

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 [IWTCE](#) 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.

[Training and more testing to help people become HGV drivers](#)

Free courses for adults to train to be HGV drivers are under way across the country – as part of a package of measures to ease driver shortages and support supply chains this Christmas and beyond.

Skills Bootcamps in HGV driving are free, flexible, intensive courses designed to train drivers to be road ready and gain their licence, offering people the chance to launch well-paid careers in the logistics sector. People that successfully complete the HGV courses are guaranteed a job interview with an employer, and the first drivers are expected to be on the road from March 2022.

The courses are available [now in locations across the country](#) and will also support existing drivers to refresh or upgrade their skills so they can get back on the road. The Department for Education has today (Friday, 10 December) announced it has boosted capacity for even more people to just over 11,000 places – backed by £34 million. Courses are in high demand with more than 2,000 people having already expressed an interest in signing up with the [National Career Service](#) and hundreds more through Jobcentre and the DfE helpline.

To ensure more people can take their test sooner, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is also making capacity available for 500 more HGV driving tests a week, equivalent to up to 26,000 more per year.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is helping Christmas deliveries run smoothly by extending flexible retail delivery hours – first put in place during the pandemic – to cover all goods. Flexible hours will stay in place until September next year to support supply chains over the busy festive period and beyond. Construction working hours will also be extended to make sure vital deliveries are not missed and smaller developers are not unfairly impacted by shortages.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

HGV drivers are vital to keeping this country moving. It's brilliant to see the first people with their hands on the steering wheel as they head towards new well-paid careers in the industry.

To help even more people get the training they need to be road ready, we're expanding our HGV Skills Bootcamps to support more than 11,000 people to gain the skills they need to progress in the industry, and to help those with previous experience refresh their skills so they can get back on the road.

The additional HGV testing capacity has been made possible following an overhaul of the testing process. The DVSA has split the HGV and bus driving tests into two parts, so that approved assessors can test the off-road exercise part of HGV and bus tests at their own training sites, freeing up DVSA driving examiners to carry out extra on road tests.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The government has worked tirelessly to tackle the driver shortage caused by coronavirus and years of undervalued wages. We have now introduced 32 actions to help get more HGV drivers on the road. It is good to see that these measures are clearly working, with the haulage industry reporting a significant increase in tests carried out and licenses issued. Now these training camps will provide a further boost for the sector as we work together towards its recovery.

Minister for Housing Christopher Pincher MP said:

It's right that we do all we can to support supply chains and give the country the Christmas it deserves.

By asking councils across the country to work with us and extend retail delivery hours and construction working hours over this busy

period, we are supporting businesses and ensuring everyone can get the goods they need.

Previously, retail deliveries were prevented through the night and construction hours were generally limited to 8am – 6pm on weekdays, and 9am -1pm on Saturdays. Councils are being encouraged to take a flexible and positive approach and not to unnecessarily impose restrictions that would prevent deliveries being made outside of these hours. Delivery hours and construction working hours are set locally and councils are still able to take action where they deem it necessary.

The measures announced today build on the action already under way to ease temporary supply chain pressures and HGV driver shortages, including a temporary visa scheme to make it easier for foreign lorry drivers to work in the UK and support from the Ministry of Defence to increase testing.

Skills Bootcamps form part of the government's drive to support more adults to get a better job and gain skills for life. They offer free courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills, including digital, construction and green skills and a fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

New figures published today show that [more than half \(54%\) of the 2,210 adults](#) who completed Skills Bootcamps between September 2020 and March 2021 went on to achieve a successful outcome, such as securing a new job, an apprenticeship, a new role or increased responsibilities with their current employer or, for the self-employed, access to new opportunities.

[Culture results for Geronimo the alpaca](#)

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has completed its culture testing work for the alpaca known as 'Geronimo', which tested positive for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) twice using highly specific tests.

In September, APHA specialist vets completed an initial post-mortem examination of the animal, which revealed the presence of TB-like lesions. These have since been undergoing further testing to determine the source of infection.

APHA has today confirmed that it was not possible to culture bacteria from tissue samples taken at post-mortem examination, meaning that it will not be possible to carry out Whole Genome Sequencing in order to try to understand how the alpaca caught the disease. This does not mean the animal was free of bTB infection because it had previously twice tested positive using highly

specific, validated and reliable tests.

Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

This animal tested positive for bovine tuberculosis on two separate occasions using highly specific tests. Due to the complexity of the disease, further testing has not enabled us to use Whole Genome Sequencing to try to understand how the animal became infected in the first place.

Our sympathies remain with all those with animals affected by this terrible disease which devastates farmers' livelihoods. It is important to remember that infected animals can spread the disease to both animals and people before displaying clinical signs, which is why we take action quickly to limit the risk of the disease spreading. We are grateful for the cooperation of livestock farmers to allow this to happen.

The additional bacteria culturing process carried out by APHA is not used to validate previous test results, but instead to identify which strain of the disease is present and help inform decisions on testing other animals in the herd. The testing was carried out at APHA Weybridge – the leading centre in the world for the study of TB in animals.

bTB is an infectious disease of cattle and other mammals. It is one of the most significant animal health challenges that England faces today, leaving behind devastating impacts on our farming and rural communities and costing taxpayers more than £100 million each year. In 2020 alone, more than 27,000 cattle had to be slaughtered to curb its spread.

The UK enjoys a hard-won international reputation for animal health, welfare and biosecurity and our standards are second to none. The UK's strict animal control strategies are central to this and due to the comprehensive bTB eradication plan in England, we are turning the tide on this disease, with human cases of bTB reducing significantly over recent decades and international markets remaining open to exports of UK beef and dairy products.

