

Written evidence submitted by Mr Adrian Burdett (AAB0007)

I have been fortunate to be both a shooter and hunter for many years. I have had the privilege to be able to deer stalk in the UK, hunt in North America, both Canada and America. Now being retired, I am hoping to complete a lifetimes ambition to hunt in Africa. In my professional life I was a scientist, with an MSc in Environmental Resources. I have also been lucky enough to work alongside people from all over the world, including the team that worked for the UN assessing the environmental impact of controlling river blindness in West Africa and the two heads of sections from the Kenyan Game Department. I am not an uneducated bloodthirsty savage as Trophy Hunters are betrayed in the Media.

As I write this, I am looked upon by black bear, moose, and whitetail deer plus a small collection of European style heads of half the native species of deer found in the UK. All these so called “trophies” are physical manifestation of the memories they represent. A so-called trophy hunter is a hunter who honours the animal he or she killed by hanging a non-edible piece of it on her wall. It reminds him or her of the great hunting experience he or she had and will bring a smile to her face for a long, long time after the piece of venison is eaten. Is it wrong to so honour the animals we kill? These are not trophies to the people who go hunting, as a cup or medal, would be for winning a 100 metre race but are mementoes of the challenge of taking a quarry animal.

I shall answer the questions you have put to those of us that wish to take part in this consultation in the order the questions are asked on the Committees Website. I shall only refer to the hunting of mammals since I have no experience of game bird shooting or fishing.

Question 1.

The estate where I stalk, in the north of England, is like many others, where 80% of their clients are from Europe or America. These people bring in foreign exchange and keep the hospitality industry going in poor rural areas. (Shooting is worth £2 billion GVA and employees 74,000 full time jobs). The income generated by field sports employs gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies who look after and improve the biodiversity of their estates. If the export of trophies were banned from the UK, these sportsmen and women would go elsewhere and the income to maintain and employ estate staff would disappear. The countryside would become a wildlife desert. This can be seen on the land managed by RSPB and the League Against Cruel Sports, showing how the well intentioned can destroy a previously well managed resource by not looking after a habitat.

Hunting is known for creating and maintaining the very best habitats, worldwide, by judicious management. These habitats allow animals to thrive. Part of a holistic management plan is the control of the population, as good habitats increasing fecundity. To keep a flourishing fauna and flora, habitats need to match the carrying capacity of the land. This requires that surplus animals are culled. It is better for the welfare of the animals in entirety, that the sick and old are removed by sustainable selective culling. An advantage is that sports-people remove these animals and pay the land owner for the privilege. Most culled animals will not be classified as trophies due to their age or health problems. Mature animals, having passed on their genes and would die of old age are taken when they are considered to be at their best in trophy terms. This earns the considerable profits needed to pay for land management here in the UK and elsewhere in the world.

Banning trophy hunting and all it entails, will do the exactly the opposite of what the animal rights lobby want. They show a complete lack of understanding or knowledge of the economics and management of wildlife. Culling populations by people paying to hunt is one of the tools used in the conservation of ecosystems with no effect on a population, as stated by Dr Amy Dickman (who has over 20 years of experience working on large carnivores in Africa and is a member of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group and the Human-Wildlife Conflict Collaboration among other bodies).

In the UK, the majority of deer stalking takes place on private land. Private land has to pay its way if the land is to be managed for its biodiversity, wildlife has to earn its keep. This comes from the day fees and trophy fees that the land and its fauna finance allowing professionals and gamekeepers to improve the land's bio-diversity. Good conservation means that the wildlife that is the quarry of sportsmen and women continues to be sustainable resource and can be harvested year after year, producing sporting fees required for the upkeep of the land. A spinoff of habit management is that all species thrive in a diverse habitat. If the landowner does not get a financial return from their resource to re-invest in professional land management, they will look to other means to achieve a financial return. As happened in the past it would turn the land into a monoculture of crops with no biodiversity, ending up as a wildlife desert where deer would be seen as a pest and eradicated.

The UK will be the odd man out in Europe, as the EU has to acknowledge the importance of hunting to conservation in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, voted on by Parliament during June 2021 an amendment that there will be no unjustified restrictions on wildlife trade, including the movement of hunting trophies.

Question 2.

The apparent worry among the chattering class in the UK and the USA, through media manipulation, has been the targeting of hunting in Africa and particular in South Africa with lions, in so called canned hunting, where lions have been bred specifically for clients to hunt on space restricted grounds. This is in the process of being terminated by the South African government, following lobbying by the South African Professional Hunters Association (SAPHA) to ban this practice.

How is the UK government going to differentiate, in what setting the animal was taken to become a memento? If it was legally taken in another country, it would not be possible to say where the animal was acquired unless the other country had a different licensing system for different habits.

The world trade in animals and their parts are already controlled by CITES and IUCN agreements, as well as the governments where the animals are living. It seems ridiculous that the UK Government would put another layer of bureaucracy on top of a legal trade.

Question 3.

If owners, as I am, of trophies that were taken both legally and ethically had their mementos made illegal by new legislation, there would be no legal market for these trophies in the UK. They would either have to go to a museum, be destroyed or sold on the black market. We all know how lucrative the black market is for such items as rhino horn, elephant ivory or bear gallbladders and how the rarity of an item pushes up the price. Illegality generates a market for illegally taken animals in the illegal trade enriching the people of this dark trade. If they are destroyed it would be a waste of the potential scientific use, as the trophies might contain information for future study. There are two ways available to legitimise trophies legally acquired and held. One is to use US style grandfather laws allowing trophies to be inherited. The other is to introduce registration of existing trophies so allowing their legal trade.

Question 4.

The current measures used to control the trade in animal parts including trophies are highly effective both nationally and internationally. The many places outside the UK, where hunting is carried out, have game departments to enforce the law of the country and carry out scientific research. The funding for these bodies to continue their work is generated by the fees paid by hunters. Hunters finance 90% of the Zimbabwe Game Department income

and their work of keeping the nation's bio-diversity intact, including anti-poaching patrols and scientific investigations into the local ecology.

A similar set up occurs in North America, Canada and the USA. All have Provincial or State Game Laws, enforced by their respective Game Departments, as well as at the Federal level. These hunting and trophy fees not only pay for game wardens but also the scientific research they carry out. The USA also take taxes on shooting and sporting goods at a Federal Level, under the Pittman-Robertson Act (1937). This is then apportioned to state wildlife agencies for conservation and hunter education. These taxes have produced over \$14.1 billion since the programme started, all from hunters and shooters pockets.

Question 5.

The question here, is who decides what is unacceptable treatment of animals? Extremists in the vegan animal rights commando think farming of animals is unacceptable but the majority in GB don't. A secondary question is how can the UK government ban advertising something that may be illegal here but is not in another land? HMG can only prohibit printed matter, domestic media advertising but not the internet. We know how successful the government has been at removing paedophilic or terrorist content on the web. You cannot ban anybody looking for information, or for example observing a bull fight or a Sevillana dance as a part of getting to know Spanish culture. How are the government going to determine what is unacceptable treatment of animals unless you have inspectors visit each attraction? Then you get down to a person's opinion and experience. For instance, do you classify the performance of either the dancing horses of the Spanish riding school in Vienna or Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art as unacceptable, as they appear to be performing, as animals did in a circus, for many years in the UK. If a practice is legal in a sovereign state, it should be up to the individual to decide whether to see or take part in an activity. Is the UK is turning into a dictatorship where the State knows better than the individual?

Question 6.

If people are going on organised tours, the tour company via their local reps, will know if the treatment of animals is acceptable to their UK clients. If cock fighting is both acceptable and legal in Thailand, the tour operator should inform their clients, what is involved, then the individual can make a judgement on whether to see the spectacle. How is the British government going to police and stop British tourists from going to watch a local show that is advertised locally and would be part of learning about others culture?

Additional Comments

It appears that this whole anti-trophy hunting crusade is being fuelled by a media onslaught orchestrated by white animal rights extremists in Britain, Europe and the USA. This has been energised by focusing on trophy hunting in 2015 and lawful killing of Cecil the lion. Following this the Western media and animal rights campaigners have had a feeding frenzy almost exclusively on trophy hunting in Africa. They know disneyfication of an animal by giving it a name that will enrage people and bring money to their cause. This Western outrage about trophy hunting has led to action, including trophy import bans or restrictions being implemented or proposed in multiple countries, with a particular focus on African species, says Dr Moreangels Mbizah. This is completely the contrary to the way the Southern Black African hunting nations, see it. They see the banning of trophy hunting, as an attack on their sovereignty by racist neo-colonialists, attacking their culture and way of life. White people in Europe and America, don't care about the natives of rural Africa. The non-Africans have forgotten (conveniently) that in **2003 UNESCO's Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention** calls on the signatories to ensure the recognition of, respect for and enhancement of hunting, food preparation and food preservation knowledge and practices, including related rituals and beliefs, and that are recognised by communities, groups and individuals as part of the intangible cultural heritage.

