

this is essential and we urge Lao's CITES, customs and police authorities to work closely with enforcement officers in neighbouring countries and especially in China.

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### International trophy hunting in China

On 5 August 2011 the national wildlife management authority in the State Forestry Administration of China held an expert consultative meeting on the issue of whether or not to permit the hunting of seven Tibetan gazelles *Procapra picticaudata* and blue sheep *Pseudois nayaur* by international trophy hunters in the Dulan International Hunting Ground, Qinghai Province. The applications were submitted by two travel agencies in Beijing on behalf of foreign clients. The consultative meeting, which was opened to the media, was an attempt to reopen international trophy hunting in China following 5 years of suspension. The meeting voted to recommend the reopening of trophy hunting. This news, aired on television, websites and newspapers, stimulated a heated debate about international trophy hunting.

The Qinghai–Tibetan Plateau is home to many endemic species. Before the wildlife protection law was implemented in 1989 many wild animals were hunted on the Plateau: 1.5 million wild animal skins, 271,742 wildfowl and 2.6 million t of game meat were sold between 1965 and 1975. A further 2.9 million wild animal skins, 60,559 wildfowl and 2.1 million t of game meat entered domestic markets from 1976 to 1985. Hunting was banned nationwide and all sporting firearms were required to be surrendered to the police in 1994. Thus, at present there is no legal hunting permitted in China except in a few approved hunting grounds where artificially bred hare, pheasants and deer are released for recreational hunting. However, international trophy hunting had previously been permitted because hunters harvested a limited number of wild animals and paid a high trophy fee. For example, in the early 1980s it cost USD 45 to hunt a blue sheep as game meat for sale on the international market but the fee paid by a foreign hunter to hunt a blue sheep as a trophy animal was USD 5,900, plus service and conservation fees. Trophy hunting resulted in reduced hunting pressure on ungulates inhabiting the Plateau while simultaneously generating funds for conservation management and pasture compensation for indigenous herdsmen. Furthermore, herdsmen began to care about the blue sheep because

their value to international trophy hunters translated into revenue for the local economy.

Opinion was sharply divided in the debate about the reopening of trophy hunting. Those in favour argued that hunting is widely practised internationally as a management tool to regulate wild animal populations and as a mechanism to generate revenue that is channelled back into local economies and resource management. Principles of conservation and sustainable use of wild animal resources are embodied in CITES and national laws. Experience of trophy hunting in Australia, North America, southern Africa and Mongolia has demonstrated that trophy hunting can achieve successful protection of wild animals and their habitats, create an effective funding base for conservation management, improve local livelihoods and stimulate participation of indigenous peoples.

On the other hand those against were ideologically opposed to any animal being killed for any reason. This group of people formed an alliance to oppose the reopening of trophy hunting. In wide discussion on the internet it was clear that many people either did not believe the results of recent censuses in Dulan International Hunting Ground, which indicate that the populations of blue sheep and Tibetan gazelle are rebounding, or were sceptical that funds generated from trophy hunting would be allocated for conservation.

In the event, however, on 5 September 2011 the two travel agencies in Beijing withdrew their trophy hunting applications to the State Forestry Administration because 'their foreign clients could not make the trophy hunting trip within the time constraints'. Thus trophy hunting in China remains banned.

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### 13th Conservation Workshop for the Biodiversity of Arabia

The 13th Annual Conservation Workshop for the Biodiversity of Arabia was held at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW) in Sharjah, UAE, on 7–9 February 2012. This regional forum brought together 106 participants representing UAE, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Yemen and Oman, and from the USA, UK, South Africa, Zambia, Germany, Italy and