



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL
UNITED KINGDOM

BANNING REAL FUR IMPORTS AND SALES IN THE UK

**Briefing for the Backbench Business Committee debate on
the fur trade, led by Giles Watling MP**

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POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Government committed in its manifesto to support the highest animal welfare standards and in May 2021 published an Action Plan for Animal Welfare. The Action Plan noted that fur farming has been banned on ethical grounds across the UK since 2003. The Government pledged to 'explore action' on the UK fur trade, noting that while it is illegal to import seal, cat and dog fur, it is still possible to import other fur from abroad.

During May 2021, the Government conducted a Call for Evidence on [Fur market in Great Britain](#) which received almost 30,000 responses. It has yet to release a summary of responses, or a policy position, responding to written and oral questions that it is still 'reviewing the evidence gathered both from our Call for Evidence and from wider engagement with the fur trade and stakeholders' and 'will use the evidence gathered to inform any future action on the fur trade'. In its response to a [current e-petition](#) calling for existing bans on the import of cat, dog and seal fur to be maintained and extended to all species, the Government responded: 'There are already bans in place which the Government will retain. We have no plans currently to make further changes.'

In addition to high levels of public interest in banning fur, this issue continues to have strong political support in Parliament with over 15 parliamentary questions being asked about fur, and a potential fur ban, in 2023 alone. A ban on the import and sale of fur in the UK also remains a key issue across various parties, as confirmed by the [cross-party letter sent to the Defra Secretary in May](#), which garnered 52 signatures.

HSI UK is joined by other animal charities, including the RSPCA, in calling on the Government to publish the summary of response to the UK Fur Market Call for Evidence, given the substantial public and political interest and engagement with the issue. The data from the call for evidence could provide key insights into the views of the public, and help to inform Government policy towards a ban.

WHY SHOULD THE UK BAN THE SALE OF ANIMAL FUR?

1. **By allowing the sale of animal fur in the UK, we are exercising a double standard.** Despite bans on fur farming coming into force across the UK in 2003, HMRC data shows that the UK currently allows imports of £30 - £70 million of fur each year (with the figure for 2022 being £41.9 million) – we estimate this equates to the fur from some **one to two million animals**, including foxes, mink and raccoon dogs. By continuing to allow the sale of fur, the UK is effectively outsourcing animal cruelty and suffering overseas. If the UK believes that fur is too cruel to be farmed here then, logically, it is too cruel to sell here.
2. **There is no such thing as humane fur farming.** Industry-led 'Assurance schemes' of 'high-welfare fur farming' have been shown, through both investigations and the opinions of veterinary and animal welfare experts, not to provide animals with a life worth living. Certification schemes, such as the recently launched 'Furmark' permit a wide range of cruel practices, including the use of leg-hold traps, drowning (for beavers), and keeping animals for their entire lives in wire battery cages. Our investigations repeatedly show that wild, carnivorous animals, kept their entire lives in barren cages measuring only around 1m², suffer physically and mentally, including resorting to self-mutilation and

cannibalism¹. Animals are typically either gassed to death or anally electrocuted, though our [investigations](#)² have also shown animals beaten to death and even skinned alive.³

While other segments of animal agriculture are shifting away from intensive farming (such as the European Commission's plan to end the use of cages by 2027), the fur trade remains completely reliant on battery cages. There is no humane alternative to the fur trade's model of intensive confinement; when the governments in Germany and Sweden brought in laws requiring that foxes were given digging substrate and (in Germany) mink were provided swimming water, the respective segments of the industry closed down in those countries as it was not economically viable to meet the requirements of the new laws.

