

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 12, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

We write to you today to urge you to cooperate fully with Zimbabwean authorities in order to complete a full investigation of the recent killings of two African lions in the area surrounding Hwange National Park. Additionally, we encourage you to devote all necessary resources to complete a review of the public comments on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) proposed rule to list the African lion as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and to finalize that rule expeditiously.

Along with many of our fellow Americans, we were outraged to learn of the tragic death of the beloved African lion named Cecil, allegedly by an American trophy hunter. This hunter traveled thousands of miles to shoot a lion for sport. He and his guides reportedly lured Cecil out of the protected Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe, used a bow and arrow to wound him, and tracked him for 40 hours, before he ultimately shot, skinned and decapitated the majestic lion. In the wake of this tragedy, the FWS must act swiftly to determine if any domestic or international laws were broken, and to complete its work on its proposed rule to list African lions as threatened and require permits for trophy imports.

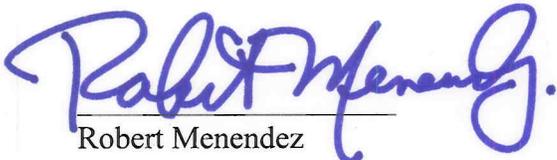
Cecil is only one of hundreds of African lions who are killed by American trophy hunters each year. The United States is the world's largest importer of African lion parts as hunting trophies and for commercial purposes. In recent years, it is estimated that over 400 lions are lost to American trophy hunters each year. The number of African lions has declined by almost 50 percent in the past three decades, with fewer than 40,000 individuals—and possibly as few as 23,000—existing today. Moreover, the African lion occupies only 22 percent of its historic range. It is our view that this data presents a strong case for listing the African lion under the Endangered Species Act.

Listing the African lion as threatened would require that the FWS allow import of sport-hunted lion trophies only from countries with sound conservation plans that enhance the survival of the species in the wild. Additionally, it would send a clear message to the international community that the United States will not tolerate hunts in countries without a sustainable, science-based lion management plan, or in circumstances that do not benefit the conservation of the species. We urge the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to continue its commitment to protect the

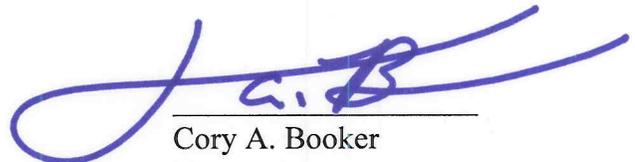
most vulnerable species in the United States and around the world, and to complete its work on the proposed listing of the African lion.

CC:
Daniel M. Ashe, Director
Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, Room 3331
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Edward Markey
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator