

CAMPAIGN TO
BAN
TROPHY
HUNTING



CECIL BETRAYED

**Britain's role in Lion trophy
hunting & factory farming**



Briefing Note—December 2018

“Cecil Betrayed”

Britain’s role in Lion Trophy Hunting & Factory Farming

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Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting

Sanderson Centre

Lees Lane

Gosport PO12 3UL

www.bantrophyhunting.com

bantrophyhuntingcampaign@mail.com

twitter: @CBTHunting

Facebook.com/BanTrophyHuntingCampaign

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Executive Summary

1. Lions are in serious trouble, and a number of reports now point to trophy hunting as playing a significant role in their worsening conservation status.
2. From a population of around 450,000 in the 1950s, there are now believed to be just 20,000 left.
3. They have disappeared from 90% of their range, and have gone extinct in 26 countries.
4. Approximately 10,000 lions have been killed by trophy hunters over the past decade - about half today's total remaining population.
5. Current annual hunting quotas are equivalent to one-third of all remaining adult males.
6. In 2006, 1428 lion trophies were exported. In 2016, the figure was 1623 - up 14%.
7. Trophy hunting has a disproportionate effect on lion numbers. Trophy hunters prize male lions with impressive manes. These are the strongest, most mature males best able to protect prides and cubs. It can take a pride 7 years to recover from their loss.
8. Killing pride leaders can lead to a weakening of a local population's gene pool, and often results in infanticide as new males seek to take control of the pride.
9. There are some 200-300 lion "factory farms" in South Africa alone, holding upwards of 8,000 lions - three times South Africa's wild lion population.
10. The cubs are taken from their mothers shortly after birth in order to 'socialise' them and to force the lionesses to breed again.
11. Operators make large profits through 'cub petting' and 'lion walking' experiences before moving the animals into enclosures for "cut-price trophy hunting".
12. The cost of hunting a "factory farmed lion" ranges from \$5,000 - \$25,000, compared to \$60,000 - \$120,000 for a wild lion.
13. Lion factory farming is closely linked to the lion bone trade, in which lioness skeletons are boiled or steeped in wine in order to make 'lion wine' and 'lion cake' for use in Asian 'traditional medicines'.
14. Over 90% - nearly 1,500 - of all lion trophies in 2016 came from South Africa. The majority came from lion factory farming facilities.
15. Britain is no exception to the trend: nearly 80% of the approximately 100 lion trophies imported into the UK over the past decade came from South Africa.
16. More than half of the lion trophies imported into the UK over the past decade have come in since 2015 - the year Cecil was killed in Zimbabwe.
17. This was also the year the UK government first promised to consider banning lion trophy imports.
18. In the 3 years before Cecil's death (2012-14), 27 lion trophies were imported by UK trophy hunters. For the 3 year period after Cecil's death, the figure is 59 trophies.
19. Lion hunting is increasingly popular with British trophy hunters. In 2007, just 4 lion trophies were brought into Britain. In 2017, the figure was 15.
20. Around half the lion trophies imported into the UK over the past decade were of mounted trophy heads. Other imports included whole lion bodies, skulls, skins, feet, and rugs.

1. Conservation status of lions

- The lion is officially classed as 'Vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of endangered species. Numbers are currently in decline. The most recent estimates put the total remaining population at around 20,000 animals. In the 1950s, it was estimated that the lion population was 450,000 strong. According to the IUCN, lion populations have fallen by over 40% over the past 21 years.
- The geographic range of African lions has shrunk by nearly 90% over the past century. The species has disappeared from 26 countries in recent times. Three-quarters of remaining African lion populations are in decline. Lions in northern Africa are particularly threatened, with West Africa lions listed as critically endangered.
- Threats to lions include human-wildlife conflict as communities encroach into wildlife habitats for housing and agriculture. Habitat loss and fragmentation is creating isolated populations making them more prone to localised extinctions. Trophy hunting and the hunting of lions for body parts used in traditional 'medicine' are now both increasingly contributing to population declines.