It is not only animal protection organisations opposing the inherent cruelty of the fur trade. Former CEO of the British Fur Trade Association and Director of Standards at the International Fur Federation, Mike Moser, resigned after ten years of defending the fur trade, and in September 2020 publicly pledged his support for banning fur sales in the UK. He confessed that *"Over time I realised that whatever soundbites we devised to reassure consumers, retailers and politicians, neither welfare regulations nor any industry certification scheme would ever change the reality of these animals being stuck in tiny wire cages for their entire lives."*⁴

3. **Taking a stand against the fur trade would cement the UK's reputation as a global leader in animal welfare.** The sale of cat, dog and seal fur from commercial hunts is already banned in the UK, so banning fur from all species would be a logical next step, eliminating illogical protections for some species above others. The UK would again be at the forefront of international efforts to challenge the unacceptable and inherent cruelty of the fur trade, but it would not be alone in doing so; on June 9th 2021 Israel passed an amendment to its Wildlife Protection Law to become the first country to ban the sale of wild animal fur (whether from farmed or trapped animals). The state of California plus thirteen towns and cities across the United States have also banned the sale of animal fur, with several others now looking to follow suit.
4. **Fur farms can act as a reservoir for viruses and present a risk to public health.** Over four hundred and eighty fur farms across Europe and North America have been affected by **outbreaks of Covid-19** over the last two years, including in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Greece, Poland, the United States and Canada. Approximately 20 million animals have been culled in order to protect public health, and a [risk assessment](#)⁵ conducted by the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has shown that the overall risk of introduction and spread of the virus within fur farms and spillover from fur farms to humans and susceptible wildlife populations in the Europe is considered 'high'. To date, spillover to humans from infected fur farms has been confirmed in at least six countries. In June 2021, the World

¹ <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/film-foxes-on-finnish-fur-farms-comes-as-2-million-petition-signatures-call-for-uk-and-eu-fur-trade-bans/>

² <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/investigation-exposes-cruelty-against-foxes-for-uk-fur/>

³ <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/investigation-exposes-cruelty-against-foxes-for-uk-fur/>

⁴ <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/former-british-fur-ceo-backs-furfreebritain-campaign/>

⁵ <https://www.oie.int/app/uploads/2021/03/glews-risk-assessment-fur-animals-sars-cov-2.pdf>

Organisation for Animal Health issued [guidance on working with farmed animals of species susceptible to infection with SARS-CoV-2](#)⁶, which stated “*there is insufficient evidence to consider raw mink furskins as safe for international trade*” due to the risk of transmission of the virus through infected mink carcasses or products.

An outbreak of **highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1)** on a mink farm in Spain last autumn has further raised pandemic fears, with virologists from Imperial College London writing in Science that it is “incredibly concerning” and “a warning bell”⁷. Others have stated that the risk is “extremely high” and that mink farming should be “discontinued immediately”⁸. A recent statement by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) reads “...some mammals, such as mink, may act as mixing vessels for different influenza viruses, leading to the emergence of new strains and subtypes that could be more harmful to animals and/or humans. Recently reported infections in farmed mink are a concern because infections of large numbers of mammals kept in close proximity of each other exacerbate this risk.”⁹

It is illogical to simply restock culled farms, breed more animals, and carry on with business as usual. In bringing in a fur ban, the UK could show important and tangible leadership on the need for countries to stop keeping animals in intensive caged conditions that lend themselves to zoonotic disease outbreaks.

5. **There is strong cross-party support for a fur ban.** During the 2020-2021 session of Parliament, 140 MPs signed Tracey Crouch MP’s EDM on [The Fur Trade in the UK](#)¹⁰, making it one of the most signed EDMs of the session. A cross-party letter in support of a fur ban, led by Christian Wakeford MP (then Con), Maria Eagle MP (Lab) and Lisa Cameron MP (SNP) and signed by over 100 MPs and Peers was delivered to Environment Secretary George Eustice at the end of [August 2021](#)¹¹.
6. **Political support is underscored by clear and persistent public support.** In April 2021, a one million signature petition to ban fur sales was [delivered to the Prime Minister](#)¹² by campaigning organisations including HSI/UK, the RSPCA, PETA, Open Cages and Four Paws.

