

Press release: 30,000 respond to ivory consultation ban during Christmas week

There has been a massive public response to the Government's proposed ban on ivory sales – with over 60,000 responses to the public consultation, making it one of Defra's most popular ever. Of the responses analysed so far the overwhelming majority support a ban.

In the past week more than 30,000 responses were submitted before the consultation closed.

Plans announced by Environment Secretary Michael Gove to impose a ban on ivory sales will protect elephants and help combat poaching by removing opportunities for criminals to trade illegally-poached ivory.

Unlike previous proposals, these plans cover items of all ages, not only those created after a certain date.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It is imperative we halt the decline in the elephant population to protect these wonderful animals for future generations. Ivory should never be seen as a commodity for financial gain or a status symbol and we are ready to take radical and robust action to protect one of the world's most iconic and treasured species.

It's incredibly heartening that so many people have contributed to our consultation. The response underlines that we are a nation which cares for wildlife. In 2018 the UK must be front and centre of global efforts to end this insidious trade.

Tanya Steele, WWF CEO said:

The scale of the public response – including over 60,000 who signed a WWF petition – shows just how strongly the British public feel about the need to end this mindless slaughter.

The UK Government must now act quickly. On average 55 elephants a day are killed. Every day we wait is a day too long.

The number of elephants has declined by almost a third in the last decade and around 20,000 a year are still being slaughtered due to the global demand for ivory.

The decline of elephants would also deprive some of the poorest countries in the world of their valuable natural capital, affecting economic growth and

sustainable development.

As profits become ever greater, the illegal wildlife trade has become a transnational organised enterprise, estimated to be worth between £7 and £17 billion a year.

The ban would reaffirm the UK's global leadership on this critical issue, demonstrating the UK's belief that the ivory trade should become a thing of the past.

It comes as the largest market for ivory, China, has introduced a ban on all trading and processing activities which came in to force at the end of 2017.

This new ban builds on Government work both at home and overseas to tackle poaching and the illegal ivory trade. The UK military trains an elite force of anti-poachers in African countries, and Border Force officers share their expertise in identifying smuggled ivory with counterparts worldwide to stop wildlife trafficking.

In October 2018, the UK will host a fourth international conference on the illegal wildlife, bringing global leaders to London to tackle the strategic challenges of the trade. This follows the ground breaking London 2014 conference on the illegal wildlife trade, and subsequent conferences in Botswana and Vietnam.

The Government will publish a response to the [consultation](#) shortly.