

## CAMPAIGN TO BAN TROPHY HUNTING

### Press Release

International Polar Bear Day, February 27, 2019

contact: Eduardo Gonçalves 0782 682 4384

### **British Hunters revealed to have killed endangered polar bears for “trophies”**

[New report reveals dramatic rise in Chinese demand for polar bear fur and gall bladders for ‘traditional medicine’](#)

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting says that as many as 5,000 polar bears have been killed by hunters for their trophies, skins and skulls.

With just 20,000 polar bears thought to remain in the wild, the group is calling for an immediate ban in the trade and trophy hunting of polar bears.

An investigation by the group shows that the tally, going back to the 1980s, includes whole bodies of polar bears, rugs, and gall bladders for so-called ‘traditional Asian medicines’.

In a new report, *“Killing for Recreation and Rugs: How Trophy hunting & Trade is threatening the Polar Bear”*, it says that the numbers killed have been growing since records began in 1981.

In the 10 year period to 1990, 154 trophies were taken. The figure jumped to 1177 in the following decade to 2000, and soared to 3163 in the 10 year period to 2010.

The report has been published for International Polar Bear Day, which is taking place on February 27, and which highlights the growing plight of the animal.

In 2017 - the most recent year for which figures are available - polar bear trophy hunters came from as far afield as China, the United States and Britain to Canada, where 13 of the 19 known populations of polar bear remain.

Hunters also came from Austria, Estonia, Spain, Lithuania, Sweden, Ukraine, Brazil, Hong Kong, and the Czech Republic.

British trophy hunters have brought polar bear bodies, skulls, skins as well as mounted trophies back to the U.K. with the permission of DEFRA.

An investigation by the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting has also uncovered a dramatic increase in the trade of polar bear items to China.

The first registered export from Canada to China was of a single skin in 1983. However in 2012 - less than 30 years later - the bodies of 96 polar bears as well as 225 skins and 115

trophies were shipped.

China and Hong Kong have also imported live polar bears other than for zoos; galls and gall bladders; skulls; bones; carvings; claws; teeth; rugs; leather 'products'; and undefined 'specimens'.

China is increasingly the main global buyer of polar bear fur, paying between \$5-6,000 for hides, rising up to \$20,000 for the highest quality.

Growing Chinese appetite for polar bear fur is thought to have prompted increased hunting of polar bears. The number of hides exported from Canada to China went from 266 to 400 between 2005-2013, according to a major report for governments.

Polar bears are categorised as "vulnerable" by the IUCN in its Red List of endangered species. They are classed as being at risk of extinction because of climate change and the melting ice caps which has reduced their habitat and hunting grounds.

The US and U.K. previously supported a ban on all international trade in polar bear parts along the lines of the ban on trade in elephant ivory. The US and Russian governments jointly put forward the proposal arguing that poachers were using trophy hunting permits to launder their own illegal kills.

The US also made importing polar bear products illegal, and included the species in the 2008 Endangered Species Act. However the US government subsequently reversed its position in 2016.

Eduardo Gonçalves, founder of the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, called on Canadian PM Justin Trudeau to halt commercial trade and trophy hunting of polar bears:

"At a time when they are under growing threat from climate change, polar bears are being killed in their hundreds for 'trophies' and trade.

"Killing polar bears for 'recreation' and rugs could now push it over the edge.

"Canada has most of the world's remaining polar bears, and is the only country in the world that permits commercial trade. The scale of the ongoing slaughter poses a serious threat to Canada's image.

"We call on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to call an immediate halt to trophy hunting and trading in polar bears for so-called sport and commerce."

He also called for a global ban on all trophy hunting, and for an amendment to CITES, the international law that protects endangered wildlife but which currently exempts the 'sport':

"The trophy hunting industry holds 'pay to slay' auctions offering hunters the chance to kill polar bears for amusement. There is no place for 'hunting for fun' in a modern civilised

society.

“Governments are meeting to discuss CITES in a few months. They should ban this archaic and immoral industry that is threatening so many species.”

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting was launched in October 2018 by former League Against Cruel Sports CEO Eduardo Gonçalves and ex-WWF International Director Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud.

It's campaign to halt the import of hunting trophies into Britain has won the support of over 150 MPs of all parties (<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52304>).

It's supporters include Ed Sheeran, Ricky Gervais, Keeley Hawes, Bill Oddie, Sir Charles Dunstone (chairman of TalkTalk), Carol Vorderman, David Jason, Lorraine Kelly, Liam Gallagher, Eamonn Holmes, Ranulph Fiennes, Chris Packham, Sue Perkins, Steven Redgrave, John Bishop, Kevin Pieteresen, Calum Best, Sara Pascoe, Ben Goldsmith and Piers Morgan. <https://bantrophyhunting.net/supporters/>

It's previous investigations have revealed that the number of lion trophies coming into Britain has increased since the killing of Cecil (<https://bantrophyhuntingnet.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/cecil-betrayed.pdf>).

They have also revealed that British hunters have killed elephants for their ivory with the permission of the U.K. government (<https://bantrophyhuntingnet.files.wordpress.com/2018/12/ELEPHANT-IN-THE-ROOM.pdf>).

Ends

**Note** - the petition to ban trade and trophy hunting of polar bears can be found here: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/ban-trophy-hunting-of-polar-bears>