MRP polling conducted in April 2022 by Focalddata for HSI UK and a number of other animal welfare charities showed the strength and breadth of public support for a ban on the importation of animal products, such as fur, where farming and production methods are banned in the UK. **77%** of UK voters said that they supported the Government introducing such a ban. MRP analysis of the polling shows this includes:

- Support for a ban is high amongst voters for all main political Parties: 79% of Conservative voters, 80% of Labour voters, 88% of Liberal Democrat voters,

⁶ <https://www.oie.int/app/uploads/2021/06/en-oie-guidance-farmed-animals-.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.science.org/content/article/incredibly-concerning-bird-flu-outbreak-spanish-mink-farm-triggers-pandemic-fears>

⁸ <https://www.gp.se/ledare/minkfarmer-grogrund-f%C3%B6r-n%C3%A4sta-pandemi-politikerna-g%C3%B6ringet-1.93972896>

⁹ <https://www.woah.org/en/statement-on-avian-influenza-and-mammals/>

¹⁰ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58635/the-fur-trade-in-the-uk>

¹¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/animal-fur-sale-ban-mps-b1911711.html>

¹² <https://www.theindustry.fashion/campaigners-submit-1-million-petition-signatures-to-no-10-calling-for-uk-fur-sales-ban/>

89% of SNP voters and 79% of Plaid Cymru voters agreed that a ban should be introduced.

- Support for the government to ban the importation of fur is marginally higher amongst rural respondents (80%) than urban respondents (76%). For example, the poll found support for a fur import ban within Jacob Rees-Mogg's constituency of North East Somerset (83%) to be slightly higher than Jeremy Corbyn's Islington North (80%).

7. **Many UK businesses already avoid real fur.** Almost all UK high street stores are fur-free, and many – such as Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, Next, Selfridges, H&M and Zara – have long-standing fur-free policies. The global [Fur Free Retailer](#)¹³ programme now has more than 1,500 brands signed up, further underlining the public and corporate distaste for animal fur. An ever-growing list of high-profile fashion designers have also adopted fur-free policies in recent years, including Prada, Gucci, Burberry, Alexander McQueen, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana and Versace. In summer 2021, Canada Goose, a company well-known for its coyote fur trimmed coats, announced it too was going fur-free. In the last twelve months, three very well-known UK luxury fashion retailers, Frasers Group¹⁴, Matches Fashion and Harvey Nichols¹⁵, have all made commitments to go fur-free.

A [2020 YouGov poll](#)¹⁶ showed that 93% of the British public reject wearing real animal fur, only 3% currently wear real animal fur, and the words 79% of people most closely associate with a fashion brand selling fur are 'unethical', 'outdated', 'cruel' and 'out of touch'. Only 6% associated fur retail with 'luxury', 1% with 'modern', and 0% for both 'sustainable' and 'on trend'.

In addition to animal cruelty, many designers are now ditching fur in favour of new, sustainable materials with much lower carbon footprints. Fabric innovation is bringing faux fur products using biodegradable plant-based materials to the market. A fur ban would further cement the UK as a global centre for future-focussed innovation and sustainability in fashion.

CURRENT LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DATE

EU Regulations banned the trade in the fur of domestic cats and dogs (2007), and fur from commercial seal slaughter (2009), but otherwise the EU allows the import and sale of animal fur from a range of species. During the UK's exit from the EU, bans on cat, dog and seal fur were transposed into UK law. In addition to EU regulations, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), to which the UK is a Party, creates controls in trade in fur from endangered species.

Whilst the UK was a member of the EU, the Government said it was not possible to introduce restrictions relating to the fur trade, due to being incompatible with the *Treaty on the Functioning of the EU*, which requires the free movement of goods within the EU single market. In July 2020,

¹³ <https://furfreeretailer.com/>

¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/oct/20/mike-ashley-frasers-group-to-stop-buying-fur-products>

¹⁵ <https://www.drapersonline.com/news/harvey-nichols-to-go-fur-free>

¹⁶ https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/5r7ryfdp97/HSI_FurRegulation_200305_w.pdf

the Minister responsible for animal welfare, Lord Goldsmith stated: “Fur farming has rightly been banned in this country for nearly 20 years and at the end of the transition period we will be able to properly consider steps to raise our standards still further.”¹⁷

On 31st May 2021, the Government launched a [Call for Evidence](#)¹⁸ on the Fur Sector in Britain, stating that it ‘intends to explore potential action in this area’ and wishes ‘to further build up [an] evidence base to inform future decisions’. This closed on 28th June and a letter from Defra to HSI/UK on 5th August stated that the Call for Evidence received around 30,000 responses from businesses, representative bodies, and individuals, noting that this demonstrated ‘the strong public interest in this area.’

