

Cecil and Canned Lion Hunting



“How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered? Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished.” Jeremiah 12:4



Cecil, The Lion, was a popular attraction among international visitors to the Wankie / Hwange National Park, in Zimbabwe. Cecil was lured outside the Game Sanctuary’s boundaries by bait and killed in a canned “hunt”.

Cecil was a beloved character in the Hwange Game Reserve and was often photographed by tourists. “He never bothered anybody,” Johnny Rodrigues, of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force said. “He was one of the most beautiful animals.” 13-year-old Cecil the Lion had been collared and tracked by GPS as part of an Oxford University research project the university has run since 1999.

“They went hunting at night with a spotlight and they spotted Cecil,” Johnny Rodrigues, told The Guardian. “They tied a dead animal to their vehicle to lure Cecil out of the park and they scented an area about half a kilometre from the park.”

Rodrigues said Palmer first shot Cecil with a compound-bow, but it did not kill him. They then “tracked him down and found him 40 hours later” and shot him with a rifle, Rodrigues said.

“Cecil was not the first male lion enticed out of the park to be shot by trophy hunters. In fact, the research programme indicates that over the years, 74% of the male lions on the border of the National Park have been shot by hunters. Cecil was shot in an area not assigned a lion quota. Supposedly the bait was set for a leopard and then Cecil came along. The professional hunter, Theo Bronkhorst, told his client to shoot the lion, and then the hunt became illegal,” Lion Aid says. “The professional hunter then allegedly attempted to destroy the radio-collar to hide the evidence.”

Allegedly the client was “furious” when he found that the lion was radio-collared. Normally, when a professional hunter engages a client in an area without a lion quota, the lion will be listed as hunted in an area that does have quota. This could have been standard practice, but Cecil was a well-known lion. Cecil was an iconic animal who was recognised by many visitors to Hwange due to his distinctive black mane. Hwange attracted 50,000 visitors last year, most from abroad.

“The offender is an American dentist, Walter James Palmer,” Emmanuel Fundira, president of the Safari Operators Association of Zimbabwe, reported in the capital Harare. “A lot of people travel long distances coming to Zimbabwe to enjoy our wildlife and obviously the absence of Cecil is a disaster.” Fundira described Cecil as “almost semi-domesticated” and said that Palmer had paid \$55,000 for the “hunt”.

“Cecil was skinned and beheaded.” the ZCTF reported. The Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force said Cecil has 24 cubs, which were now in danger.





Bronkhorst and the landowner, Honest Ndlovu, appeared in court in Victoria Falls to face poaching charges. *“Both the professional hunter and land owner had no permit or quota to justify the offtake of the lion and therefore are liable for the illegal hunt,”* the Zimbabwean Parks Authority said in a statement Tuesday. *“They are being jointly charged for illegally hunting the lion.”* The statement made no mention of Palmer.

Palmer is an experienced trophy hunter from Minnesota. He is well-known in US hunting circles as an expert shot with his bow and arrow, and has travelled across the world in pursuit of leopards, buffalo, rhino, elk and other large mammals. Palmer, who reportedly pleaded guilty in 2008 to poaching a black bear in Wisconsin, said he had *“relied on the expertise of my local professional guides to ensure a legal hunt.”*

The Twitter and Facebook accounts and website of his dental practice - River Bluff Dental in a suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota - were shut down after being flooded with blistering attacks. A makeshift memorial to Cecil formed outside his shuttered office as outraged people dropped off fluffy animals and flowers.

Shocking Facts

There are less lions in the world than rhino. Lions are the only big cat not protected as an endangered species. There are more jaguars in the world than lions, and yet lions are not yet recognised as an endangered species. Almost as many lions are being killed by hunters each year as rhino are being poached.

Lions in the Line of Fire

There are twice as many lions in captivity in South Africa as in the wild. More than 8,000 lions are in captivity in South Africa being bred for the bullet or the bow. The explosive growth of the Asian lion bone trade, fuelled by canned hunting, is severely impacting on wild lions through a massive increase in poaching.

