



---

# SHOOTING UP

**Are Britain's trophy imports  
& hunting companies booming?**

---



# All-Party Parliamentary Group on Banning Trophy Hunting

Published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Banning Trophy Hunting  
January 11, 2022

**Chair:** Sir Roger Gale MP (Con)

**Co-Chair:** Baroness Hayman of Ullock (Lab)

**Vice-Chairs:** Dr Lisa Cameron MP (SNP) Lord Rennard (Lib Dem) Hywel Williams MP (Plaid Cymru)

**Officers:** Kevin Brennan MP, Amy Callaghan MP, Dave Doogan MP, Margaret Ferrier MP, Baroness Gale, Andrew Gwynne MP, Pauline Latham MP, Kate Osborne MP, Christina Rees MP.

The objectives of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Banning Trophy Hunting are to secure a comprehensive and properly-enforced UK ban on all trophy hunting imports, and for Britain to be a global leader in helping to end trophy hunting.

[www.APPGTrophyHunting.org](http://www.APPGTrophyHunting.org)

## It's like "mainlining on heroin" - British trophy hunter Paul Roberts

- Figures collated by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) show the numbers of hunting trophies arriving in Britain have risen sharply in recent years. Since 2010, over ten times as many trophies entered Britain than during the 1980s. The amount of elephant ivory coming into the UK has risen five-fold. The 1980s saw 171 trophies and 192 kg of elephant ivory enter the country. Since 2010, more than 2,000 trophies and over 1 tonne of elephant ivory have been brought back to Britain by hunters (**Fig. 1**).
- British hunters have travelled widely in search of hunting trophies, taking in the US, Russia, several former Soviet Republics as well as Africa, South America and a number of European countries (**Fig. 2**).
- In total, British hunters have shipped home 5,000 trophies of CITES-listed animals since the 1980s. However the total number of animals shot and brought into the country could be as high as 25,000. Import and export permits are only required for trophies of species protected by CITES. Therefore no official figures exist for non-CITES animals that are popular with trophy hunters, such as plains zebras, buffaloes, striped hyena, golden jackal, honey badger, antelopes including impala and wildebeest etc. Estimates by IUCN scientists and wildlife groups, though, indicate that the total number of trophies taken each year by hunters around the world may be between three to five times greater than the number of CITES-listed species.
- In an average year, trophy hunters shoot approximately 35,000 animals that are protected under CITES rules. Estimates of the overall number of animals shot annually range from 105,000 (International Union for the Conservation of Nature - IUCN) to 170,000 (International Fund for Animal Welfare – IFAW). Humane Society International has estimated that American hunters alone import approximately 126,000 trophies a year. (**SEE NOTE 1**). Therefore, if British trophy hunters shoot CITES-listed and -unlisted animals in the same proportions, this would suggest that the actual number of trophies brought into the country since the 1980s could range between 15,000 – 25,000.
- By far the most popular CITES-listed species shot by British trophy hunters is the African elephant. Since the 1980s, British hunters have brought home more than 1,000 elephant trophies into the country, as well as an additional 1.3 tonnes of elephant ivory. The second favourite animal is the hippopotamus, followed by black bears, leopards, zebras, and lions (**Fig. 3**).
- British hunters have shot and brought home trophies from at least 70 different species that are listed as protected under international laws. Some are endangered – eg rhinos, Scimitar-horned oryx (extinct in the wild), addax and dama gazelle (both species are down to a few dozen in the wild). Others are unusual or controversial for other reasons – e.g. seals, sheep, otters, wild cats, civet cats, and aardwolf (**Fig. 4**).
- Several British hunters are among the world's leading trophy hunters and have won awards from Safari Club International (SCI), the world's main trophy hunting association. The awards are presented to hunters who shoot large numbers of the world's top 'Big Game' species. Paul Roberts, a Sussex gun-maker who says he has been on 33 African safaris, has won SCI's African Big 5 'Grand Slam' for shooting lions, elephants, rhinos, leopards and buffaloes. Abigail Day, a London lawyer, has won the SCI award for the world's top female trophy hunter. Malcolm Day, a retired property developer from Gloucester, has won 36 different SCI prizes including the Hunting Achievement Award (Diamond) which requires trophy hunters to shoot animals from at least 125 different species. He recently came runner-up in the Weatherby Award, generally considered the 'Oscar' of the hunting industry. He is thought to have killed around 300 animals in all.