2. Impacts of trophy hunting

- High rates of trophy hunting have been found to have directly resulted in population declines, according to research conducted for members of the US House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee. The number of lions hunted in the decade between 2003-2013 represents half of the current number of lions remaining in the wild.
- A number of scientific studies have pointed to the negative impact of trophy hunting on lion numbers. A 2015 UNEP report noted 'concerns in many areas'. Hunter et al. (2013) called for urgent and comprehensive reforms of lion management. Packer et al. (2011) recommended that hunting should be reduced to just one male lion per 2,000 km² in order to protect populations. Lindsey et al. (2013) denounced arbitrary quota establishment, excessive harvesting, a lack of enforced age restrictions, a lack of minimum hunt lengths, concentrated hunting areas especially alongside game parks, and a lack of funding for effective law enforcement.
- A recent report produced for the CITES Periodic Review acknowledged that a 'high demand for lion trophies has caused trophy off-takes to be too high in most countries'. The 2015 IUCN Red Data analysis on lions reveals there is concern that current trophy hunting management regimes are one of the main contributors to the lion's decline. Lion density has been found to be significantly lower in hunting zones compared to national parks.
- Trophy hunters prefer to kill the most beautiful, the biggest and sometimes also the rarest animals. This places further pressure on already vulnerable and declining

populations. It can adversely affect the gene pool and reduce the average size of future generations, which in turn threatens the ability of future generations to thrive.

- Killing off adult males of lions decreases the survival odds of the surviving young. It may also destabilize the population by creating a shortage of males. If females are targeted, this can also lead to the deaths of young offspring.
- A continent-wide lion population of 20-25,000 means there are about 3,000 adult 'trophy' males. It has been estimated that around 40% of them will be in protected areas, leaving a "hunnable" total of around 1,800 male lions. There are an average of over 650 trophy exports per year, which represents an unsustainable hunting rate.
- Studies of Tanzania's lion population found that, between 1996 and 2008, the lion "harvest" declined by over 50%. This was despite the fact that there had been an increase in hunters of 60% since 1998. The decline was found to be due to the fact that Tanzania was rapidly running out of trophy lions, and clients were increasingly shooting underage males. The steepest population declines occurred in areas with the highest levels of trophy hunting. Numbers remained stable in tourist areas where there was no hunting.
- The killing of adult males has often been associated with an accelerated decline in pride stability and increased infanticide. A study of lions in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park - the home of Cecil - looked at the impacts of the killing of 24 lions by trophy hunters, representing 72% of the adult territorial males tagged within the Park's boundaries. Two lion prides saw a change of males four times during the study. A total of 19 cubs were lost due to infanticide from four prides.

3. Lion factory farming, canned hunting & the lion bone trade

- A canned hunt is one that takes place in a fenced-in area. The lions have no chance of escape. The animals are often baited to a particular location for the kill. Some are habituated to approaching vehicles, associating them with food, making the kill even easier.
- Since first being exposed in a Cook Report documentary for ITV in 1997, the canned hunting industry has boomed. Today there are estimated to be approximately 200 'lion farms' in South Africa alone holding upwards of 8,000 captive lions that have been reared solely for the purpose of cut-price trophy hunting. To properly understand the scale of the industry one needs to understand that there are fewer than 3,000 wild lions in South Africa.
- Half of all the lion trophies imported to the U.S. in 2014 came from captive-bred lions killed in South African lion farms. According to the South African Department of Environment (DEA), less than 10 wild lions are hunted in South Africa per annum. Lion farming and canned hunting is now a multimillion dollar industry.

- The farms often resemble prison camps with large numbers of 'inmates' on bare ground behind barbed-wire fences. Many suffer from ill-health. Ian Michler, the main narrator for the 'Blood Lions' documentary about canned hunting, described it as "about breeding wildlife as intensively as they can, as quickly as they can, to make as much money as they can."
- Canned hunting is popular because the kill is guaranteed, and the animal is likely to have fewer scars - for example, as a result of fights with other wild lions. It is also considerably cheaper. Wild lion hunting can cost between US \$60,000 to US \$120,000. The cost of killing a captive lion in a canned hunt can range from US \$5,000- \$25,000/lion.
- Farmed lions often begin life as cubs who have been taken away from their mothers just days after birth. This is both to 'tame' the cubs and also to force the lionesses into oestrus again. In the wild, lionesses and cubs typically stay together for about 1.5 years.
- The cubs then become part of a lucrative 'lion petting' industry where people pay to cuddle and bottle-feed them. In some cases these centres are staffed by volunteers - some of them gap-year students - who have paid large amounts of money to volunteer at what they have been led to believe is a conservation programme or sanctuary. When they are older, the lions are used in equally lucrative 'walking with lions' experiences.
- Once they are adults, or when they are too large or dangerous for lion-walking, they enter into the canned hunting enclosures. Prospective hunters may pre-select them from a website or from a stand at a hunting convention.
- Females are often shot for their bones to be used to make lion 'wine' or 'cake', an increasingly popular pseudo-medicinal product sold in Asian markets. The popularity of lion bones has grown in inverse proportion to the decline in the availability of tiger bones because of declining tiger populations. The males will be shot for trophies and body parts to be taken back home to the US, UK and other countries.
- The canned farming and hunting industry is allowing those involved to maximise profits at every stage of a lion's life. In addition to the \$5-25,000 per lion that is shot, a lion skeleton for wine/cake can be worth another US \$1,260 to US \$1,560 per set without skulls, and up to US \$1,890 to US \$2,100 with skulls (the total figure depends on the size of the skeleton, which is sold on weight). Skeletons are sold to Chinese dealers in Durban or Johannesburg, then shipped to Asia where the product, once boiled down and bottled, could fetch a market value exceeding US \$20,000. From 2008 to 2011, the official number of lion skeletons legally exported from South Africa with CITES permits totaled 1,160.

