

This is a letter I sent to a magazine about NC and how we are faced with incompetent people in positions today, we must get a permit to hunt legally, but look at what I went through, I hardly ever hunt WC BECAUSE of far too much red tape, BUT when I had to this was the result.

I applied on Sept 27th, and till today November 20th have heard ZERO to legally hunt vermin on farms.

Nature Conservation and hunting vermin in the Western Cape

We had stock loss, sheep being killed on the farm, so being located in the Western Cape we contacted NC and got the form to fill in. On 27 September 2010, I submitted the application for a hunting permit, and waited. Two weeks to the day (after about 3 emails to them asking what the heck was happening), I got a call from an Officer who asked me to meet him at the farm the following Tuesday (another week).

When I asked why we should meet, he said it was because I had claimed that predators had killed sheep on the farm, and he wanted to see proof of what the predator had been killing in order to issue the species permit. He said that he would do an inspection and then go back to NC to discuss the matter and see what permit they would issue.

I wondered whether they actually went by car to all the thousands of farms in the Western Cape to inspect all stock loss – this would be totally crazy. What's the sense in applying for a permit and then having to wait about four weeks to get a response; then a meeting is held – all this to shoot vermin on farms that are killing sheep.

On 19 October the Officer arrived at the farm, had a look around, and spoke to other people on the farm who had also witnessed the killings. He then indicated to the farm manager he would issue a permit after he had called me. So I waited for the call and the issuing of the permit.

19, 20, 21, 22 October ... and we waited, waited, waited... and then it was weekend again and we had still heard nothing. I am still awaiting a permit or contact from NC, so maybe next week...

Today is the 27th. It seems they have simply forgotten about me, and my needs for a permit and wanting to go the legal route ... what a pathetic business.

I have said this before: what needs to be done is that all the farmers in the Western Cape, who have stock loss, should all get together and take NC to court for the stock loss they have suffered from the time they applied for a permit till it actually came - one

massive lawsuit. This would sort out all the problems very quickly and having to rely on NC and a system full of holes. How could they possibly visit all farms throughout the Western Cape to evaluate all the applications? They don't have manpower, finances or transport to carry out this task – it is of no use visiting a farm three weeks after a person has applied to see proof of killings - this all needs to be done promptly.

I wrote NC a letter after two weeks, commenting on their bad services. I then received a response asking me when I had applied and with whom, even though the original emails had the name of their officer clearly displayed at the top of the email for all to see. As a professional I walk a straight road with the law, but with these laws how are farmers to survive? And then I am told by a guy who emailed me, that just the previous week he got a permit after 3 days and nobody had visited him. He had simply sent in an application and got a permit, so I ask you!

It is all another way to stop guns in SA, and make life difficult for those who own guns. Anything at all related to guns is made as hard as possible.

So, after all this time, does nature conservation honestly think a pile of dead rotten smelly carcasses would be available to be shown to them for inspection?

These laws need serious thought, and a final thing that bugs me is how come a hunting licence costs R170-00 in the Western Cape but these Permits are sold for only R25-00 for the Northern Cape. What is the difference?

They claim a permit is for 3 months. If they issue it for 3 months, that's 90 days - this sounds like a lot of days, BUT actually it doesn't provide for 90 days of hunting vermin. Looking at it from a predator hunter's perspective, it is anything but 90 days. Here is why: firstly the moon plays a MAJOR role in predator calling, In general you have about 14 days a month to call with good moon conditions. So, already that 90 days decreases to 42 days, and then you may have applied for a permit in winter so the rain will catch you, which cuts down the time by another week in each month in general, and then don't forget the wind, as the dates on which you planned to hunt may be windy or rainy, so another few days of that month are affected as you can't call in the wind or rain. So wind and rain cuts more days off that 90-day term. In actual fact, a typical predator hunter with a 3 month-permit, considering rain, moon and wind, may have only about 30 days on which to call in a 90-day window. It is of no use saying it's an amazing 3-month permit, as **you don't have 3 months at all.**

So, I never got my permit, was never contacted again by NC and till this day, since I applied, am no better off. I have tested the system, applied for a permit, with no success to date. Great service, NC! Now after they have read this letter they will no doubt answer it, BUT facts are facts and these are the facts and shocking service I received.

G Laubscher

(I was told by a conservation official in an email that it takes 10 days normally to get a permit – yeh fat chance! Personally I think this saga of having to apply to get permission to kill vermin on your farm, vermin that is killing your game, sheep and poultry, is in my book a total joke. These vermin are not bought at auctions and located to farms; they are free roaming and cost farmers millions every year. But we are expected to get a permit, and ask permission to shoot the rubbish, then the authorities just forget about us.) Nov 6 -2010 I have all correspondance to back what I claim here.

RECEIVED PERMIT 28th November after a local nature magazine helped.