is in a process of finalising exit pathways and options for further consultation with stakeholders. These draft options will be tested with potential exit volunteers and may need further refinement. The MTT is also engaging potential donors to assist with providing resources to support the voluntary exit process. The MTT report will be finalised and submitted at the end of December 2023.

- (b) The objectives of World Lion Day are to:

- raise awareness of the plight of the lion and the issues that lion faces in the wild;
- find ways to protect the natural environment of lion, such as increasing the number of national parks and reducing the number of areas in which people can settle; and
- educate people who live near wild cat species such as lion, on the dangers of the species and how to protect themselves.

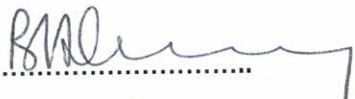
The social media post was not authorised by the Department and appears to have been the views of an individual on matters that are currently out for public comment and are not concluded.

(2) See above.

- (3) The draft Policy Position on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Elephant, Lion, Leopard and Rhinoceros (draft Policy Position) was published in Government Gazette, No. 49322 of 19 September 2023, under Government Notice No. 3889, for public comments for a period of 30 days. The draft Policy Position proposes a specific policy objective pertaining to captive lions that is aimed at ending the captive keeping of lions for commercial purposes and closure of captive lion facilities, ending the intensive breeding of lions in controlled environments, and ending the commercial exploitation of captive and captive-bred lions.
- (4) The draft lion prohibition notice was published in terms of section 9A of the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) (NEMBA), which is the new well-being clause included in NEMBA through the National Environmental Management Laws Amendment Act, 2022 (Act No. 2 of 2022).

The draft notice proposes a prohibition of the following aspects in respect of the African lion:

- (a) establishment or registration of a new captive breeding facility;
- (b) establishment or registration of a new commercial exhibition facility, rehabilitation facility or sanctuary, except if the facility provides a public function or operates on a non-profit basis; or
- (c) the introduction, or having in possession or exercising physical control over, a live specimen of African lion in any other new controlled environment that is not a facility referred to in (a) or (b).

  
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**MS B D CREECY, MP**  
**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**  
DATE: 26/10/2023