SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY COUNCIL POSITION STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF OUR COUNTRY

The South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) recognises that mankind and its associated activities are the major threat to all non-human forms of life and to the environment as a whole.

The SAVC also acknowledges the significance of all forms of life as contributing to the whole of the existence of life on the planet and are thus worthy of respect and conservation. The SAVC also recognises the equal status of all forms of life within the complexity of the environmental web and therefore recommends the avoidance of any single-species approach to conservation.

The SAVC recognises the legal supremacy of the Constitution of South Africa and in particular the prescripts of Section 24 which describes the right of South Africans to the environment as follows:

Everyone has the right —

a. to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and

b. to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that — prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

The SAVC endorses the fact that sustainable utilisation includes both consumptive and non-consumptive methods of sustainable use of our natural resources or part thereof.

The SAVC understands and accepts sustained utilisation of all non-human forms of life. However, in accordance with the Mission of the SAVC to protect the health and well-being of animals and animal populations, such utilisation should at all times be undertaken with the utmost responsibility, respect and welfare for all forms of life in accordance with the five (5) basic principles of freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst by ready access to fresh water and an appropriate diet;
2. Freedom from discomfort by providing an appropriate environment, including shelter and comfortable resting areas;
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease;
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour; and
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

All harvesting and selling of living creatures and or products of living creatures should be done strictly in accordance of the laws of the country.