

# Conservation Position Statement

on

# Intentional Colour Variation Manipulation

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Colour Variation and Selective Breeding Workshop  
Pretoria, 2 December 2015

**Petri Viljoen**

***IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group***



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By Gerhard Uys

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# IUCN SSC ASG Position Statement on the Intentional Genetic Manipulation of Antelopes

April 2015

**Antelope Specialist Group (ASG)** fully supports the principle of sustainable use of wildlife and other natural resources, including appropriately managed game ranching and hunting.

ASG is, however, concerned by the use of *intentional genetic manipulation* (IGM) of antelopes.

- IGM is undertaken to create modified phenotypes such as novel coat patterns or enlarged horns.
- IGM is typically conducted for amenity, ecotourism, live trade and/or hunting purposes.



## **ASG position statement on IGM is based on:**

- *Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines of the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992).*
- *IUCN SSC Policy Statement on Sustainable Use of Wild Living Resources (2000).*
- *IUCN SSC Guiding Principles on Trophy Hunting as a Tool for Creating Conservation Incentives (2012).*
- *WCC Resolution 3.093: Application of the IUCN Sustainable Use Policy to sustainable consumptive use of wildlife and recreational hunting in southern Africa (2005).*



## **Definitions of IGM:**

### **Manipulations Between Taxa:**

- Hybridising two different species, either indigenous or exotic.
- Crossing two different subspecies or strains, either indigenous or exotic.

### **Manipulations Within Taxa:**

- Selective inbreeding to exaggerate the prevalence of some characteristics.
- Cloning.
- Combinations of manipulations.



## **Purpose and Extent of IGM:**

The purpose of IGM is to supply private collections, trophy hunting enterprises and other commercial operations and is expanding:

- Growing in magnitude with a continuously increasing number of (i) facilities involved, (ii) number of antelope species and individuals subject to IGM, and (iii) private and public sales.
- Increasing unnatural diversity with a continuously growing number of newly created morphs.

Antelopes modified by IGM are extensively spread:

- Most modified antelopes are translocated to other wildlife facilities in or out their original range country or natural distribution range.
- IGM antelopes are mostly held behind fences which cannot be regarded as 100% wildlife proof, with a high risk of escapes to neighbouring areas and into the wild.



## **Actual and Potential Impacts of IGM:**

- Direct threat to biodiversity by risking the survival of indigenous taxa, i.e. genetic pollution by dilution of indigenous taxa.
- Distortion of natural processes of evolution.
- Homogenisation of taxa at national or regional scale and globalisation of taxa at the global scale.
- Weakened resilience or reduced adaptive capacity to environmental changes, such as health hazards, ecosystem transformation, or climate change.
- Reduced reproductive fitness.
- Other unknown impacts.



## **ASG Statement on IGM:**

- Considers that IGM of antelopes incorporates many risks and ignores the precautionary principle.
- States that IGM of antelopes for commercial or amenity purposes makes no contribution to the conservation of biodiversity at global, regional, national or local levels.
- Opposes all forms IGM of antelopes for commercial or amenity purposes, with particular reference to:
  - Hybridisation of different species.
  - Crossing of different subspecies.
  - Selective inbreeding of a population.





**Thank you**

# The Precautionary Principle

“When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm. Morally unacceptable harm refers to harm to humans or the environment.”

- The Precautionary Principle. UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). 2005

“...the internationally recognised precautionary principle, which provides guidance in the development and application of environmental law where there is scientific uncertainty. These two principles together with the principle in section 2(4)(a)(viii), which requires that negative impacts on the environment be anticipated and prevented, are particularly important because they advance the constitutionally significant objective of sustainable development .”

- SA National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) No.107 of 1998.