

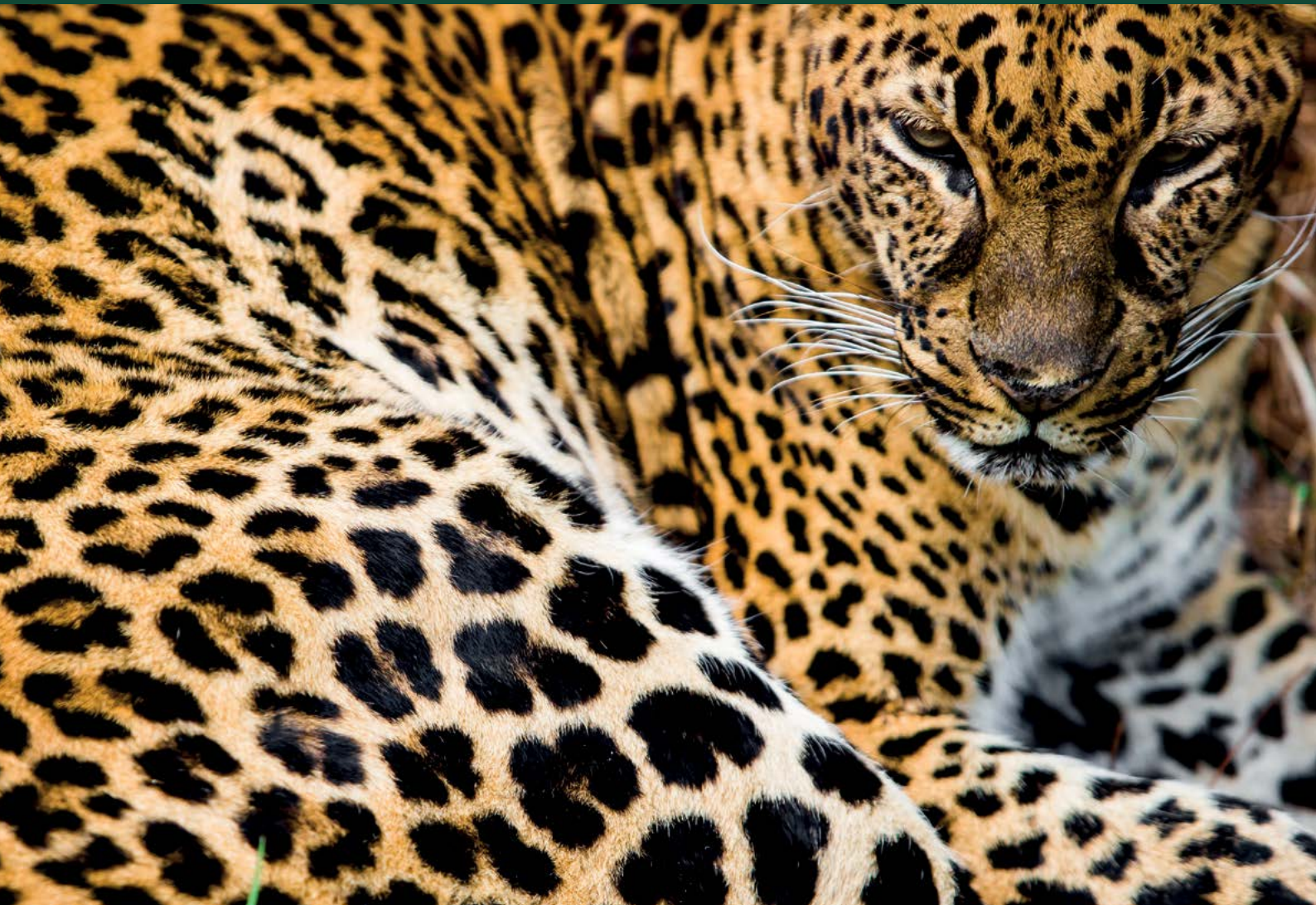


**HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL**  
UNITED KINGDOM

POLITICAL BRIEFING

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# TROPHY HUNTING





A trophy hunting ban limited to endangered species would allow the trade of species **including lion, African elephant, brown bear and leopard to continue.**



## A UK TROPHY HUNTING IMPORT/EXPORT BAN

Humane Society International firmly believes that a ban on all hunting trophies entering or leaving the UK should be adopted by the Government.



