NACSSA’s Policy on the Breeding of Colour Variants of Wildlife
NACSSA represents ±750 conservancies in South Africa.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVANCIES OF SOUTH AFRICA  
(NACSA)

POLICY DOCUMENT

AGRICULTURE

NOVEMBER 2005
All naturally occurring wildlife on farms should be conserved and properly managed by:

1. Ensuring that sufficient natural habitat exists to sustain the passage of wild populations of fauna.
2. Ensuring against the destruction of habitat harboring rare or endangered species.
3. Educating farm labour as to the benefits of wildlife occurring on the farm and the legalities of chasing, hunting or capturing them.
4. Starting up a conservancy in the district, which would aim at establishing co-operative management of transient wildlife population in the area.
5. Reporting any unusual sightings or the occurrence of rare or endangered species to the local representative of the provincial nature conservation agency, for inclusion onto their data-base.
6. Adhering to all laws pertaining to the protection of wildlife.
7. Ensure that all hunting on farms is in accordance with the provincial nature conservation legislation.
8. Ensuring against unethical forms of hunting or any inhumane treatment of wildlife.
9. Refraining from importing any exotic species onto farms and game farms, including any indigenous species that do not naturally occur in the region.
10. Guarding against any illegal hunting on agricultural land.
11. Stocking farms or game farms with the correct species composition so as to guard against any unnatural hybridizing occurring.
12. Refraining from purchasing and stocking farms with any hybrid game species.
13. Refraining from selecting aberrant forms of wildlife for breeding purposes. (e.g. melinistic or albino forms)
Why is NACSSA opposed to the breeding of colour variant game?

• NACSSA supports the principle of sustainable use of wildlife and other natural resources, including well managed game ranching and ethical hunting.

• NACSSA does not support the breeding of genetically inferior recessive colour morphs as it makes no contribution to the conservation of South Africa’s wild biodiversity.

• NACSSA is concerned about the risks associated with the intensive and selective breeding of colour variants.
Why is NACSSA opposed to the breeding of colour variant game?

NACSSA’s concerns are:

- Inbreeding depression / loss of variability
- Unnatural selection / predator persecution
- Domestication / loss of genetic fitness
- Development of resistant strains of parasites
- Habitat loss / fragmentation (extensive to intensive)
- Animal welfare (vision, hearing, disease, stress, etc.)
- Reputational damage (hunting and tourism industry)
- Redirecting of limited resources from conservation
- Socio-economic risk / pyramid scheme
Why is NACSSA opposed to the breeding of colour variant game?

• Many of the concerns regarding the breeding of colour variants can be ‘mitigated’ by stricter control and better management practices.

• However, will that make the breeding of colour variants the right thing to do?
Why is NACSSA opposed to the breeding of colour variant game?

• The fundamental issue here is one of environmental ethics. Modern holistic environmental ethics awards intrinsic value to natural systems such as species, populations, or ecosystems.

• Aldo Leopold (1887 - 1948), considered by many as the father of wildlife management, expressed this philosophy as follows: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.”
Why is NACSSA opposed to the breeding of colour variant game?

• The overall conservation ethic is therefore to preserve the essential characteristics of a species and ensure genetically healthy and sustainable populations both in captivity and in the wild.

• Although occasional expressions of rare and deleterious genes do occur in nature, these traits should be allowed to appear at their naturally occurring frequencies.
POSITION PAPER ON THE BREEDING OF COLOUR VARIANTS IN THE WILDLIFE INDUSTRY

BACKGROUND

ACKNOWLEDGING that NACSSA has the responsibility to

i) Promote environmental sustainability and the conservation of South Africa’s biodiversity and environmental goods and services in conjunction with all land-users;

ii) Comment on and take part in all aspects related to the development of our environmental legislation;

iii) Liaise and assist (if possible) conservancy bodies (and organisations with a similar focus and aim) in other countries;

RE-ENFORCING NACSSA’s commitment to section 24 of the Constitution of South Africa and South Africa’s environmental management legislation;

RESERVES the right to enter into dialogue with any government department who proposes laws concerning the agricultural, game ranching, breeding and hunting industries, which may directly or indirectly have a deleterious effect on the environment;

APPRECIATING that many of our country’s farmers are indeed good conservationists;

OBSERVING the significant increase in the intensive breeding of colour variant game, such as white, black and copper-coloured springbok, “golden” oryx and wildebeest, by members of the wildlife industry;

COGNISANT of the substantial body of scientific evidence surrounding the detrimental consequences of line breeding of animals, such as inbreeding depression, loss of genetic diversity and various debilitating conditions and characteristics as a result thereof;

CONCERNED that exploitation and deliberate selective breeding for specific traits in indigenous wild animals, if uncontrolled, can negatively impact on our biophysical environment through the process of “genetic pollution” which is believed to substantially weaken the genetic resource with an increased likelihood of pollution of pure bred wild populations;
## How to regulate?

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Questions