



Summary

Trophy Hunting by the Numbers: The European Union's role in global trophy hunting

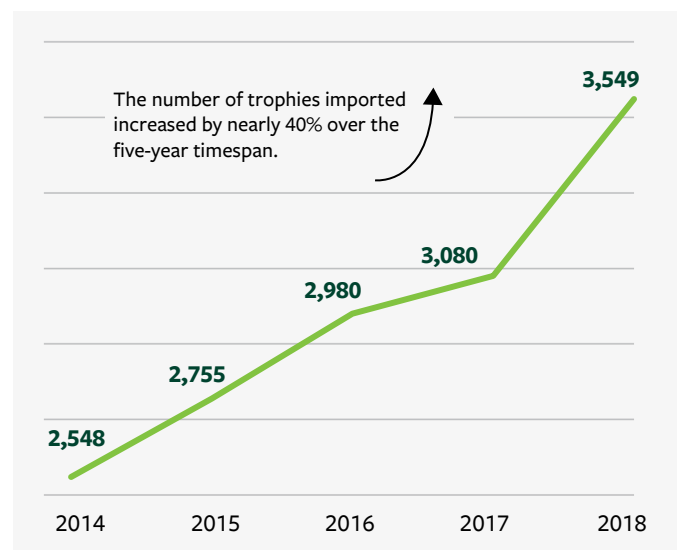
TROPHY HUNTING IS A EUROPEAN ISSUE

European countries including the EU member states are actively involved in the trophy hunting industry by allowing the import and export of many CITES-listed species as hunting trophies. Endangered and threatened animals such as polar bears, elephants, leopards, rhinos, cheetahs, giraffes and many more are killed and legally imported or exported by the EU. Primates are our closest cousins in the animal kingdom, yet even they are killed by trophy hunters.

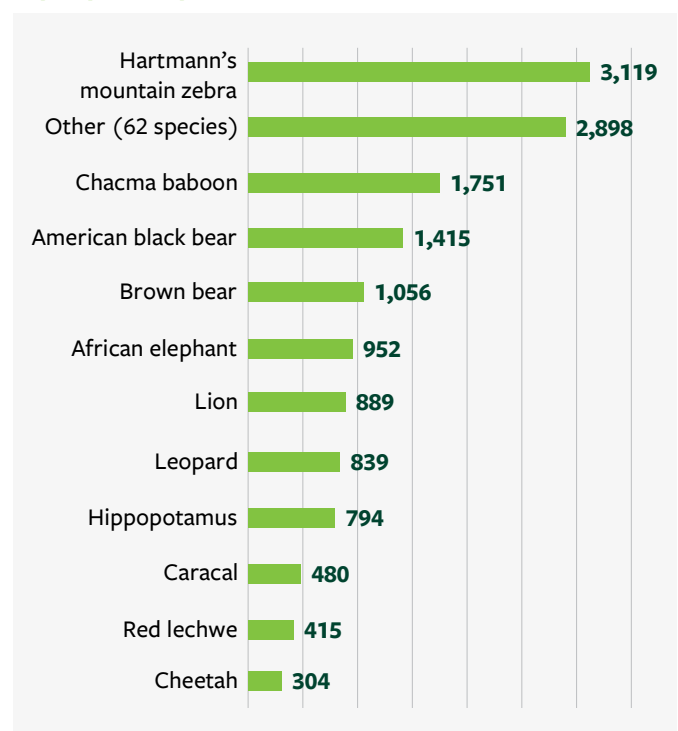
Key numbers of imported trophies to the European Union between 2014 and 2018 (inclusive)

- The EU is the **second-biggest** importer of trophies from internationally protected species worldwide, after the U.S.
- Trophy hunters imported nearly **15,000 hunting trophies** from **73 different CITES-listed mammalian species**.
- On average, **eight hunting trophies** of CITES-listed species were imported **each day**.
- Since 2016, the EU is the **largest importer of lion trophies** in the world.
- **Germany, Spain and Denmark** imported by far the most hunting trophies among the EU member states, cumulatively representing **52% of all imported trophies**.
- The number of trophies imported **increased by nearly 40%** over the five-year timespan.
- The **top five species** imported into the EU are Hartmann's mountain zebra, chacma baboon, American black bear, brown bear and African elephant.
- **Romania, France and Spain exported the most hunting trophies**, cumulatively representing 57% of all exported trophies.
- The **brown bear** was the most significantly **exported species** from the EU; exports of this species represented 40% of total EU exported trophies.