Since the start of 2022, 37 written questions have been tabled across the Commons and the Lords on the fur trade and the continuing use of fur, with the Government frequently giving non-committal answers on next steps beyond noting their ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders and saying that a summary of responses to the call for evidence will be “published soon”.

Now that the UK has left the EU, the Government has the freedom to respond to public concerns by building on existing legislation, and banning the import and sale of fur from all species, in Britain.

MYTHS ON A FUR SALES BAN

In recent years, the British Fur Trade Association has been responsible for spreading misinformation on the consequences of a fur sales ban. Just as legislators in California robustly rejected the fur trade’s misinformation tactics, we trust that MPs and the British Government will also carefully examine and reject the many unsubstantiated claims made by the fur trade.

Myth: *A fur ban would do nothing to improve animal welfare standards, and could make it worse through increasing unregulated sources of fur.*

Reality: *The ‘regulated’ fur trade is one of the worst examples of industrialised, systematic animal cruelty in the world. We estimate that a UK fur ban would eliminate a market for 1 to 2 million animals annually, as well as setting a global precedent that other countries would highly likely follow.*

- Each year, over 100 million animals are kept confined in tiny barren cages for their whole lives, until anally electrocuted, gassed to death, beaten to death or even skinned alive. Cannibalism, self-mutilation, untreated wounds and mentally deranged cage spinning are frequently uncovered in investigations on fur farms, including in countries held up by the fur trade as having the ‘highest standards of animal welfare’, such as Finland.
- In fact, former CEO of the British Fur Trade Association and Director of Standards at the International Fur Federation, Mike Moser, resigned after ten years of defending the fur trade, and in September 2020 publicly pledged his support for banning fur sales in the UK. He confessed that “Over time I realised that whatever soundbites we devised to reassure consumers, retailers and politicians, neither welfare regulations nor any

¹⁷ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/government-signals-drive-crackdown-imports-22344265>

¹⁸ <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-in-trade/fur-market-in-great-britain/>

industry certification scheme would ever change the reality of these animals being stuck in tiny wire cages for their entire lives.”

Myth: *A fur ban would open the UK to legal challenges from fur nations, and could compromise our trading relationship with other countries.*

Reality: *The UK has every moral and legal right to ban the sale of products based on public morality, and to do so would be consistent with World Trade Organisation obligations. Trade in fur is not economically significant enough to make it at all likely to be a red-line negotiating issue in any trade deal.*

- In 2014 the WTO made a landmark decision regarding the EU's ban on seal fur products, recognising that public moral concerns regarding animal welfare are a legitimate reason to justify trade-restrictive measures. As the UK already banned fur farming two decades ago for being unacceptably cruel, and so has no domestic production, a UK fur import and sales ban would be compatible with trade rules.
- A 2021 [Telegraph article](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/06/fur-ban-would-breach-newly-signed-trade-deals-government-warned/)¹⁹ suggested that banning fur sales could compromise post-Brexit trade deals and cites a letter sent by the Icelandic government to the UK government warning that banning fur could compromise the UK's £21.6billion EFTA trade deal, signed in July. This is little more than scaremongering and hyperbole, as evidenced by the fact that during the period 2016-2022, the HMRC registered imports of only £32,496 of fur products from Iceland, with zero imports registered in either 2020, 2021 or 2022 (the value of the EFTA deal is £21.6billion annually). In 2018 a press report stated that mink farms in Iceland had been operating at a loss for several years and the industry was seeking increased subsidies from the Government. The industry there is in decline, in 2015 there were 32 farms producing 200,000 pelts, and by 2019 that number had dropped to 65,000 pelts. 9 fur farms remained in 2020.
- Trade negotiations focus on trade that is economically significant, and fur simply doesn't qualify. For example, U.S. goods exports to the UK in 2019 were almost \$70 billion; the top export categories being precious metal and stone worth \$14 billion, and aircraft worth \$10 billion. By comparison, according to HMRC trade figures, the UK imported just £2 million worth of fur from the US in 2019, the figure for 2022 was £1.2 million.