**Animals shot by hunters often do not die right away and suffer in agony for hours before the hunters recover their bodies.**

- YouGov polling shows that 76% of the public want any restrictions to apply to all species and not just threatened or endangered species.
- A total ban would free up capacity for Border Force and border staff by streamlining regulation.
- The economic benefits of trophy hunting to conservation and local communities have been greatly exaggerated. Investment in, and adaptation to, non-hunting revenue generation opportunities will not be prioritised as long trophy hunting persists.
- An import and export ban on all hunting trophies would be the fairest regulation with regards to international trade, not favouring one nation over another.
- Trophy hunting is a colonial hangover, morally indefensible in the 21st century. It is a pursuit of largely privileged white westerners and rich elites from around the world who are permitted to hunt, but locals killing the same species do so as illegal poachers.
- Banning imports of hunting trophies from only endangered animals would leave a large number of species without protection. Iconic animals like polar bears, African elephants, lions and leopards could remain in trade.
- As well as ensuring a ban was non-discriminatory, an export ban would also protect UK animals. From 2004-2014 more than 1,000 red deer trophies were exported from the U.K to the U.S.<sup>1</sup> This is a trend encouraged by Safari Club International, whose latest Hunting Awards lists the 'European 25 Milestone', with targets including English and Scottish red deer alongside Eurasian brown bear and gray wolf.<sup>2</sup>



## Background

Trophy hunting is the killing of an animal to obtain animal parts (such as their heads, hides, claws, teeth, tusks, horns, skin, or the whole stuffed animal) for display but not for subsistence. Trophy hunters compete with one another in contests sponsored by trophy hunting industry organisations, to kill the largest animals of a certain type (for example, “Bears of the World”) and to kill the largest number of animals from around the world.

A common goal for trophy hunters is to add the most threatened and endangered species to their collections. For example, the African Big Five includes the African elephant, African lion and African leopard which are classified as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, and the black rhino which is classified as Critically Endangered. Trophies from all of these species and many more have been imported into the UK.

Trophy hunting is associated with cruel and unsportsmanlike practices like baiting, hounding and trapping as well as captive hunts or canned hunting (hunting of captive-bred animals in enclosures). Trophy hunting is also frequently poorly regulated; even where adequate laws and regulations are on the books, these are often poorly implemented and enforced, and undermined by corruption. A ban on import and export of trophies to the UK would eliminate our country’s role in rewarding these corrupt and damaging practices.

Trophies imported into the UK over the last 10 years include **polar bears, cheetah, baboon, zebra and rhino.**



## THE CASE AGAINST TROPHY HUNTING

### The Extinction Crisis

The planet is in the grips of an extinction crisis caused by humans. Animal exploitation, climate change, human encroachment into habitats, deforestation and pollution are wiping out species at a level not seen in human history and “human actions threaten more species with global extinction now than ever before”<sup>3</sup> Yet, despite this, every year thousands of the largest, strongest animals from some of the planet’s most imperilled species are killed simply for fun and for bragging rights.

Trophy hunters often target the strongest and largest animals, negatively impacting not only individual animals but population dynamics and species survival. Take lions as an example; when dominant pride males are killed the rest of the pride is vulnerable to attacks by new males seeking to take over the pride. When the elephants with the largest tusks are killed, we have seen the size of elephant tusks in the population decrease over time, making it harder to find food and defend themselves.

**Killing animals to obtain trophies for bragging rights or for fun whilst we are in the midst of an extinction crisis is not justifiable.**

### Morally indefensible

Some have argued that a ban on the import of trophies gathered from threatened or endangered species would be sufficient. However, it is clear that trophy hunting or the killing of animals not for the purpose of sustenance or survival but simply for fun and bragging rights is, as Lord Goldsmith said ‘morally indefensible’<sup>4</sup> and must be consigned to the history books. The public overwhelmingly support this position; 76% believe any import and export ban should apply to all species and not be restricted to threatened or endangered species.<sup>5</sup> 80% support a ban on imports and exports of hunting trophies with 70% strongly supportive.

**It is well within our government’s prerogative to pursue a policy that reflects the moral value of the majority of the British public.**

**76%**  
**OF BRITS**

**believe any restrictions should apply to all species and not just threatened species.**



### Welfare concerns

Trophy hunters do not have the welfare of the target animals in mind and have no qualms about engaging in egregious or unethical hunting methods. Animals shot by hunters often do not die right away and suffer in agony for hours before the hunters recover their bodies. Cecil the Lion, shot with a bow and arrow in Zimbabwe in 2015, was injured and endured excruciating pain for 10 hours before the hunter found him the next day and killed him.