- Prizes such as the Hunting Achievement Award have a number of different levels similar to computer or arcade games. The first level is denominated the 'Copper' level, and requires a hunter to shoot animals from 10 different species. 'Bronze' and 'Silver' awards are presented to hunters who shoot 30 and 70 species respectively. To reach 'Gold', a hunter has to have shot animals representing 100 or more species, with the Diamond prize being the top level and being presented to hunters who shoot at least 125 species. To date, trophy hunters who have won this one award alone have killed 57,295 animals.
- British businesses are among some of the top safari companies selling and operating trophy hunting 'holidays' in Africa and elsewhere. Blackthorn Safaris in Oswestry sells canned lion hunts. ProStalk Safaris in Glastonbury sells elephant and monkey hunts. Take Aim Safaris - owned by Carl Knight, from Surrey - operates in 4 different African countries. Trophy prices with Take Aim Safaris range from £60 for a baboon, £220 for a porcupine, to £1300 for a giraffe. Other animals include leopards for £2,200 and hippopotamuses for £2,950. Prices for Elephants start at £9,600 while lions are available for £22,000.
- British companies are among the world's 'record-breaking' firms too. Safari Club International operates a Record Book. Similar to the Guinness Book of World Records, it includes records of the largest animals of species shot by trophy hunters. The Record Book is controversial because it explicitly encourages hunters to shoot the strongest or 'fittest' of the species, and lists the areas where record-sized animals can be found and the hunting companies operating there. Scientists warn that deliberately targeting the biggest and genetically 'fittest' animals strips species of genes essential to its survival, particularly in the face of a changing and increasingly hostile environment as a result of climate change. Lions have lost 15% of their gene pool over the past century. Hunting industry records indicate that the average size of lions may now be smaller than a generation. Hunting industry data shows elephant tusks are today shorter than in the 1980s, with a growing number of adult elephants have no tusks at all.
- The Record Book stipulates minimum sizes of animal trophy for entries to be eligible. In order to be considered for entry, elephants must have tusks which together weigh at least 90 lb. The length and width of a lion's skull is measured and must come to a total of at least 23 inches for it to be eligible. The criteria for rhinos is the circumference and length of each horn.
- A number of British companies feature in SCI's list of hunting companies that have amassed the largest number of record-sized trophies. British trophy hunter Mike McCrave's business is one of the highest-scoring companies with around 300 recognised records spanning 20 different species. According to one industry estimate, the firm has annual revenues of US \$1 million (SEE NOTE 2). The company is registered to an address in Cheltenham – where it describes itself as a pest control service provider - but operates largely from Kelso, Scotland.
- British firm KD Sporting is one of the 25 most successful international trophy hunting companies of all time. It has approximately 700 record trophies recognised by Safari Club International covering 29 different species. The company operates in Africa, Europe, and also in the UK. The business was set up by Kevin Downer, a British trophy hunter from Sharpthorne, near Gatwick Airport. His company sells many of its hunts at Safari Club International's international convention which takes place in Nevada each year.
- Robin Hurt Safaris is regarded as one of the leaders of the global trophy hunting industry. With an astonishing 921 Safari Club International records to its name, the company is one of the all-time top safari businesses. Only eight firms have more than 1000 record-beating trophies to their name. The company was founded and continues to be run by Robin Hurt from London. Many of the company's senior team and professional hunting guides are British too.



- SCI's Record Book reveals that the firm has helped trophy hunters shoot record-sized elephants in Botswana, leopards in Tanzania, lions in Zambia, and rhinos in South Africa. SCI credits the company with having helped hunters shoot no fewer than 36 of the world's biggest leopards.
- SCI also credits the business with a number of world records for unusual animals, and for animals killed using 'novel' hunting weapons. The list includes the world's biggest-ever Abbot Duiker, Topi, Southern Gerenuk and East African Roan Antelope, and the largest Tiang and White-eared Kob ever killed using just a handgun.
- Robin Hurt is a qualified professional hunting guide ('PH'). A review of a book he has written about his hunting adventures says: "There is only one PH who can genuinely say he has done it all—Robin Hurt. He has taken 50-inch-spread buffaloes, 100-pound tuskers, 200-pound leopards, 10-foot lions with heavy manes, and 30-inch-plus rhinos back in the day. His clients have shot numerous, superlative free-range trophies of the entire Big Five with dozens of those heads qualifying for Rowland Ward's Records of Big Game. Robin's record is an unsurpassed accomplishment in the history of African hunting."
- In 2020, Hurt won the most prestigious prize awarded by Dallas Safari Club, the world's second largest hunting club. He was also treated to a special dinner by former US Presidential candidate Ross Perot. His company is currently expanding its operations around the world with a number of new hunting holiday packages on offer in Alaska, Argentina, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, New Zealand, and Spain.