Myth: *Banning fur but not other forms of animal use is inconsistent and hypocritical*

Reality: *The Government has a broad action plan for animal welfare, including improvements for animals farmed in the UK.*

- Animals farmed for their fur spend their entire lives living in tiny cages, denied the opportunity to express even the most basic behaviours. Inflicting this kind of physical and mental suffering on an animal is unacceptable whether it is a fox kept for fur, or a chicken kept for eggs. In its May 2021 Action Plan, the Government pledged to look at reforms in intensive confinement farming systems, including the use of farrowing crates for pigs and cages for laying hens.
- Rather than advocating a 'race to the bottom', in which the existence of poor animal welfare in one area is presented as justification for inaction in another, we urge

¹⁹ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2021/09/06/fur-ban-would-breach-newly-signed-trade-deals-government-warned/>

progress in animal welfare wherever it is possible, and in particular an end to the 'cage age' of farming for all species.

Myth: *A fur ban would adversely affect indigenous and religious groups, as well as traditional military and ceremonial uniforms.*

Reality: *A UK fur sales ban could have pragmatic exemptions for such groups.*

- When California was in the process of banning fur sales, the fur trade attempted to get it thrown out using racial arguments, which were dismissed by the California Legislative Black Caucus. Claims that the ban would adversely affect religious groups are cynical, opportunistic scaremongering by the fur trade. The California, and other bans, show that reasonable exemptions can be put in place, including for religious use.
- The vast majority of fur (upwards of 90%) comes from factory fur farms. The remainder is wild trapped fur, but not by indigenous peoples, in reality indigenous fur trapping accounts for a tiny percentage of the global commercial market. We can expect the government to look at that, understanding the existence and nature of any indigenous fur exported to the UK and consider exemptions as necessary (as were put in place for the EU's seal product trade ban). It may suit the fur trade's purposes to opportunistically talk about indigenous fur as a barrier to a ban, but the purpose of a fur sales ban is to end the cruel industrialised commercial factory farming and trapping of fur animals.

Myth: *A fur ban would lead to job losses and impact the UK economy. We should not cause businesses economic difficulty at this time.*

Reality: *Fur represents a minute percentage of clothing sales in the UK. The fur trade has failed to corroborate with data its claims of growth in recent years; HMRC figures in fact suggest an economic decline across recent years, and an ever-growing list of retailers and designers are dropping fur.*

- In a [recent video](#)²⁰, Mike Moser, former CEO of the British Fur Trade Association, suggested that the fur industry is, in his opinion, experiencing financial distress. For the small number of people employed exclusively in this trade, their transferable skills can be employed, as evidenced by Dolce & Gabbana as part of its fur-free announcement²¹, in the use of new environmentally friendly materials, such as bio-fur, and to meet the growing demand for ethical, humane fashion.
- Throughout history there have been other UK trades, such as whaling and the ivory trade, that were once lucrative, but also abhorrent, and so they were banned. Economies evolve and adapt in line with shifts in public values and evolving expectations for socially and ethically acceptable business practices. Companies' and governments' adaptation to embrace the green economy and 'build back better', as well as shifts in policy and investment in agriculture away from inhumane and unsustainable intensive farming, are examples of this. The fur trade, by contrast, is an anachronism, failing to move with the zeitgeist of public opinion, and for this reason it is not an economically future-proof industry.
- The British Fur Trade Association's (BFTA) claims that a fur sales ban would 'cost thousands of jobs and shut hundreds of businesses' are also completely

²⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfG_ZkMxYtE

²¹ <https://www.voguebusiness.com/sustainability/dolce-and-gabbana-goes-fur-free-following-moncler>

unsubstantiated and appear highly exaggerated. As of May 2023, the BFTA has 20 member companies (down from 32 in September 2021)²², many of which sell a range of 'luxury' garments (not exclusively fur) and many of which provide fur services including cleaning and cold storage and insurance, as well as remodelling of vintage furs, none of which would be immediately affected by a ban on the sale of new fur. According to publicly available information (Companies House) the BFTA's 15 member companies who appear to be solely invested in the sale or trade of fur, collectively employ less than 40 people.

