

PROPOSED BAN OF TROPHY-HUNTED SPECIMENS INTO THE UK

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On the 25th January 2020, the UK Government closed its public consultation on whether to ban trophy imports into the country.

Those opposed to an outright ban argue that until better alternatives are implemented, vast wild spaces currently allocated to hunting will be lost to agriculture.

As the UK government recognises: "Some conservationists believe that trophy hunting can be an effective conservation tool, supporting local livelihoods and attracting revenues for other conservation activities."

Consequently it has called for evidence to inform the process. The evidence suggests that ethical, economic and ecological problems with trophy hunting warrants a trophy import ban.

THOSE IN FAVOUR OF TROPHY-HUNTED SPECIMENS BAN INTO THE UK

1. The Queen in her annual speech to the nation said that there was a possibility that the ban on the importing of trophy-hunted specimens would be upheld –according to reports.
2. The Prime Minister Boris Johnson (says that trophy hunting is barbaric-obviously influenced by his partner Carrie Symonds) and his partner Carrie Symonds (a vociferous Animal Rights Activist) have both expressed opposition to the trophy hunting industry and the importation of trophy-hunted specimens.
3. Ross Harvey [writer](27/1/2020) suggests that evidence points to ethical, economic and ecological problems, which would warrant trophy-hunted specimens' import ban into the UK. He says that trophy hunting is a deeply controversial topic and the consequences of ending the practice appears to be largely unknown.
 - (a.) Ethics-According to Batavia and her co-authors (Not sure who Batavia and her co-authors are-but I gather that they are involved in the banning of trophy-hunted specimens into the UK). Trophy hunting "involves a hunter paying a fee to kill an animal and subsequently retain some or all of the animal's body as a trophy."

They argue that "the consequentialist [*important characteristics of many moral theories can produce moral judgements*] argument misses the core concerns we seek to raise, namely, that collecting bodies or body parts as trophies is an ethically inappropriate way to interact with individual animals, regardless of the beneficial outcomes that do or do not follow."

Many well-meaning conservationists get themselves into a muddle through a fear of unknown consequences (say job losses) but nonetheless try to justify an inherently unethical act on consequentialist grounds. Unfortunately, the conservation often snowballs into name calling and irreversible positioning.

Opponents of trophy hunting are labelled as animal rightists-meant to be some kind of insult.

Those defending it as a 'necessary evil' hold up science as an antidote to 'emotion' and suggest that the inherent moral repugnance be overlooked for the sake of wilderness landscape preservation.

- (b.) Morally-Justifying the practice on consequentialist grounds-that the ends' justify the means-is inadequate. A satirical letter in Science-responding to a letter arguing that trophy hunting supports biodiversity preservation-shows that consequentialist reasoning, logically extended, would justify fortress conservation and green militarisation, which few people would support.

Appeals to potential consequences are inadequate foundations on which to build an ethical argument.

The guiding imperative-'what would society be like if everyone pursued action x?'-is useful only if you have a very precise empirical idea of the answer.

Even then, reliable prediction of a good outcome may nonetheless be insufficient for establishing whether an act is morally acceptable in itself. And in the trophy hunting case, it is empirically unclear.

- (c.) Success-If everyone hunted elephants for their tusks, there would be none left, a 'moral bad'.

However, subject to the monetary constraint-only a few can afford it-the outcomes may be different.

Under proper governance (an elusive construct) only 'surplus' males are selected as trophies and the money supports local communities in ways that are currently irreplaceable, creating a 'moral good'.

But there are too many assumptions in the latter that do not materialise in reality.

Ecologically, for instance, there is no such thing as a 'surplus' male elephant. *As Lucy Taylor? and her collaborators write: 'We show that male elephants increased their energetic allocation into reproduction with age as the probability of reproductive success increases.'*

- (d.) Matriarchal-"Given that older male elephants tend to be both the target of legal trophy hunting and illegal poaching, man-made interference could drive fundamental changes in elephant reproductive tactics".

Furthermore, because trophy hunting selects the biggest and the best animals it undermines the genetic health of these populations.

Removal of the biggest tuskers is simultaneously the removal of the most reproductively successful bulls.

Moreover female herd leaders don't like younger bulls, who go into premature musth in the presence of older bulls and behave inappropriately.

Older bulls maintain the female social structure by enforcing the norms of matriarchal society.

(e.) Trophy-Stressing this core institution through selective removal of the last big tuskers strongly suggests that hunters are more dedicated to extracting trophies than to supporting conservation. They simply cannot have it both ways.

