



## REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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### MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

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#### OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

#### PRESS RELEASE

26 November 2018

### RESPONSE TO CONCERNS ON WILDHORSES' WELLBEING

The Ministry has taken note of the concerns raised around the wellbeing and existence of the Namib Wild Horses after the last of the four Namib Wild Horse foals born since September have been preyed on by spotted hyenas.

We concur with concerns that unless an urgent intervention is made, at the current rate of predation on the foals the wild horse population will show no growth and could decline to an unsustainable population.

There are currently 80 wild horses at Garub in the Namib Naukluft Park and is made up of 47 stallions and 33 mares. The past five years has been extremely harsh for the wild horses, with severe drought and predation by a pack of spotted hyenas that had moved into the area decimating their numbers.

Unfortunately foals are easy targets for these hyenas because they are weak and vulnerable. According to biologist Dr. Telane Greyling who has studied the wild horses for the past 20 years, the hyenas in 2013 alone killed a 100 horses of which 50 were foals. No foal has survived since 2012 making the youngest horse six years old.

Therefore, as a matter of urgency the Ministry is devising a solution that will reverse this disturbing trends and ensure a healthy and sustainable wild horses population.

The recent good rains received has improved grazing conditions of the horses but the hyena remains the ultimate threat giving no chance of foals surviving.

Relocating the horses was previously considered and seemed less viable, therefore the Ministry is now considering relocating the hyenas in an attempt to safe guard the wild horses against possible extermination or extinction. However this needs to be considered carefully not to disturb the natural ecosystem since the hyenas are in their natural habitat.

The Ministry has also in the past tried to intervene by feeding the hyenas in an attempt to distract their attention from preying on the horses.

We wish to assure the Namibian people and the world at large that the Ministry will respond swiftly to the ailing condition of the horses. We are aware of the tourism, environmental and economic value these horses have and their extinction is not an option.

The Ministry is open to collaborate with anyone including the Namibia Wild Horses Foundation on the protection and conservation of these species which are not only a tourist attraction but a national heritage.

  
Romeo Muyunda  
MET Spokesperson