- Fur's declining popularity is emphasised by the growing list of fashion designers, including Gucci, Prada, Chanel, Burberry, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana and Armani, adopting fur-free policies and turning to modern, innovative materials.

Myth: *Since fur is unpopular with consumers anyway, we don't need a ban, we can just let the markets decide.*

Reality: *Despite its unpopularity, and almost complete absence from the high street, the UK is still responsible for importing a large amount of animal fur, and online sales are persistent. A ban should prohibit imports as well as sales, removing the UK as a global trading hub for fur.*

- Although sales of fur in the UK on the high street are almost non-existent, a significant amount of fur is sold online, including via popular sites such as eBay and Etsy.
- According to HMRC figures, in 2022 the UK imported £41.9 million worth of animal fur from overseas. It is likely that a significant amount of this was imported by fur brokers, and then re-exported. A 2020 [report published by the University of Copenhagen](#)²³ 'Implications of a potential British ban on import of fur skins, fur garments etc.' highlights the importance of the UK as a trading hub in global fur markets, claiming (p.19) "the United Kingdom is now a major player on the world market for fur garment. The UK is the seventh largest importer of fur garment in the world..." (p.21) "The UK's position as a large importer and an importer heavily dependent on European markets means that the UK plays an important role on the European market for fur garment. As a major share of the UK's import of fur garment comes from Europe, a British import ban will disrupt trade in Europe significantly."
- A ban would also be of huge importance to global political and campaign efforts to end the fur trade. Becoming the first country to ban both the import and sale of fur for all species would set a precedent others would follow, as was the case when the UK became the first country to ban fur farming (18 European countries have since banned fur farming). In recent years, politicians from the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway have all indicated their support for a fur sales ban, while a fur import ban has been proposed by politicians in Switzerland.

Myth: *A fur ban would stop people wearing vintage fur and stifle consumer choice.*

Reality: *We are not proposing a fur wearing ban, or for it to be illegal to own and wear fur already in possession. The aim of the legislation would be to eliminate the UK as a market for the sale of new animal fur.*

²² <http://britishfur.co.uk/fur-services/list-of-members/>

²³ https://curis.ku.dk/portal/files/247984541/UK_Fur_Ban_Report_03_09.pdf

- The vast majority of consumers (93%¹) already choose not to wear fur. More concerning for consumer rights is the unacceptable occurrence of real fur being mis-sold as faux fur (more on this in a [recent Mirror article](#)²⁴). A fur sales ban, with the potential for significant fines for companies in violation, would create a far greater imperative for retailers [repeatedly found to be selling 'fake faux fur'](#)²⁵ to clean up their acts. This would ensure those shoppers who wish to buy fake fur can do so with much more confidence.
- Consumers accept that they do not have the choice to buy a great number of animal products, where they are deemed unacceptable by the vast majority of people, including whale meat, cat fur and ivory. A fur sales ban would be a logical extension of existing fur bans, in line with public opinion.

Myth: *20% of fur in the UK market comes from 'animal conservation schemes'*

Reality: *The vast majority (>90%) of fur comes from intensive farms. The hunting (by trapping or shooting) of animals such as coyotes is not necessary to manage populations, such killings don't work to control populations, and the methods used can cause injury and suffering. It is in the hunters' interest to keep numbers high to make money off the pelts, the legal trade in fur products drives these ineffective and inhumane killings.*

- Coyote killing programmes do not work to control populations, nor are they humane. All species — especially native carnivores — play a vital role in healthy ecosystems (e.g. cleaning up carrion, keeping rodent populations in check) and whilst such killings may reduce local populations temporarily, they will respond with an increase in numbers to fill the vacant territory. Coyotes can be killed by trapping, by leg-hold traps or snares, which can cause severe injuries, pain and suffering.
- Black bears are important in maintaining the ecological systems in their forests, helping to create greater biological diversity. Hunting does not permanently reduce bear populations, numbers rebound with the increased availability of food. The goal of Ontario's bear "harvest management programme" is to "ensure the sustainability of black bear populations *and the continuation and/or enhancement of bear hunting opportunities and associated economic benefits.*", clearly conflating a purported conservation goal with a goal of 'harvesting' bears to sell their fur. Companies in Canada advertise black bear shooting holidays where hunters can purchase hunting licences online before killing bears from pre-baited stands. Regulations vary by province, but bears can be killed using a variety of tools, from guns to bows and, in some parts of the country even spears are legal.

