

# UK's world-leading ivory ban moves step closer

The UK's world-leading ban on importing, exporting and dealing in items containing elephant ivory in the UK moves a step closer today following the launch of a [consultation on the implementation](#) of the [Ivory Act](#).

Once implemented, the Ivory Act, which was a key government manifesto commitment, will introduce a near total ban on the import, export and dealing of items containing elephant ivory in the UK, regardless of their age, allowing only for a narrowly defined set of exemptions.

Elephants are the world's largest land mammal and can live past 60 years of age in the wild. However they are commonly targeted for their tusks. The savanna elephant populations declined by about 30 per cent – equal to 144,000 elephants – across 15 African countries between 2007 and 2014. The UK's landmark Ivory Act will help protect the world's elephants by banning sales of ivory that may contribute to poaching.

The eight-week consultation seeks views on the registration and certification process and fees for exempted items. People will only need to register and certify items for the purposes of dealing in items containing ivory. Those who own but are not planning to sell ivory items do not need to register and certify them.

## **Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:**

Our Ivory Act introduces one of the world's toughest bans on elephant ivory sales, ensuring that we do everything we can to save this magnificent species from extinction.

As a global leader in animal conservation, we are sending a clear message that we consider the commercial trade in elephant ivory to be totally unacceptable.

## **Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy at the Born Free Foundation, said:**

In passing the Ivory Act into law, the UK Government has boldly introduced some of the toughest restrictions on ivory trade anywhere in the world, vindicating Born Free's longstanding assertion that only by banning the trade in ivory can we hope to bring an end to the industrial-scale poaching of elephants for their tusks.

The Government made a manifesto commitment to bring the ivory ban into force

and to extend it to cover other ivory-bearing species such as narwhals, killer whales and hippos. Defra is currently considering evidence submitted in response to a [call for evidence on non-elephant ivory trade](#), and will be consulting on this later in the year.

The implementation of the Ivory Act was delayed due to unsuccessful legal challenges but it will now help cement the UK's place as a global leader in conversation and will help us play a leading role internationally in addressing threats to endangered species.

The UK government is working closely with the international community to address the threats to the conservation of elephants from poaching and both the legal and illegal ivory trade. Since 2014 the UK has contributed £2.6 million to projects around the world to stop the ivory trade through the [Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund](#).

The eight-week consultation by can be found [here](#).

The Ivory Act 2018 creates narrow and carefully defined exemptions to the ban for:

- Items with only a small amount of ivory. Such items must comprise less than 10% ivory by volume and have been made prior to 1947.
- Musical instruments. These must have an ivory content of less than 20% by volume and have been made prior to 1975.
- Portrait miniatures. A specific exemption for portrait miniatures – which were often painted on thin slivers of ivory – made before 1918 and with a surface area of no more than 320cm<sup>2</sup>.
- Sales to and hire agreements with qualifying museums.
- The rarest and most important items of their type. These must be items of outstanding artistic, cultural or historic value, and made prior to 1918. Decisions on applications for such items will be based on expert advice from a selection of institutions deemed to have the necessary knowledge and expertise.