Imported trophies to the EU



Top imported species to the EU



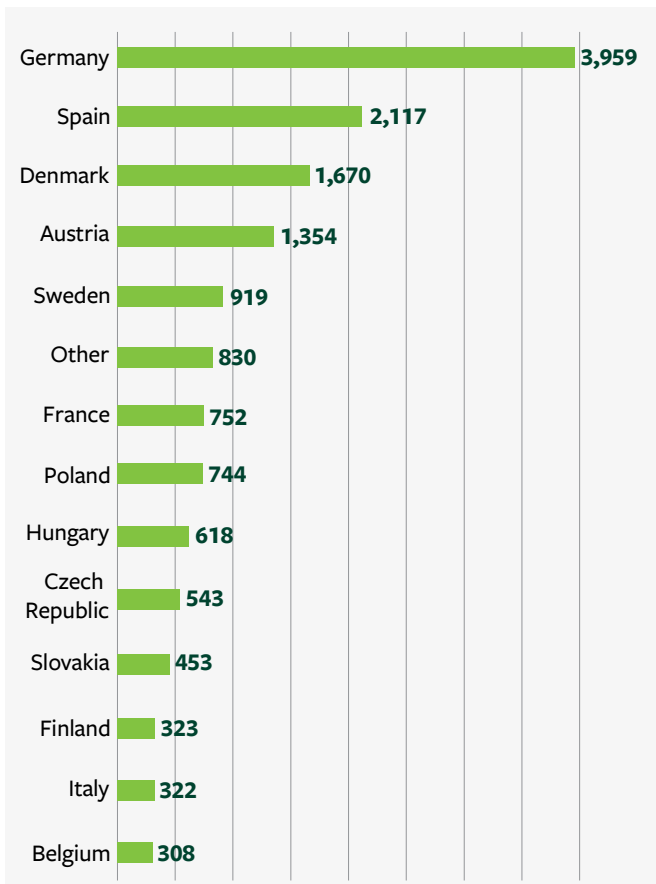
THERE IS WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO TROPHY HUNTING IN EU MEMBER STATES

In March 2021, a representative study revealed that 81% of the respondents in five EU member states (Germany, Italy, Denmark, Spain and Poland) oppose trophy hunting. Also, 81% of the respondents condemned trophy hunting imports from other countries and believe that these should not be legal. Nearly 90% of German, 88% of Italian and 84% of Spanish respondents support an import ban on dead animal trophies in their countries. In 2020, 91% of Belgians supported prohibition of import of all hunting trophies. Similarly, 89% of French citizens were in favour of banning the import of hunting trophies when asked in 2017.

TROPHY HUNTING IS A DESTRUCTIVE INDUSTRY DETRIMENTAL TO CONSERVATION

Trophy hunting is exploitation of wild animals, many of whom are already facing the multiple threats of poaching, conflict with humans and habitat loss and decline. It affects wildlife populations on different levels, such as age and sex structure, reduced reproduction rates and altered genetic structure. It also disrupts social structures, which can contribute to loss of necessary ecological and social information shared across generations (as is the case for elephants and giraffes) and can also increase rates of infanticide and inbreeding (seen in leopards, lions, brown bears and cougars). Ultimately, this can have long-term negative effects on population growth and viability.

Top importing countries in the EU



TROPHY HUNTING IS A CRUEL PRACTICE OF COLONIAL ORIGIN THAT SHOULD BE RELEGATED TO THE HISTORY BOOKS

Trophy hunting, as we know it today, emerged with European expansionism over the African, American and Asian continents in the 19th century. Recent studies have shown that this practice reenacts colonial, racist and sexist narratives, and it is profoundly unethical. The International Union for Conservation of Nature Ethics Specialist Group found that alleged financial benefits of trophy hunting to local communities “appear to be nowhere near as widespread as claimed; and claimed conservation benefits are undermined by trophy hunters’ support for abundance of animals they want to kill instead of biologically diverse ecosystems”. They also confirm that trophy hunting is incompatible with the mission of the IUCN to conserve nature and is inconsistent with the idea of “sustainable use”.

Many species targeted by trophy hunters are highly intelligent, with complex social dynamics and the capacity to experience positive and negative emotional states. However, cruel hunting practices are employed by trophy hunters. Hunting with hounds, baiting, spotlighting and aerial hunting are among some of the cruellest hunting practices favoured. Hunting groups, such as Safari Club International, offer awards for extreme methods of killing trophy animals, such as using bows and arrows, handguns or weapons such as muzzle loaders. Animals shot by trophy hunters are often seriously wounded, but do not die right away.



Since the head of the animal forms an integral part of the trophy display, trophy hunters might opt for an inhumane method to minimise damage to the trophy parts.

The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Trophy hunting has no place in modern society. The gratuitous killing of wild animals by a small minority of hunters to obtain trophies negatively impacts wild animal populations, exacerbates other pressures on biodiversity, maintains geopolitical inequalities and fails to deliver meaningful socioeconomic benefits. Yet EU hunters are slaying some of the world’s most vulnerable and magnificent animals and importing their trophies. The EU is the second-largest importer of hunting trophies in the world.

