

I shared the outrage of many of my constituents when earlier in the summer Cecil the Lion was killed by a “trophy hunter”. I am grateful to those who contacted me then and indeed since asking me to support legislation to ban the import of hunted remains, such as skin, skulls and teeth.

As someone who is well known for caring about animal welfare it is of course a no brainer for me to support calls for legislation and if I were still on the backbenches and not in ministerial post I would probably be the one leading the process. Instead I shall just be helping behind the scenes and supporting the wider campaign for change.

I am not anti-shooting, although I am anti-hunting. I eat gamebirds along with meat and I have no problem with people shooting for the pot. Shooting organisations themselves are concerned with the growth of an industry which over feeds birds so that are too fat to fly and become easy targets for shooting parties, whereas most shooters I know are in it for the skill and eat what they kill.

However trophy hunting is shooting on a whole different level. Cecil was a well-known lion much loved by those on safari. The global reaction to his hunting was incredible. In America, the birthplace of the hunter, US senators immediately proposed extending legislation to ban the import of trophies such as this. The UK should follow suit.

Our wildlife is precious. Prince William has this week called for China to stop buying ivory and Rhino horn as a means of protecting this incredible endangered species from poachers. He was absolutely right to do so but we can do our bit for other animals and Cecil’s Law would be an important step in doing that.