African lions are not as complex as elephants but taking out pride males (because why would you select a very old male as a trophy?) is an ecological disaster, as the incoming male often kills the dead male's cubs to establish his dominance. Fewer than 32,000 of these apex predators are left in the wild.

A recent paper shows, however, that a three-year moratorium on trophy hunting in South Luangwa National Park in Zambia resulted in a 17.1 and 14 percentage point increase in survival in sub-adult and adult male populations respectively.

"The data shows that the moratorium was effective at growing the Luangwa lion population and increasing the number of adult males." Not surprising.

Economically, alternative activities to trophy hunting are likely to trump the potential value of hunting without the damaging ecological effects. The evidence also increasingly suggests that trophy hunting does not pay its way.

(f.) Jobs-Regarding jobs, ecotourism is more labour-absorptive and provides better quality jobs for longer seasons than hunting.

While it's clear that not every hectare currently under hunting can simply be transformed overnight into high-end tourism, there are alternatives that are workable in many areas.

Completely marginal or unfeasible areas that are critical to ensuring ecological functionality through maintaining migration corridors, for instance, should be appropriately subsidised by other means.

Academic work from South Africa estimates that 21 million hectares are accounted for by 9,000 hunting ranches, which in turn support 17,000 jobs.

Other work shows that non-consumptive tourism accounts for 90,000 jobs.

(g.) Science-Assuming that the ecotourism jobs are derived predominantly from protected areas and some private nature reserves, the labour absorption rate could be as high as 0.009 per hectare.

Therefore, if hunting land were converted to non-consumptive tourism, as many as 193,000 jobs could presumably be created (11-fold more than hunting), especially if some of those fragmented hunting zones were joined up through appropriate ecological corridors.

Appealing to (unknown) consequences is, clearly, too risky an altar on which to sacrifice inherent morality, especially if the practice creates 'moral bad'.

Whether your epistemological *{relating to the theory of knowledge, especially with regards to its methods, validity and scope and the distinction between justified belief and opinion}* starting point is that we are obligated to steward the planet well or that we should never kill sentient [*Capacity to feel, perceive or experience subjectively*] and intelligent (let alone self-aware beings), it is very difficult to see how trophy hunting can be ethically justified.

Defending this practice through an appeal to science is dangerous, as it disingenuously pits science against morality.

(h.) Abandoned-The resultant scientism [*not science*] misunderstands that an integrative [*combining 2 or more things to form an effective unit or system*] approach to conservation is ethically and scientifically preferable to an aggregative [*whole formed by combining several separate elements*] one.

Science and ethics are ultimately not in conflict. The ethical, economic and ecological arguments against trophy hunting-especially of keystone herbivore and apex predators-are weighty.

The consequentialist counter arguments make too many assumptions to warrant a practice with extreme tail risks.

It is, therefore, high time that trophy imports into the UK are banned. Ultimately, the practice of trophy hunting itself should be abandoned.

Original Article: <https://theecologist.org/2020/jan/27/uk-must-ban-trophy-hunting-imports>

2500 trophy hunted animals were apparently imported into the UK since 2010.

A referendum was held and a 'targeted' group voted and 76 % (apparently) were in favour of the banning of trophy hunted specimens, into the UK.

Mr Goncalves CEO of League against Cruel Sports and the Conservation Action Trust have combined forces with the other Animal Rights Activists-to effectively ban the import of trophy hunted specimens into the UK.

HOUSE OF COMMONS-LIBRARY
TROPHY HUNTING

Document published on Thursday, September 26, 2019-House of Commons are presently in recess-re-opening on 1st September 2020.

There is ongoing debate about trophy hunting, its contribution to wildlife conservation and links to wildlife trafficking. Those opposed to trophy hunting are calling for a ban on imports of hunting trophies into the UK.

Trophy hunting is legal as long as it complies with a country's existing hunting legislation, including ensuring all proper permits have been obtained. Exports and imports of hunting trophies from endangered species must be licenced under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

CITES is an international agreement between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES works by subjecting international trade in specimens of selected species to controls. All import, export, re-export and introduction of the species covered by the Convention must be authorised through a licencing scheme. This includes trophies from hunting.

There is ongoing debate as to whether well managed trophy hunting is beneficial to conservation efforts, The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is of the view that "with effective governance and management, trophy hunting can and does have positive impacts". Other organisations, such as Born Free and the Campaign for the Ban of Trophy Hunting disagrees with trophy hunting, calling for a ban and focus on other options to generate income from wildlife. Both CITES and the EU support the view that well-managed and sustainable trophy hunting can contribute to species conservation efforts.

Control on imports of hunting trophies by the EU were strengthened in 2015 to address concerns about links to wildlife trafficking.