4. Lion trophy hunting and the law

- CITES regulations state that lion products may be commercially exported under a permit system “if the relevant authorities are satisfied that certain conditions are met, above all that trade will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.”
- Lions are classified in Appendix II of CITES in most countries, but are also included in Appendix I in some areas owing to their fragile conservation status. Appendix I lists species “threatened with extinction. Trade in these species is permitted “only in exceptional circumstances.” Appendix II includes species in which “trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.” In reality, trophy hunting permits are issued as a matter of routine in both instances.

5. UK policy

- On 14 June 2016, Henry Smith MP tabled a parliamentary question in which he asked whether the Secretary of State had any plans “to prohibit the import of trophies from any CITES Appendix I or Appendix II listed species.” On 27 June 2016, Rory Stewart gave the following reply:

“Under international rules set by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), a hunting trophy from a species listed on Appendix I or Appendix II of the Convention can be exported only if the exporting country is satisfied that the hunt was both legal and sustainable.

Importing controls are implemented at an EU-wide level and the UK works with other EU Member States to agree a collective approach. In light of growing concerns about the sustainability of the hunting of some species, stricter controls on the import of hunting trophies of six species, including lions and African elephants, have been introduced. As a result, the import of hunting trophies of certain species from certain countries is currently prohibited.

The Government considers that properly managed, legal and sustainable trophy hunting can play a part in species conservation efforts, including by providing an important source of funding for conservation in some countries. In view of this, we have no plans to introduce legislation banning the import of all trophies of Appendix I and II species. We will however continue to monitor the impact of trophy hunting and will work to put in place greater protection, including prohibiting imports, if this is shown to be needed.

For example, in recognition of the real concerns about the impact of trophy hunting on lion conservation, I announced in Parliament on 24 November 2015 that the Government will ban lion trophy imports by the end of 2017 unless there are improvements in the way hunting takes place in certain countries, judged against strict criteria. We will work with our European and international partners, and experts in the field, to reach a common approach to this issue.”

- There have been few if any changes made to practices around lion trophy hunting, but there have been no further measures taken by the government.
- Countries which have banned the import of lion trophies include Australia which introduced a ban in March 2015. Environment Minister Greg Hunt imposed a total ban on all African lion trophy imports specifically as a result of concerns around canned hunting.
- France's environment minister Ségolène Royale instructed officials to stop issuing permits for lion trophies 4 months after the killing Cecil. Royale also said that the French government would “seek stricter” regulations on the importing of hunting trophies into the EU.
- The Netherlands has introduced the strictest ban on the importing of hunting trophies, including those of white rhinos, elephants, cheetahs, lions, hippos and polar bears.

