

Pretoria, 01 March 2023 – In response to a media statement of the Bloemfontein SPCA regarding a serious report of animal cruelty on a game ranch near Verkeerdevlei in the Free State, WRSA has released the following statement:

South Africa – As a leading association representing wildlife ranchers in South Africa, Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA) is deeply distressed at reports of animal cruelty found after an inspection of a game farm in Verkeerdevlei in the Free State on 31 January 2023.

[\(Media Statement: Bloemfontein SPCA, 01 March 2023\)](#)

The inspection was carried out by the Bloemfontein SPCA, Virginia SPCA and Free State Department: Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTEA).

We wish to condemn in the strongest sense the actions of this individual and to state unequivocally that this treatment of any animal goes against every standard of ethics and humanity which we expect from all people who have taken on the responsibility of caring for animals. As an association, we are committed to promoting ethical sustainable wildlife ranching practices that prioritize animal welfare. The extended keeping of any animal in a game trailer designed for translocation for several months, is utterly unacceptable.

Wildlife ranching fulfils a crucial role in South Africa's conservation efforts and has been recognized as a significant contributor to the country's economy. However, the industry's reputation is at stake due to instances of animal cruelty such as reported in this case. Any damage to the industry – reputationally or otherwise – puts at risk not only our continued work towards conservation but also the livelihoods of more than 400,000 rural South Africans.

In the best interest the animals in our care and our industry, wildlife ranchers must always prioritize the well-being of animals and adhere

to the strict regulations governing animal welfare in South Africa, including the Animal Protection Act Nr 71 of 1962. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that wildlife ranching continues to be a sustainable and ethical practice that benefits both conservation and the economy.

The identity of the person charged is currently still unknown, however, we as WRSA offer our full support and assistance to the investigation in any way we can and have reached out to them directly.

WRSA encourages members of the public to report any instances of animal mistreatment or cruelty to the relevant authorities. We are committed to working with the authorities to ensure that any such cases are thoroughly investigated and that the perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.