POLITICAL TIMELINE

- **1st January 2003:** *Bans on fur farming take effect across the UK. Imports of animal fur from other countries continue. The world-leading decision to ban fur production has now been implemented by almost twenty countries across Europe.*

²⁴ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/shoppers-being-sold-fake-fur-23179090.amp>

²⁵ <https://www.hsi.org/news-media/amazon-ebay-shein-romwe-among-popular-online-retailers-misselling-real-fur-as-faux/>

- **March 2018:** [e-petition 200888](#)²⁶ in support of a ban on the sale of fur in the UK closes with 109,551 signatures.
- **April 2018:** The EFRA Select Committee begins an inquiry on the fur trade in the UK.
- **June 2018:** At the Westminster Hall Debate (arising from e-petition 200888), 32 MPs attend and speak unanimously and passionately in support of a fur import ban, many noting the significant volume of correspondence from their constituents on this topic. Government response noted that because of EU rules “it is unlikely that we would be able to advance [a ban] while we are in the EU.”
- **July 2018:** The EFRA Select Committee publishes its report, [Fur Trade in the UK](#)²⁷ which criticises retailers, local authorities, and Trading Standards for complacency in enforcing regulations around the sale of fur, and also finds that the current fur labelling laws are confusing for both retailers and consumers. Having received evidence from HSI/UK and a number of other charities, as well as concerned individuals, of strong public support for extending existing fur trade bans to cover all species, the Committee recommended that the Government holds a public consultation to consider whether to ban fur.
- **January 2019:** Government responds to [e-petition 223221](#)²⁸ that “there will be an opportunity for government in the future, once we have left the EU and the nature of our future trading relationship has been established, to consider further steps such as a ban on fur imports or a ban on sales.”
- **March 2020:** Tracey Crouch MP initiates EDM 267 on [Real Fur Imports](#)²⁹, which gains cross-party support from Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Scottish National, Democratic Unionist and Green MPs. It had gained 140 signatures by the end of the Parliamentary session.
- **July 2020:** DEFRA Minister Lord Goldsmith tells the [Daily Mirror](#)³⁰: “Fur farming has rightly been banned in this country for nearly 20 years and at the end of the transition period we will be able to properly consider steps to raise our standards still further.”
- **September 2020:** Virtual parliamentary event ‘No Business in Fur’ is attended by around 70 MPs, celebrities, activists, retailers, and designers.
- **February 2021:** The Telegraph exclusively reports that “Senior government insiders said a fur import ban is “definitely” coming down the line”, highlighting links between mink farms and Covid-19, and the cruelty of the trade. Contrary to claims from the fur trade that a ban would jeopardise ceremonial use of fur, and would ban people from wearing fur, the plans shared with the Telegraph point to a ban on the sale of new furs, with exemptions for religious and ceremonial use, as well as passing down of vintage furs.

²⁶ <https://petition.parliament.uk/archived/petitions/200888>

²⁷ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/1675/1675.pdf>

²⁸ <https://petition.parliament.uk/archived/petitions/200888>

²⁹ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/56726/real-fur-imports>

³⁰ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/government-urged-ban-importation-fur-23471461>