One really hears the view of Africans, who live with wildlife daily, about what **THEY** want for their wildlife and biodiversity, says Dr John Ledger, following his research with rural communities, who want to benefit from the wildlife that they are surrounded by. The so-called conservation movement has not listened to and respected local voices, Dr Luwi Nguluka (a member of the Cecil research team) said s,he is greeted with hostility from rural Africans for being a conservationist. As the Western Conservationists have not listened to rural Africans, as wildlife has more value to non-Africans than the rural Africans. This is illustrated by the anti-African hunting mob and their media cronies, making a celebrity out of a new legally hunted lion, they name Mopane, in August 2021 but it shows they do not care about native Africans as nothing has been heard about the railway man, Tomas Mousa, eaten by lions in March 2020, nor the three Tanzanian primary children eaten by lions on 5th July 2021.

The new, so called, conservationists are ignoring and excluding local people from the discussions about African wildlife. Dr Nguluka states rather than tell Africans how to manage their wildlife, we should listen to the locals and respect their choices, not impose Western views on Africa. The frustration amongst many local people is palpable, as Chief Ronald Makuya, chair of African Community Conservationists (ACC) and Chief of the Makuya hunting community, who is fighting to save his peoples hunting culture, is quoted as

saying, “What does Lord Goldsmith, living in London, know of the rural Africans, living daily with the wildlife of Africa? We live with it every day and know it. We lose crops, livestock and family members to wildlife daily!”

Fortunately, the hunting African nations, are resisting the neo-colonialists emanating from Europe and America, as exemplified by Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe community leaders, who have started action against the Born Free Foundation with the Charity Commissioners due to the Foundation giving out wrong information about hunting in Africa.

Hunting is a tool, in conservation and bio-diversity, used in a legal, scientifically informed way. The most successful countries in the world for megafauna conservation, are Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Tanzania and Mozambique. All have thriving populations of wildlife. The sustainable use of wildlife is a central theme in the Convention on Biological Diversity, underpinning local livelihoods, often for the poorest and most vulnerable communities. That must not be taken lightly, particularly by privileged outsiders. However, the trophy hunting debate has not yet arrived at the importance of centring impacted communities. The views, rights, and conservation experiences of rural Black Africans are often largely ignored, while the outrage and offence felt by Westerners are extensively considered and overly weighted, both in the media and in political decision-making. Affected local communities have spoken out, a letter representing over a million people accused campaign groups of undermining conservation and human rights by pushing hunting bans but the lack of space and weight given to the African perspectives is deeply troubling.

African hunting nations are recently, questioning membership of organisations such as CITES and IUCN, as they see that these bodies have been hijacked by the white anti-hunting gang from Europe and America, as they are not using science to determine animal quotas, but more the emotions of the European and American members of these organisations.

Trophy hunting gives a financial incentive to maintain wildlife populations and habitat. The hunters pay through day fees and trophy fees for the right to hunt on community land often in more primitive, disease-ridden areas where photo-tourist will not go. More land across Africa is protected in hunting reserves than in National Parks. Hunting operators conduct anti-poaching operations, while hunting areas often act as buffers around parks, reducing hard boundaries and the intense human-wildlife conflict. The local Africans benefit from the hunting as they are provided with protein from the animals taken, the hunting operations provide employment where there is none. The wildlife is given a value to the local subsistence farmers, as the hunting fees pay for crop damage, livestock killed and help to compensate family members harmed or killed by wildlife.

As stated before hunting operations provide benefits to communities, in addition, there are programmes like Community Based Natural Resource Management, Communal Areas Management Plan for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), in Zimbabwe, Described by Dr Russell Taylor in 2009 publication (Biodiversity and Conservation 18:2563-2583) as a long-term programme using wildlife to promote rural institutions and livelihoods.

CAMPFIRE is the right of rural communities to manage, use, dispose of, and benefit from wildlife resources. Between 1989 and 2006 CAMPFIRE income totalled, USD\$ 30 million of which 52% was allocated to sub-district wards and villages for community projects and household benefits. Community projects included the constructions of roads, schools, clinics and other valuable amenities. CAMPFIRE experience confirmed that the concept of devolving responsibility and accountability for natural resource management can be highly effective for the collective and participatory management of such resources. That is the voice of rural Africa!

For African wildlife to survive, it must be able to, compete economically with agriculture, cropping and livestock farming. If rural people are denied the opportunity, then wildlife will disappear.

If trophy imports to the UK are banned, I will still go hunting, but not bring tangible mementoes back home.

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