The Asian Crime Syndicate Connection

Approximately 1,000 lions are canned hunted every

year in South Africa. That is about the same number as rhinos that were poached last year. Lion bones are being sold to known Asian crime syndicates who pay Lion farmers, \$1,000 for a carcass, which is then sold as tiger bone cake in Asia, for \$70,000. There are ridiculous superstitions in Asia that lion and tiger bone cures different diseases and act as aphrodisiacs.

Drugged and Baited

There are documented cases of tame lions being drugged and baited to provide *“guaranteed kills”* for trophy hunters. Most of the canned lion hunting in South Africa is now being done with compound bows and arrows. Visit www.cannedlion.org for documentation and visual evidence of the shocking abuse and exploitation of South Africa’s wildlife. ***“They are quick to hurt and kill; they leave ruin and destruction wherever they go.”*** Rom 3:15

What Exactly is Canned Hunting?

Chris Mercer explains: *“Canned hunting is the hunting of an animal where the target is unfairly prevented from escaping the hunter, because of either physical constraints (fenced in) or mental constraints (habituation to humans).”*

Consider the Sparrows

God created all the animals (Psalm 104). God cares for the animals. ***“Jesus said: ‘are not the five sparrows sold for two copper coins and not one of them is forgotten before God.’”*** Luke 12:6. It is that Scripture which inspired the first act of the Union of South Africa, the minting of the half cent coin and later the one cent coin with two sparrows on it - reminding us that God cares for the very least.

“A good man is kind to his animals, but the wicked are cruel to theirs.” Proverbs 12:10. Cruelty to animals is, by definition, wicked.

Animals Matter to God

There are those who say that animals do not matter, but the Lord Jesus taught that His people are worth more than many sparrows (Matthew 6:28). If a sparrow is worthless, then of what value are you? A hundred times zero equals zero. A million times zero still equals zero. For you to be of great value, the birds of the air must be of some value. Obviously animals matter to God because the presence of animals in Nineveh is recorded as one of the



reasons for God's mercy in not destroying that sinful city (Jonah 4:11).

"For we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

The Ark of Noah Included Animals

Noah's Ark is the premier Biblical picture of Salvation. God provided a way of salvation from the judgment of the Flood, for Noah, his family and for multitudes of animals. *"Then God remembered Noah and every living thing and all the animals that were with him in the Ark..."* Genesis 8:1. The most revealing Old Testament picture of God's Redemptive work is Noah's Ark. God took great care to save animals from the Flood. In God's instructions to Noah we see many details and repeated emphasis on animals (Genesis 6). The Redemption of mankind from the Judgment of the Flood is a picture of Salvation. The rescue of the animals in the Ark is also a picture of how animals share in the benefits of Christ's Redemption. Just as with the animals in Noah's Ark, we see that the Salvation provided by Christ includes animals. *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are on earth - in Him."* Eph 1:10

God's Covenant with All Animals

Following the Flood, *"God made a Covenant with Noah and with every living creature... for perpetual generations... The rainbow shall be in the cloud... to remember the everlasting Covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."* Genesis 9:12,16

Reversing the Curse

In the words of Isaac Watts immortal Hymn: **Joy to the World:** *"He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found!"* Just as the rebellion of Adam and Eve brought death to every creature, so in the second Adam - Jesus Christ - the effects of the curse are reversed. *"For*

as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive." 1 Cor 15:22.

The blessings of the second Adam, Christ, are greater than the curse of the first Adam. *"And all flesh will see the Salvation of God."* Luke 3:6 (The Greek word *sarx* translated flesh is equally used to refer to all mankind and all breathing creatures, all animals and all Creation). *"Because the*



"A good man takes care of his animals, but wicked men are cruel to theirs."
Proverbs 12:10



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Creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Rom 8:21

King David's View of Affection for Pets

The prophet Nathan spoke to King David of a poor man in his kingdom who had a little lamb who shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like one of his own children (2 Samuel 12:3). There was no suggestion that this man's affection for his pet was inappropriate. Indeed when King David heard that a man had taken this precious pet and had killed it, we read: *"So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man and he said to Nathan: 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!'"* 2 Sam 12:5