- **February 2021:** The Shadow Secretaries of State for International Trade, for the Environment, and for Business – MPs Emily Thornberry, Luke Pollard and Ed Milliband - write to Liz Truss, Secretary for International Trade, expressing their collective support for an outright ban on the import of fur and fur products into the United Kingdom.
- **May 2021:** Government launches a [Call For Evidence](#)³¹ on the UK fur trade, seeking to inform a policy position on whether there are further steps the UK should take in relation to the import and sale of fur from overseas. It closes on 28th June with around 30,000 responses, demonstrating the huge public interest in action on fur.
- **June 2021:** Tracey Crouch MP initiates EDM 193 [The Fur Trade in the UK](#)³². It had gained 119 signatures by the end of the Parliamentary session.
- **August 2021:** Conservative MP Christian Wakeford sends [cross party letter](#)³³ to Environment Secretary George Eustice, co-led by Labour's Maria Eagle MP and the SNP's Lisa Cameron MP, signed by 102 MPs and Peers, calling for the Government to legislate to ban fur imports and sales.
- **September 2021:** In Parliament's first [fur debate](#) since leaving the European Union, cross-party MPs called on the government to ban the sale and import of real animal fur in Britain. All 18 of the MPs who spoke did so in favour of a ban, referring to the trade as 'barbaric', 'cruel', 'utterly illogical', 'outmoded' and 'inhumane'.
- **February 2022:** A group of Conservative MPs and Peers wrote a letter to [The Times](#)³⁴ in support of bans on fur and foie gras imports in reaction to reports that moves to ban the products had been blocked by certain cabinet members.
- **May 2022:** The Government introduced the Queen's Speech for the 2022/3 session of Parliament, but failed to include an Animals Abroad Bill, as envisioned by the Action Plan for Animal Welfare. This Bill was expected to include a ban on the importation and sale of real fur, amongst a range of popular measures to ensure that UK markets are not complicit in unacceptable cruelty overseas.
- **September 2022:** Shadow Animal Welfare Minister Ruth Jones MP and Liberal Democrat Environment Spokesperson Tim Farron [MP sent letters to Defra Secretary of State](#) Ranil Jayawardena, each stating their party's support for a fur import and sales ban and urging the government to release the findings of the Call for Evidence³⁵.
- **January 2023:** HSI/UK and FOUR PAWS UK held a Parliamentary event, hosted by Ruth Jones MP, to mark the 20th anniversary of the Fur Farming (Prohibition) Act 2000 and advocate for a Fur Free Britain. MPs, Peers, celebrities, and campaigners

³¹ <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-in-trade/fur-market-in-great-britain/>

³² <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58635/the-fur-trade-in-the-uk>

³³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/animal-fur-sale-ban-mps-b1911711.html>

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/HSIUKorg/status/1496645329768304640>

³⁵ <https://www.hsi.org/news-resources/liz-truss-urged-dont-betray-animals-suffering-for-fur-and-foie-gras-in-300000-signature-petition-led-by-chris-packham/>

gathered to launch a report exposing the cruelty of the fur trade and call for a ban on fur imports and sales. Speakers at the event emphasised the need for the Government to publish the results of the Call for Evidence. Cross-party political support was evident, with commitments from both Labour and Conservative MPs to end double standards and stop outsourcing cruelty overseas.

- **January 2023:** HSI/UK tabled a [public petition](#)³⁶ titled “Retain bans on cat, dog, seal fur imports, and extend to ban all fur imports” calling on the Government to commit to keeping bans on imports of cat, dog and seal furs, and extend legislation to ban the import and sale of fur from all species. The petition, which will conclude in July 2023, currently has approximately 53,000 signatures. A government response to the petition stated “There are already bans in place which the Government will retain. We have no plans currently to make further changes”.
- **February 2023:** In response to media reports following an interview with the Environment Minister, [DEFRA released a statement](#)³⁷ confirming that “Future legislation to ban the imports of fur and foie gras has not been “dropped” or “shelved”. It added “... we are committed to building a clear evidence base to inform future decisions on these issues. We are currently gathering information and speaking to a range of interested parties to help us do this.”
- **May 2023:** Tracey Crouch MP worked with HSI/UK to deliver a cross-party letter signed by 52 MPs and Peers to the Defra Secretary, calling on the Government to release the responses to the Fur market in Great Britain consultation.

³⁶ <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/630751>

³⁷ <https://deframedia.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/06/coverage-on-fur-and-foie-gras/>