The Rt. Hon. Andy Burnham MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
United Kingdom
SW1A 2AA

18 November 2026

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Call of the Wild: turning Government promises into protections for wildlife

Last year, we welcomed the launch of the Government's landmark Animal Welfare Strategy, committing to a "generational step change" in animal welfare. We strongly support your recognition of animal welfare as "a moral cause" and a core principle of public compassion. We write today to urge you to prioritise time in the next Parliamentary session to deliver Labour's specific manifesto promises to protect wildlife from cruelty.

Delivering on manifesto commitments to ban trail hunting, the use of snares, and the import of hunting trophies commands overwhelming and enduring public support. Acting on these promises will deliver immediate, tangible protections against unacceptable animal cruelty.

Since the introduction of the Hunting Act 2004, illegal hunting with dogs has persisted under the guise of "trail hunting", despite nearly two thirds of the public supporting a full ban. Figures compiled by the League Against Cruel Sports showed nearly 500 foxes were seen being chased by hunts across England and Wales during the 2025/26 hunting season and there were more than 1,200 reports of hunts wreaking havoc on rural communities with their anti-social behaviour, endangering wildlife, pets, livestock and local communities, while successful prosecution rates remain in single figures.

Whilst Scotland and Wales have taken action to ban the use of snares, these cruel and indiscriminate devices continue to cause suffering to wildlife in England, even in the face of overwhelming public support for a ban. Polling shows that 71% of people in England believe snares should be illegal, rising to 80% among those living in rural areas. However UK Government figures suggest that up to 200,000 snares may be in use across the English countryside at any one time.

Despite public support for a trophy import ban exceeding 80%, since Labour took office the government has granted 41 import licences for trophies of endangered and vulnerable species, including lions, giraffes, bears and hippos.

Polling by YouGov this year[1] highlights the strong public support for these measures:

- 86% of the public believe animal welfare should be protected through legislation
- 74% think it is unacceptable to use snares to catch animals such as foxes and rabbits

[1] Commissioned by the RSPCA, Animal Kindness Index 2026: https://www.rspca.org.uk/documents/d/rspca/animalkindnessindex_2026-pdf

- A clear majority believe it is important for wildlife to be protected through legislation or regulation, both in cities and towns (93%) and the countryside (96%)
- 70% are worried about wildlife in the UK and 77% are concerned for wildlife globally

Britain is often described as a nation of animal lovers and in your speech to the Labour Party Conference this year you spoke of wanting to “bring a spirit of unity and positivity back to our country.” Delivery of these manifesto commitments will protect millions of animals from egregious harm and are issues we can all unite behind, while going a long way to restore public trust in politics to achieve meaningful change.

By bringing forward legislation in the next King's Speech, your Government can demonstrate it shares the public’s compassion for animals, will honour its commitments and deliver positive change we can all get behind.

Kind regards

(NGOs in alphabetical order)

Animal Protection Agency

Animal Aid

Badger Trust

Born Free Foundation

Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting

Cats Protection

Crustacean Compassion

Ecoflix Foundation

Ethical Seafood Research

FOUR PAWS UK

Hare Preservation Trust

Humane World for Animals

Hunt Saboteurs Association

League Against Cruel Sports

Naturewatch Foundation

Pigs Protection

Rabbit Welfare Association & Fund

RSPCA

Shellfish Network

Wildlife and Countryside Link

Woodgreen Pets Charity

World Animal Protection

Brian Blessed OBE

Dame Judi Dench

Kerry Ellis

Peter Egan

Sir Stephen Fry

Ricky Gervais

Sally Gunnell

Dame Joanna Lumley

Dame Virginia McKenna DBE

Jenny Seagrove

Jim Moir (Vic Reeves)

Chris Packham

Jenny Seagrove

Nancy Sorrell

Levison Wood