

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2017

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the conservation of lions in Africa.

I entirely agree with you that lions are an iconic species that deserve our best protection, and I am glad that the UK Government is committed to conserving the world's wildlife.

The killing of the Zimbabwean lion known as Cecil was a particularly distressing case. The Government wrote to its counterparts in Zimbabwe to call for our two countries to work together to promote lion conservation.

I know there have been serious concerns raised about African lion hunting trophy imports. The wildlife trade is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, whose approach is to ensure that the trade is conducted legally and sustainably, not necessarily to reduce or end it. At its most recent conference the UK played a key role in developing of a proposal for enhanced global rules on hunting and trade. The resulting tightening of controls are a very positive step towards ensuring sustainability.

Import controls are managed at an EU-wide level and stricter controls on the import of six species subject to hunting, including lions and African elephants, were introduced in 2015. Following our withdrawal from the EU, the Government will be in a position to consider future UK policy in this area.

Properly managed, legal and sustainable trophy hunting can play a part in species conservation efforts, providing an important source of funding for conservation in some countries. That is why I would join the Government in opposing blanket import bans in all cases.

As part of its efforts to tackle the illegal wildlife trade, the Government hosted and led the London Conference on Wildlife Trafficking, where over 40 countries adopted the London Declaration in an effort to save iconic species from being poached to the brink of extinction. It has also set up the £13 million Illegal Wildlife Challenge Fund to support projects in the developing world, and in 2012 funded a conference in Johannesburg to consider conservation of the African lion with other interested countries.



Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY