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Trophy hunting imports into the EU: Key Facts

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Each year hundreds of thousands of wild animals, including endangered and threatened species, are killed by trophy hunters worldwide. Trophy hunters pay large sums of money to shoot wild animals to collect body parts for display and bragging rights. The European Union is the world's second largest hunting trophy importer of mammal species threatened by trade, after the US. European trophy hunters kill species in other countries and import parts of these kills into their home countries.

This factsheet presents key information on CITES-listed trophy hunting imports into the EU, including the main EU importing countries, the most commonly imported mammal species, the leading countries exporting hunting trophies, and the primary importers of captive-sourced lions.

Methodology

The total number of CITES-listed mammals traded as hunting trophies is based on data extracted from the CITES Trade Database, focusing on records coded for hunting trophies, as well as records coded for personal use where the term "trophy" was specified.

Species-specific criteria were used to estimate the number of individual mammals traded as trophies, rather than individual body parts (i.e., body parts such as feet, tails and skin pieces are excluded). Terms such as bodies, rugs, skeletons, skins, skulls and trophies were included, as well as, where appropriate, horns, tusks and teeth (for hippopotamuses only). The dataset covers the period from 2015 to 2024.



EU importing countries

Between 2015 and 2024, the EU imported over 27,000 trophies of internationally protected species, and import numbers rose by 11.8%, benefitting the global trophy hunting industry. Germany, Spain, Denmark, and Austria import the most hunting trophies among EU countries, summing up to 61% of all imports. Germany is by far the largest importer of hunting trophies at more than 26%. The imports to Hungary are increasing, those to Sweden are declining.

Table 1: Ranking of EU importers of hunting trophies of mammal species threatened by trade (2015 - 2024)

Importing Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average per Year	Grand Total	Percent of Grand Total
Germany	726	783	787	803	859	573	451	575	749	859	717	7165	26%
Spain	378	390	428	516	534	552	185	129	238	202	356	3552	13%
Denmark	219	383	324	401	278	283	207	245	602	564	351	3506	13%
Austria	272	291	276	273	237	252	144	153	269	176	235	2343	9%
Hungary	76	149	192	178	307	170	127	280	323	309	212	2111	8%
Poland	116	120	183	181	175	99	96	170	127	149	142	1416	5%
Sweden	221	155	189	244	171	164	124	84	15	28	140	1395	5%
Czech Republic	111	98	103	123	116	74	47	73	115	153	102	1013	4%
France	162	128	94	193	53	43	54	37	41	22	83	827	3%
Slovakia	65	69	98	102	91	50	43	66	59	133	78	776	3%
Belgium	74	77	58	65	61	40	44	51	48	71	59	589	2%
Finland	59	54	62	92	97	82	9	31	42	56	59	584	2%
Italy	36	45	40	180	77	28	15	27	39	33	52	520	2%
Bulgaria	22	29	45	64	59	24	17	49	76	78	47	463	2%
Romania	6	32	18	28	17	24	20	68	68	44	33	325	1%
Lithuania	18	44	54	26	23	3	5	13	31	29	25	246	1%
Latvia	30	19	9	3	18	17	9	17	21	18	17	161	1%
Portugal	29	17	14	11	12	7	13	15	15	15	15	148	1%
Estonia	3	10	6	11	6	11	1	26	3	3	8	80	<1%
Luxembourg	3	1	6	8	5	3	2	5	14	6	6	53	<1%
Slovenia	5	6	5	0	3	0	0	6	1	5	4	31	<1%
Netherlands	12	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	20	<1%
Malta	0	1	0	10	0	0	3	2	1	0	2	17	<1%
Croatia	2	1	2	1	3	1	3	0	0	1	2	14	<1%
Greece	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	<1%
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	<1%
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	<1%
Grand Total	2645	2909	2993	3513	3203	2503	1619	2123	2897	2956		27361	

Hunting trophy species

There were 27,361 trophies from 89 different mammal species threatened by trade imported to the EU between 2015 and 2024. The top CITES-listed mammal species imported as hunting trophies into the EU were Hartmann's mountain zebra, Chacma baboon, American black bear, lion, African elephant and brown bear.

Table 2: Top species imported into the EU (2015 - 2024)

Species	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average per Year	Grand Total	Percent of Grand Total
Hartmann's mountain zebra (<i>Equus zebra hartmannae</i>)	542	651	636	796	683	398	309	344	477	446	529	5282	19%
Chacma baboon (<i>Papio ursinus</i>)	316	330	418	367	445	234	159	227	283	373	316	3152	12%
American black bear (<i>Ursus americanus</i>)	259	324	264	299	185	287	102	96	290	306	242	2412	9%
Lion (<i>Panthera leo</i>)	189	172	187	215	184	223	164	298	353	366	236	2351	9%
African elephant (<i>Loxodonta africana</i>)	178	170	149	169	132	63	141	163	222	233	162	1620	6%
Brown bear (<i>Ursus arctos</i>)	162	249	179	229	304	218	28	45	31	27	148	1472	5%
Hippopotamus (<i>Hippopotamus amphibius</i>)	121	146	138	284	131	98	134	71	138	91	136	1352	5%
Leopard (<i>Panthera pardus</i>)	176	153	128	181	123	85	81	107	103	99	124	1236	5%
Red lechwe (<i>Kobus leche</i>)	61	58	119	118	156	125	56	121	109	136	106	1059	4%
Caracal (<i>Caracal caracal</i>)	88	78	103	101	83	60	36	58	91	79	78	777	3%
Giraffe (<i>Giraffa camelopardalis</i>)	0	0	0	0	6	126	69	113	188	194	70	696	3%
Siberian ibex (<i>Capra sibirica</i>)	20	30	65	57	108	50	59	50	92	67	60	598	2%
Cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>)	52	58	51	73	55	31	24	44	43	49	48	480	2%
Scimitar oryx (<i>Oryx dammah</i>)	34	36	44	60	50	40	30	34	56	68	46	452	2%
Grey wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	58	88	58	36	73	32	8	17	18	37	43	425	2%
Vervet monkey (<i>Chlorocebus pygerythrus</i>)	32	31	64	56	49	44	16	31	36	46	41	405	1%

Blackbuck (<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>)	79	53	29	69	43	47	7	9	22	24	39	382	1%
Southern white rhinoceros (<i>Ceratotherium simum simum</i>)	11	14	22	17	24	16	19	46	44	48	27	261	1%
Marco Polo sheep (<i>Ovis polii</i>)	17	10	8	10	19	21	22	35	58	35	24	235	1%
Bontebok (<i>Damaliscus pygargus pygargus</i>)	9	8	23	11	30	20	23	16	23	39	21	202	1%
African civet (<i>Civettictis civetta</i>)	28	29	27	27	14	19	7	13	16	18	20	198	1%
Wild goat (<i>Capra hircus aegagrus</i>)	4	13	23	33	24	32	9	30	8	19	20	195	1%
Serval (<i>Leptailurus serval</i>)	23	13	11	35	16	14	8	16	17	22	18	175	1%
Argali sheep (<i>Ovis ammon</i>)	20	16	28	33	27	20	8	6	14	2	18	174	1%
West Caucasian tur (<i>Capra caucasica</i>)	0	0	0	43	37	44	7	14	7	4	16	156	1%
Blue duiker (<i>Philantomba monticola</i>)	10	15	30	23	14	21	3	9	7	21	16	153	1%
Cougar (<i>Puma concolor</i>)	17	8	23	34	22	16	9	7	6	3	15	145	1%
Other (62 species)	139	156	166	137	166	119	81	103	145	104	132	1316	5%
Grand Total	2645	2909	2993	3513	3203	2503	1619	2123	2897	2956		27361	

Exporting countries to EU

Namibia, South Africa and Canada are the world's largest hunting trophy exporters of mammal species threatened by trade, summing up to around 72% of all exported trophies to the EU.

