

16th December 2018

## CELEBRITIES & MPS CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO BAN HUNTING TROPHIES

### **Michael Gove urged to stop issuing import permits after revelations that elephant tusks and growing numbers of lion trophies are being brought into U.K.**

Over 50 leading public figures have called on the government to stop hunters being allowed to bring trophies of endangered wildlife into the country.

It follows revelations by the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting that 2 tonnes of elephant ivory have been allowed into Britain by the government over the last decade.

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting has also revealed that the number of lion trophies coming into the U.K. has doubled since the death of Cecil the lion in 2015.

The signatories of a new open letter to the government calling for a hunting trophy import ban include (in alphabetical order):

conservationist Damian Aspinall,

Angie Best,

comedian John Bishop,

Presenter Nicky Campbell OBE,

Ex-RSPCA CEO Jeremy Cooper,

actress Annette Crosbie OBE,

legendary Monty Python star Eric Idle,

Downton Abbey star and leading animal activist Peter Egan,

legendary explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes OBE,

musician Liam Gallagher,

TV and radio presenter Eamonn Holmes OBE,

Only Fools and Horses star Sir David Jason OBE,

TV presenter Lorraine Kelly OBE,

former newsreader & "I'm a Celebrity.." star Jan Leeming,

Ab Fab star Joanna Lumley OBE,  
'Born Free' film star Virginia McKenna OBE,  
'Allo 'Allo star Vicki Michelle MBE,  
presenter and journalist Piers Morgan,  
actress Lesley Nicol,  
conservationist and broadcaster Bill Oddie OBE,  
Chris Packham,  
comedian Sara Pascoe,  
cricketer Kevin Pietersen MBE,  
ecologist Sir Jonathon Porritt CBE,  
actress Carol Royle,  
Richer Sounds CEO Julian Richer,  
musician Ed Sheeran MBE,  
conservationist Will Travers OBE, and  
Carol Vorderman MBE.

In their letter, they say:

"Hundreds of hunting trophies have been imported into the UK in recent years, including from species threatened with extinction such as elephants, lions, hippopotamus, leopards, and rhinoceros.

"Trophy hunting is having a negative impact on wildlife through the loss of significant numbers of healthy individuals that are key to the survival of rapidly declining populations.

"Unsustainable rates of trophy hunting have caused some populations of Africa's big cats to decline, while hunting and poaching is outpacing the rate of reproduction of elephants.

"Trophy hunting is cruel, immoral, archaic and unjustifiable, and can act as a cover of illegal poaching.

“We believe that a global end to trophy hunting is desirable, and that nature tourism is a humane and more effective means of conserving wildlife and supporting local communities.

“We therefore call on the U.K. government to commit to halting imports of hunting trophies as a matter of urgency.”

Twice as many lion trophies have been brought back to Britain by hunters in the 3 years following the killing of Cecil than in the 3 years prior to his death.

As well as mounted heads, the trophies brought home by British hunters include lions’ feet, skins and skulls.

Over 700 elephant trophies and body parts – including feet, tails, trunks and ears – have been taken home by U.K. hunters over the last decade.

British trophy hunters have also killed hundreds of hippos, bears, baboons, leopards and zebras in recent years.

The government has come under fire for failing to follow through on promises to ban lion trophy imports after Cecil the lion was killed by American dentist Walter Palmer in 2015. The killing of Cecil led to France, the Netherlands and Australia banning trophy imports.

Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting founder Eduardo Gonçalves said:

“Britain has sought to be a world leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation. However it’s reputation is under threat following the revelations that it is allowing hunters to kill and bring home trophies of some of the world’s most endangered species. If it wants to rebuild its reputation, it should act now to help bring about a global ban on trophy hunting.

“Scientists are saying that trophy hunting is directly contributing to endangered wildlife being pushed to the brink of extinction. Lions, elephants and leopards are among those species particularly affected. We may have very little time left to save them.

“This is an issue where there is overwhelming public and political consensus. Michael Gove has responded to public demand in the past to increase sentences for animal abusers. He should listen now to the public’s demand to stop allowing hunters to kill endangered wildlife and bring their trophies home with them”.

Lorraine Kelly said:

“I’m appalled and disgusted by this so-called “sport”. I have been lucky enough to visit Africa many times and see these beautiful wild animals. I would like my grandchildren to be able to do the same one day.”

Chris Packham said:

“Trophy hunting has had its ugly day in the sun. It’s not a sport: in sport there is fair competition. Here the animals die and the humans sit on their corpses for a selfie.

“Trophy hunting is about killing wildlife, and when more and more species are heading towards the brink of extinction it’s no longer ethically or morally acceptable.

“We still hear those involved in trophy hunting trot out the tired old lie that it’s about conservation. But killing wildlife for fun is a dying business, and this is just another way for them to try to justify their desire to kill for pleasure”.

Peter Egan added:

“The government has allowed British trophy hunters to kill hundreds of elephants for their tusks. It’s given hunters more permits to bring back lion trophies after the killing of Cecil than ever before. People are simply going to wonder what on earth is going on?

“We’re supposed to be a nation of animal lovers, yet the government’s policies on trophy hunting are contributing to extreme cruelty being inflicted on animals.

“Trophy hunting is driving endangered wildlife to extinction. The government should hang its head in shame.”

Politicians who have signed the letter include:

Conservative Zac Goldsmith MP,

Chris Williamson MP (Labour);

Sir Edward Davey MP (Lib Dem),

Stuart McDonald MP (SNP),

Jim Shannon MP (DUP),

Caroline Lucas MP (Green), and

Shadow Leader of the House of Lords Baroness Angela Smith.

Other MPs to have signed the open letter are: Tonia Antoniazzi MP; Clive Betts MP; Ronnie Campbell MP; Vernon Coaker MP; Ann Coffey MP; Rosie Cooper MP; Clive Efford MP; Jim Fitzpatrick MP; Paul Flynn MP; Kelvin Hopkins MP; Andrea Jenkyns MP; Albert Owen MP; Matthew Pennycook MP; Jonathan Reynolds MP; Chris Stephens MP; Graham Stringer MP; and Anna Turley MP.

An Early Day Motion calling for a ban on Trophy Hunting has been signed by 120 MPs from

the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Green Party, and the DUP.