

Importing of hunting trophies banned to protect world's threatened species

- Import of hunting trophies from thousands of endangered and threatened species to be banned – including lions, rhinos, elephants, and polar bears
- Ban on imports of hunting trophies will be one of toughest in the world and protect nearly 7,000 species
- Key manifesto commitment as part of a wider UK drive on international conservation

Importing hunting trophies from thousands of endangered and threatened species, including lions, rhinos, elephants, and polar bears, is set to be banned, under new measures announced by Environment Secretary George Eustice today.

[The new ban](#) will apply to imports of hunting trophies from endangered and threatened animals into Great Britain, supporting long-term species conservation and protecting some of the world's most endangered and threatened animals – including the frequently killed 'Big Five' (lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants and buffalos).

In the last 50 years, there has been a 60% decline in wildlife globally. This ban will be among the toughest in the world and will protect a range of species including nearly 6,000 animals that are currently threatened by international trade.

The Ban will also cover over 1,000 additional species which are considered near-threatened or worse, such as African buffalo, zebra and reindeer – going further than the Government's initial manifesto commitment to prohibit the import of hunting trophies from endangered species.

The Government consulted on a ban in 2019 and we received over 44,000 responses which showed clear public and conservation group support for tighter restrictions with 86% supporting further action.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

More animal species are now threatened with extinction than ever before in human history and we are appalled at the thought of hunters bringing back trophies and placing more pressure on some of our most iconic and endangered animals.

This would be one of the toughest bans in the world, and goes beyond our manifesto commitment, meaning we will be leading the way in protecting endangered animals and helping to strengthen and support long-term conservation.

Eduardo Gonçalves, founder of the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, said:

The government's bill looks set to be the strongest ban in the world. This is the leadership that we have been calling for to save endangered species and help bring this terrible trade to an end.

Wildlife needs this ban. Endangered animals are cruelly and needlessly killed every day, and many of them are brought back to Britain as trophies.

I urge the government to bring the bill to Parliament as soon as possible, and will be asking MPs and Peers to get behind it.

Claire Bass, executive director of Humane Society International UK said:

We welcome the Government's commitment today to a UK hunting trophy import ban that will protect thousands of species including lions, elephants and giraffe, ruthlessly targeted by trophy hunters. We also welcome that it has ruled out loopholes that would have allowed hunters to carry on shipping their sick souvenirs.

We now urge ministers to expedite the introduction of this legislation, which will make going on holiday to kill endangered animals and bring home their body parts as legally indefensible as it is socially unacceptable.

Born Free's Head of Policy Dr Mark Jones said:

It cannot be right for British hunters to be able to pay to kill endangered wild animals overseas and ship the trophies home. While the UK is by no means the biggest destination for international hunting trophies, nevertheless UK-based hunters frequently travel overseas to kill animals for fun, including species that are threatened with extinction. The proposed ban will send a clear signal that the UK does not condone the brutal killing of threatened wild animals for this so-called 'sport' by UK citizens.

It is two years since the British public overwhelmingly called for an end to hunting trophy imports, so we urge the Government to introduce and implement this legislation as quickly as possible.

Biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate. The population of African savanna elephants has decreased by more than half in the last 50 years whilst the number of African lions has declined to just 20,000 in the wild in the last 20 years.

Trophy hunting can add to the range of threats that species face and have negative knock-on effects for animal populations or entire ecosystems. Banning trophy imports from these endangered and threatened animals – with no exemptions – will help reduce the threats many of these species are already facing.

The UK Government is at the forefront of international efforts to protect endangered animals and plants and following a recent [£7.2m boost](#), is investing £46m between 2014 and 2021 through its [IWTCF](#) to directly combat the illegal wildlife trade to benefit nature, people, the economy and protect global security.

The Government's world-leading [Ivory Act](#) will also come into force next year and will further support conservation measures by introducing a near total ban on the import export and dealing of items containing elephant ivory in the UK, regardless of their age.

Alongside today's announcement, the measures are part of the Government's wider plan to reverse biodiversity loss and reinforce our position as a global champion in conservation and animal welfare as set out in our [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#). The measures will be included in future legislation aimed at raising welfare standards and protections for animals abroad. Further details of this will be forthcoming soon.