The competitive nature of trophy hunting also raises welfare concerns. Hunters are encouraged to kill animals with a variety of weapons to increase their standing. Safari Club International awards what it calls ‘Alternative-Method Awards’ for animals killed with muzzleloader rifles, handguns, crossbow and other weapons.<sup>6</sup> By rewarding the use of more primitive weapons, encourages practices which causes greater suffering to the animal.

**Animal welfare will always come second to the gratification of the hunter**





Alternative-method Awards reward hunters for using **outdated, inefficient weapons causing greater suffering.**

### Canned Hunting

Canned hunting represents the tragic inevitable conclusion of the increase in popularity of trophy hunting in a social media age. Animals are bred in captivity and then released into enclosures to be killed by inexperienced hunters. While this practice is frowned upon by many ‘serious’ hunters, the two are very much linked, the continuation of any form of hunting purely for sport feeds all of its forms.

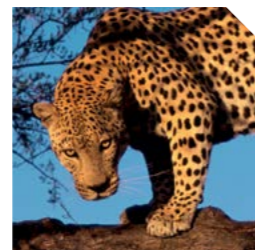
An estimated 7,000 lions exist in about 300 captive-breeding facilities in South Africa, supplying lions to the canned lion trophy hunting industry.<sup>7</sup> The import of lion canned hunting trophies from South Africa has increased exponentially since 2015 when Cecil the lion was killed. In the years 2015-2018 captive lion trophy imports more than trebled when compared to the previous four-year period and between those two periods rose from 44% of the total lions imported to 79%.<sup>8</sup>

**No skill is required, no chase, no engagement in the natural world, the horror of ‘farming’ some of the world’s most magnificent species purely to be killed for fun is something we cannot continue to support.**

### FALSE CLAIMS BY TROPHY HUNTERS...

#### Hunting conserves populations

More often than not animals in their prime and in breeding age are targeted by trophy hunting because of their specific characteristics; their black mane, their long tusks, the size of their antlers, in fact **Safari Club International offers prizes for the largest animals killed.**<sup>9</sup> Where older males are targeted this can have extreme negative consequences for the herd or pride; older males offer protection to groups and keep juvenile males in line, when they are killed less experienced animals move in, increasing the risk of human wildlife conflict and killing the cubs of the older male.



**Leopard, elephant and lion are the top 3 animal**

**trophies imported into the UK with over 150 trophies imported over the last 10 years.**

### Hunting contributes to local communities

These claims have been vastly exaggerated. A 2010 study of trophy hunting in Tanzania found that **only around 3% of the costs associated with an average trophy hunt found their way to local community development** with the majority of income going to operating costs of trophy hunting industry operators and government fees.<sup>10</sup>

In eight key African countries, trophy hunters contribute at most 0.03 % of gross domestic product (GDP) and at most 0.76 % of overall tourism jobs.<sup>11</sup>

It is well established that **photographic safaris contribute more to local communities** and we would encourage the UK Government to seek opportunities to increase engagement in ecotourism and support local communities living with hunted species.



### Hunting pays for the wildlife

The so called ‘if it pays it stays’ argument, has also been discredited. The cost of a hunt can be as much as \$400k in the case of the black rhino,<sup>12</sup> however, little of that money is ever distributed to species conservation, and far more can be ‘earned’ by keeping an animal alive. While **a trophy hunter may pay \$40,000 to shoot a bull elephant, a living elephant would generate \$23,000 annually through photo tourism, meaning a potential value of \$1.6m over its lifespan.**<sup>13</sup>

A 2008 study included an interview with a Village Executive Officer in Tanzania, who stated:

**“ We’re more closely allied with the photographic operators than the hunters. They are finishing off the wildlife before we’ve had a chance to realize a profit from it. Hunters don’t recognize us; they only recognize the government... 25 % of hunting fees goes into the ‘hole’ at the district. We’re supposed to get 5 %: we don’t even see that. The WD [Wildlife Division] controls everything.”<sup>14</sup>**

Trophy hunting also represents a colonial hangover. Hunters argue that they pay for the animal which incentivises local communities to protect these species and crack down on poaching. This implies it is **acceptable for wealthy foreigners to arrive in a country, kill wildlife for fun and leave with a trophy gathered from the kill but illegal for a local person to kill the same animal to feed his family.** This is a situation we would never tolerate in our own country and should be consigned to the history books.

In eight key African countries, **trophy hunters contribute at most 0.03% of GDP.**







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