## NOTES:

1. A report by IUCN scientists has calculated that "tourist hunters kill around 105 000 animals per year, including around 640 elephants, 3 800 buffalo, 600 lions and 800 leopards" ('Big game hunting in west Africa – what is its contribution to conservation?', IUCN, PAPACO Studies No.2, 2009 <https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/2009-074-En.pdf> ) The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) say that 1.7 million animals have been killed by trophy hunters in the past decade, or approximately 170,000 per year. ('Killing for trophies: an analysis of global trophy hunting trade' <https://www.ifaw.org/resources/killing-for-trophies> ). Humane Society International believes that American hunters alone import 126,000 trophies every year [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/160206-American-trophy-hunting-wildlife-conservation?awc=19533\\_1639848848\\_378acf41f362aa64e92cae6230ebc126](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/160206-American-trophy-hunting-wildlife-conservation?awc=19533_1639848848_378acf41f362aa64e92cae6230ebc126)
2. <https://www.zoominfo.com/c/mike-mccrave-hunting-ltd/363753664>

## Tables

**Fig 1. UK HUNTING TROPHY IMPORTS BY DECADE**\_(source: CITES)

YEARS	NO. OF TROPHIES
1981-1990	171 + 192KG IVORY
1991-2000	677 + 20KG IVORY
2001-2010	1963
2011-2017	2075 + 1029.1KG IVORY

**Fig 2. COUNTRIES HUNTED IN BY UK TROPHY HUNTERS** (source: CITES)

In recent years, British hunters have hunted in over 30 different countries around the world, including: Argentina; Botswana; Bulgaria; Cameroon; Canada; Central African Republic; Croatia; Ethiopia; India; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kyrgyzstan; Lithuania; Malawi; Mexico; Mongolia; Mozambique; Namibia; Nepal; Pakistan; Romania; Russia; Seychelles; South Africa; Sudan; Tajikistan; Tanzania; Turkey; Uganda; United States; Zambia; Zimbabwe.

**Fig 3. TOP TEN MOST POPULAR CITES-LISTED TROPHIES IMPORTED BY UK HUNTERS, 1980 to 2017** (source: CITES)

SPECIES	NO. OF TROPHIES
African Elephant	1083 + 1357.1kg ivory
Hippopotamus	622
Black bear	532
Leopard	323
Zebra (Hartmann's Mountain)	278
Lion	256
Chacma Baboon	247
Lechwe antelope	204
Nile Crocodile	161
Caracal cat	157

**Fig 4. ALL HUNTING TROPHIES OF CITES-LISTED SPECIES IMPORTED BY BRITISH HUNTERS, 1980-2017** (source: CITES)

British hunters have imported almost 5,000 hunting trophies from approximately 70 different species protected under international law since CITES came into effect

SPECIES	NO. OF TROPHIES
Aardwolf	7
Addax	1
African civet cat	26
African elephant	1083 + 1357.1kg ivory
African rock python	2
American alligator	4
Arabian oryx	1
Argali	21
Baboon (unspecified)	1
Barbary sheep	10
Bighorn sheep	1
Black bear	532
Black rhinoceros	2
Blackbuck	21
Blue duiker	34
Bobcat	4
Bongo	7
Bontebok	40
Brown bear	126
Brown fur seal	3
Canadian lynx	4
Caracal	157
Chacma baboon	247
Cheetah	16
Collared peccary	1
Cougar	31
Dama gazelle	1
Egyptian goose	15
Eurasian lynx	5
Gelada monkey	1
Golden jackal	1
Grivet monkey	55
Guenon monkey	1
Hamadryas baboon	82
Hawksbill sea turtle	1
Himalayan blue sheep	2

Hippopotamus	622
Honey badger	6
Lechwe	204
Leopard	323
Lion	256
Mantled guereza monkey	1
Markhor	12
Nile crocodile	161
Nilgai antelope	1
North American river otter	2
Olive baboon	18
Polar bear	16
Pygmy hippopotamus	11
Roan antelope	7
Scimitar horned oryx	28
Serval	17
Siberian ibex	7
Sitatunga	7
Spur-winged goose	10
Tiger	3
Tsessebe	59
Vervet monkey	54
Walrus	2
White-faced whistling duck	2
White rhinoceros	43
Wild cat	42
Wild goat	3
Wild sheep	3
Wolf	133
Wood bison	1
Yellow-backed duiker	1
Yellow baboon	36
Zebra (Cape mountain)	1
Zebra (Hartmann's Mountain)	278



Cecil the lion shortly before he was shot by a Trophy Hunter