

12<sup>th</sup> July 2016

Dear Constituents,

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 UK is a leading participant in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, which is reviewing the protection granted to lions.

I agree with you that the killing of the Zimbabwean lion known as 'Cecil' was a particularly distressing case. The Africa Minister at the time, Grant Shapps, wrote to the government of Zimbabwe to call for our two countries to work together to promote lion conservation.

I was pleased that in 2012 the UK funded a conference in Johannesburg to consider conservation of the African lion with other interested countries.

That said, properly managed, legal and sustainable trophy hunting can play a part in species conservation efforts, providing an important source of funding for 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 more broadly, 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.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**