Table 3: Top countries that export hunting trophies to the EU (2015 - 2024)

Country of Origin	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average per Year	Grand Total	Percent of Grand Total
Namibia	935	1070	1078	1248	1128	680	536	694	946	1004	932	9319	34%
South Africa	572	576	725	781	774	776	476	747	870	984	729	7281	27%
Canada	313	413	350	375	249	332	122	110	325	355	295	2944	11%
Zimbabwe	220	222	213	250	185	118	152	145	272	242	202	2019	7%
Russia	156	280	195	275	341	252	24	65	35	35	166	1658	6%
Tanzania	132	104	106	123	88	61	75	47	72	48	86	856	3%
Kyrgyzstan	50	27	65	43	73	60	43	60	130	70	63	621	2%
Zambia	19	26	69	174	82	31	37	58	38	21	56	555	2%
Argentina	88	55	35	78	51	49	7	7	22	23	42	415	2%
Botswana	2	6	0	0	0	0	21	75	65	65	24	234	1%
Tajikistan	10	10	14	22	46	12	23	31	40	23	24	231	1%
United States	51	28	24	25	31	25	8	9	8	8	22	217	1%
Mozambique	61	12	37	20	8	7	6	0	6	15	18	172	1%
Turkey	3	6	16	28	22	30	9	34	2	14	17	164	1%
Other (23 countries)	33	74	66	71	125	70	80	41	66	49	68	675	2%
Grand Total	2645	2909	2993	3513	3203	2503	1619	2123	2897	2956		27361	

Captive lions

A captive lion used in a canned hunt is a lion that has been bred and raised in captivity, often through exploitative practices such as cub-petting and tourist interactions, and later killed in a controlled, fenced environment where it has no chance to escape. These lions are typically accustomed to humans and lack natural survival instincts, making them easy targets for trophy hunters seeking guaranteed kills. After being shot, the lion's body is frequently further exploited, with its bones entering international (illegal) trade. Spain, Hungary and Poland import the most hunting trophies from captive lions among the EU countries, summing up to 51% of all imported trophies to the EU. The import numbers for Hungary and Poland are increasing.

Table 4: Top EU importers of captive-sourced African lion trophies (2015 - 2024)

Importing Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Average per Year	Grand Total	Percent of Grand Total
Spain	44	29	26	47	18	45	27	7	69	55	37	367	18%
Hungary	7	14	35	30	40	29	22	63	55	70	37	365	18%
Poland	12	11	20	22	18	24	38	51	46	56	30	298	15%
Denmark	7	7	2	2	11	48	10	20	23	15	15	145	7%
Germany	10	20	19	13	6	13	3	10	25	26	15	145	7%
Romania	1	8	4	3	3	4	4	43	25	19	12	114	6%
Slovakia	2	4	10	1	13	6	7	15	9	26	10	93	5%
Czech Republic	7	3	8	7	6	7	5	9	14	25	10	91	5%
Austria	7	8	4	3	12	6	13	8	14	10	9	85	4%
Belgium	6	11	4	5	3	0	1	8	2	4	5	44	2%
Finland	2	6	6	6	1	9	1	0	4	4	4	39	2%
Italy	5	2	1	3	17	3	0	2	4	2	4	39	2%
Bulgaria	2	0	1	13	0	0	0	3	8	7	4	34	2%
Sweden	4	6	2	2	6	2	0	1	1	0	3	24	1%
Estonia	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	18	0	1	3	23	1%
Latvia	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	2	19	1%
Lithuania	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	12	2	19	1%
France	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	1%
Croatia	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	9	<1%
Luxembourg	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	4	1	1	9	<1%
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1	0	1	7	<1%
Portugal	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	<1%
Grand Total	133	134	154	158	158	200	133	266	313	335		1984	



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