Animals on Special Assignment

Throughout the Bible we read of various animals to whom God spoke and gave assignments. A **raven** was assigned to bring food to Elijah (1 Kings 17:4-6). The **donkey** through whom God spoke, (Numbers 22:21-41). The **lion** whom God sent to kill the prophet who disobeyed God (1 Kings 13:24-30). The **whale** that swallowed Jonah and transported him to the shore (Jonah 1:17). The **lions** whom God commanded not to harm Daniel (Daniel 6:22). All the animals that God commanded to present themselves to Adam to be named (Genesis 2:19), and the animals whom God guided to assemble in Noah's Ark (Genesis 6 and 7).

The Creator and His Creation
"For since the Creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and Divine



CAN ONE LION

WAKE THE WORLD?



“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” Proverbs 24:11



nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.” Romans 1:20. In lions we see something of the power, the courage, the boldness and royalty of the Creator. In lambs we see gentleness and meekness. In otters and dogs we see God’s playfulness. In horses we see some of the strength, stamina and perseverance of the Creator.

The Bible describes the Angels around God’s throne as having features and characteristics like those of a lion, a bull and an eagle (Ezekiel 1). God Himself is likened in Scripture to a lion, a leopard, a bear (Hosea 13:7-8), and to an eagle (Deuteronomy 32:11).

Jesus is described as **“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** John 1:29

There is only one way of salvation and that is through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - the Lamb of God who died to redeem sinful mankind (Revelation 5:12-13).

Jesus is also known as **“The Lion of the tribe of Judah”** (Revelation 5:5). It is interesting to notice that He was born in a stable among animals rather than in an inn among sinful people (Luke 2:7), that He rode a lowly donkey in triumph into Jerusalem on that great day of the feast (Matthew 21:5) and that He is prophesied to

return again in glory as the King of kings and Lord of lords, riding on a white horse (Revelation 19:11).

The Holy Spirit is symbolised by a dove (John 1:32), and He chose to reveal Himself as like a pure and gentle bird (Matthew 3:16) at Jesus’ baptism.

The Bible records at least one occasion when God

spoke through an animal (Numbers 22:28-33). Balaam’s donkey showed greater spiritual perception than the prophet himself did.

Obviously animals matter to God because the presence of animals in Nineveh is recorded as a reason for God’s mercy in not destroying that sinful city. **“How much more then, should I have pity on Nineveh, that great city. After all, it has more than 120,000 innocent children in it, as well as many animals.”** Jonah 4:11

Animals and Man

In the first chapter of the Bible, God made mankind responsible for His animals (Genesis 1:28). All animals are God’s animals (Psalm 50:10) and we are answerable to God for our treatment, care and protection of them. In the light of the clear teaching of Scripture concerning creation and mankind’s responsibility for it, we should treat animals with the love and concern of those who must give an account of our conduct to God. We must recognise that the welfare and protection of animals is an essential part of our Christian responsibility. We must all do what we can to secure the well-being of all animals who, with ourselves, inhabit the earth and so fulfil the creative joy and purpose of Almighty God.

Born in Africa

I have been born and brought up in Africa. Africa has always been my home. Some of my best friends are animals. Growing up, my very best friend was a lioness, Vivian, and a leopard, Malcolm. Those of us who have interacted, close-up, with these magnificent wild animals are horrified that anyone can subject them to trophy hunting, let alone in a baited/canned/staged/caged/ *guaranteed kill* environment.

Love for God’s Creatures

Perhaps some of these concerns are not as clear to people who live in the cities, far from wildlife, but for those of us who see the looting of God’s Creation, we are convinced that this is deeply offensive to God and destructive to His Creation.

Social Media

Please find, like and share our **Wonderful Wildlife** and **We Love God’s Animals** Facebook pages and visit www.theBibleandAnimals.org website.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.” Proverbs 31:8

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