CONCLUSIONS

- The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting believes that trophy hunting is cruel, immoral, archaic and unjustified. The scientific evidence clearly points to trophy hunting having negative consequences for the conservation of endangered species. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the case of lions.
- We believe that Britain, as a global leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation matters, should ban the import of lion trophies forthwith. It should also work with our international partners to ensure trophy hunting is included within the provisions of CITES, and to bring about a global convention that brings trophy hunting to an end.
- Arguments that “well-managed” trophy hunting can potentially make a positive contribution to the conservation of endangered species have been proven to be thin or non-existent upon closer examination. A study by researchers for the US House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee looked at 4 case studies where conservation benefits had been claimed, and found that only in one could any discernible benefits be identified. The researchers also found that trophy hunting was directly and specifically contributing to the decline in lion populations. Other studies have found trophy hunting to have been directly responsible for the dramatic decline in species such as dorcas gazelles and Nubian bustards.
- IUCN studies have themselves concluded that trophy hunting is an inefficient economic activity and form of land use for the purposes of conservation and socio-economic development. There have been a number of reports pointing to widespread corruption involving government departments and officials responsible for overseeing trophy hunting and conservation. The UN World Tourism Organisation is among many bodies to state that nature tourism is a much more effective means of generating revenues for local communities.

- Canned hunting is a particularly despicable and cruel form of trophy hunting, and has been criticised even by some in the trophy hunting community because of the clear lack of 'fairness'. CITES has taken a strong position against canned hunting.
- There can be little doubt that trophy hunting has serious impacts in terms of animal welfare. Large animals are difficult to kill cleanly, and trophy hunters tend to avoid headshots that may otherwise 'spoil' the trophy. Many trophy hunters are in fact quite poor shots, and there are documented cases of even smaller animals such as leopards taking several days to die.
- There is currently growing popularity among trophy hunting enthusiasts in the use of bows and arrows, which is reportedly leading to a significant increase in reported wounding rates.
- In 2015, and again in 2016, the UK government stated it would ban lion trophy imports by the end of 2017 unless significant improvements were made by the industry. There is little if any evidence of any such improvements having been made. In the meantime, lion populations are continuing to decline, as indeed are those of many other Appendix I and Appendix II species as defined by CITES.
- A number of foreign governments have taken measures to stop the import of hunting trophies because of concerns about canned hunting and the conservation status of lions. The UK is perceived by itself and others as a global leader in animal welfare and wildlife conservation matters. Given the ongoing decline in the conservation status of lions, concerns about the conservation impact of trophy hunting on lions, ethical concerns about canned hunting and the rise on the lion bone trade, and concerns around animal welfare, it is clear that a UK ban on trophy imports would be a positive step with few if any down-sides.
- The UK Government should push to have trophy hunting included within the provisions of CITES in order to prevent poachers from posing as trophy hunters in order to continue their illicit trade. It should also take the lead in proposing a global agreement that seeks to bring trophy hunting to an end, with proper enforcement measures, and support the growth of nature and wildlife tourism for the benefit of wildlife conservation and poverty eradication.

Appendix 1 - UK Data

UK Lion Trophy Imports 2007-2016

2007 = 4
2008 = 4
2009 = 3
2010 = 3
2011 = 11
2012 = 17
2013 = 5
2014 = 5
2015 = 31
2016 = 13
(2017 = 15)

Total: 2007-2016 = 94 (2008-2017 = 105)

Note: 2017 data was due for filing with the UNEP-WCMC by October 31, 2018. Governments are sometimes late with filings, hence it is assumed that 2016 data will be the most reliable final figure.

Countries of Origin 2007-2016:

South Africa = 72 (77%)
Zimbabwe = 15
Zambia = 4
Mozambique = 2
Tanzania = 2
US = 1
(2017 - South Africa = 7, Namibia = 6)

Trophies/body parts 2007-2016:

Trophies = 52
Skulls = 16
Bodies = 11
Claws = 10
Bones = 9
Skins = 5
Feet = 2
(2017 - 9 trophies, 3 skulls, 2 rugs, 1 body)

Appendix 2 - Global Data

Figure for 2016

Total: 1,623 + 540 kg skeleton. 8 were from Appendix 1 countries

In 2006, the total figure was 1428 (none of which were from Appendix I countries). This represents an increase of 13.7% from 2006-2016.

Countries of origin:

South Africa = 1,474 (91%)

Zimbabwe = 41

Burkina Faso = 39

Botswana = 10

Zambia = 5

Mozambique = 4

Trophies/body parts

Trophies = 895

Claws = 274

Skulls = 139

Skeletons = 101 + 540 kg skeleton

Bones/bone pieces = 71

Derivatives = 52

Skins/skin pieces = 44

Bodies = 29

Teeth = 10

1 x jewellery

1 x rug

Between 2005 and 2014, trophies of 5,605 African lions were imported to the US alone, an average of 560 per year.

There was a steady increase in imports from 2011 onward, as in the UK, with imports peaking at 736 lions imported in 2014.