

Case 7

Every year thousands of hunters try their luck at bagging their dream trophies: wildebeest, aoudad, zebra, Asiatic Water Buffalo, Nilgai antelope, dama gazelle, and other exotics. Hunters don't have to travel to distant lands to pursue their dream. Since the 1930's, many US ranchers have stocked their ranges with scores of endangered species, charging hunters up to several thousand dollars to kill just one animal.

Commercial hunting of exotics gives ranchers incentives to breed rare animals that might not otherwise survive. Hunters and ranchers claim that the business of providing exotic animals for hunting not only conserves endangered animals, but also creates conditions that allow them to thrive. Exotic animal hunting is, they contend, the only reason some of these animals still exist. Supporters of exotic hunts claim that the practice is successful in conserving species. They point out that some endangered species are now more numerous in the US than in their native countries; some species found on these ranches, like the scimitar horned oryx, no longer exist in the wild.

Opponents of exotic hunts claim that breeding rare animals for hunting is not conservation, but a violent sport that abuses animals for commercial exploitation. Besides killing exotic animals, hunting leaves many maimed, orphaned, debilitated by parasitic or infected wounds, and vulnerable to predators. Even when they escape their human predators, hunted animals suffer stress from the constant chase, fear, inability to feed adequately, and disruption of family units.