Further information on the need to eradicate bTB can be found in [our APHA science blog](#) and on the [TB Hub](#).

[With the climate crisis posing an](#)

existential threat to our future – not only to our environment, but to our common security – we must act

Thank you Mr President. And thank you in particular for your clear account of the impact of climate change and terrorism in Niger and I thank the other experts too for their valuable briefings.

It is a cruel reality that many of the nations most affected by the climate change are also among the world's most fragile.

As the Secretary-General made clear the impacts of climate change act as a multiplier of threats already facing vulnerable populations. Countries enduring conflict are hit especially hard.

With institutions under pressure, communities displaced, societies insecure, these nations are less equipped to cope with the impacts of climate change.

As you highlighted Mr President, in the Sahel, changes in rainfall have fuelled conflict between farmer and herder communities. This can create the conditions for violent extremism.

In Iraq and Syria, farming communities affected by climate- induced crop failures and droughts were thought to have been an important source of recruits for ISIL between 2014 and 2016.

We therefore welcome the UN's efforts to address both terrorism and climate change.

With the climate crisis posing an existential threat to our future – not only to our environment, but to our common security – we must act.

I want to emphasise three ways we can do this.

First at COP26, we saw that countries can work together to deliver ambitious commitments.

Through the Glasgow Climate Pact, we have kept alive the hope of limiting the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees.

We saw strong commitments made at COP on net zero, ending and reversing deforestation, the doubling of adaptation finance and meeting the \$100 billion goal by 2023 at the latest.

This will help countries increase their preparedness to climate risks and protect vulnerable communities from some of the worst impacts of climate change and its effects on stability.

Second, we need the UN system to report comprehensively on the links between

climate and security, so we have the best information to inform our decisions.

The Council's Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate has a clear role here and should continue to examine the conditions and environments in which terrorism develops and thrives.

But all arms of the UN, including the Security Council, have a critical role to play to meet this challenge. Therefore, we support the resolution put before this Council as an important first step.

Third, we whole heartedly support a fully inclusive approach in particular with women and girls who suffer disproportionately from conflict and from climate change to play a meaningful role.

In conclusion Mr President we must act effectively, urgently and together, to address the climate crisis and reduce the increasing risks of climate insecurity.

I thank you.

[Welsh Secretary sees £13m levelling up project in north Wales](#)

The Welsh Secretary joined Clwyd South MP Simon Baynes and Wrexham Council on Friday (3 December) to see how the money, allocated as part of the UK Government's new Levelling Up Fund, will transform connectivity, public spaces and services in the area.

A total of £13.3m was granted to the project in October's Autumn Budget – part of the first round of successful bids for the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund which invests in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centre and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

There are three phases in the north east Wales project:

- The Trevor Basin Technical Masterplan which will see investment in a new arrival area, rewilding former industrial land, setting up a woodland activity and education area and creating a new Dee Valley walking route in the area around the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage site.
- Connectivity improvements in the area including a new public space at the junction of Castle Street and Abbey Road in Llangollen, improving links between Llangollen and the Wenffrwd Nature Reserve through a

walking / cycling route along a disused railway line and new visitor facilities at Llantysilio Green / Horseshoe Falls.

- Improvements to Corwen Station and car park including electric vehicle charging points and the creation of a walking / cycling route along the disused railway line between Corwen and Cynwyd.

On Friday, Mr Hart, Mr Baynes and members of Wrexham Council visited the Trevor Basin, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the River Dee to learn how the levelling-up investment would benefit the area.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The UK Government is completely focused on levelling up our communities, improving infrastructure and connectivity and creating opportunity for people right across Wales.

It was fantastic to see the ambitious plans for the Dee Valley and surrounding area and learn how the major injection of funding we are providing will unlock the potential of all our local areas.

We are aiming to provide investment where it's needed and where it can make a real difference to people's lives.

Clwyd South MP Simon Baynes said:

I am hugely grateful to the Secretary of State for taking the time to join us at the Trevor Basin to discuss the ambitious plans underway to level up Clwyd South and our communities in North East Wales, with the Trevor Basin masterplan, the investment in Llangollen and Chirk, and the proposals for the Corwen area.

The projects have huge potential to benefit Clwyd South residents and visitors alike. They will not only provide jobs and a much needed economic boost to Clwyd South but also improve the well-being of our residents by widening access to recreation, outdoor and other amenity activities. And will celebrate the amazing history, language and culture of our part of Wales and bring them to a wider audience.

Cllr Mark Pritchard, Leader of Wrexham Council, said:

We are very grateful to UK Government for a successful Levelling Up Fund bid and the support of the local MP, Simon Baynes. The funding will make a significant difference to the Dee Valley from Corwen to Llangollen, to the Trevor Basin and Chirk.

The improvement of our unique World Heritage Site is of critical importance to Wrexham, the World Heritage Site Board, Wales and the United Kingdom. I would like to thank everyone involved in putting together this very successful bid and look forward to seeing the progress that will now be made in the area.

The Wrexham and north east Wales project was one of 10 successful bids in the first round of applications for the new Levelling Up Fund including the regeneration of Aberystwyth seafront, an important dualling of the A4119 in South Wales and redevelopment of the Theatr Brycheiniog Arts Centre in Brecon.

It was also announced last month that more than 160 projects across Wales will also receive a share of more than £46m in the first round of the Community Renewal Fund which will pilot new programmes that invest in people, boost skills and support local business.

And three further projects in Wales received over £460,000 from the new Community Ownership Fund designed to protect valued community assets.

[Further Information is available on all three funds](#) – the Community Renewal Fund, the Community Ownership Fund and the Levelling Up Fund, including the full lists of successful bids.

The [published methodology](#) used to identify places in need of funding is also available.