

Received answer

## 1. Organisation name

Born Free Foundation

## 5. Postal Address

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Horsham  
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## 6. Postcode

RH13 5PL

## 7. Phone Number

WAC 861

## 9. Permissions - I am responding as

Group/Organisation

13. The name and address of your organisation WILL BE made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site). Are you content for your response to be made available

Yes

14. We will share your responses internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

15. It would be helpful for our analysis if you could indicate which of the sectors you most align yourself/your organisation with the purpose of this consultation (please tick one)

Animal welfare organisation

17. Consultation Question 1: Do you believe that the exhibitions and performances required of wild animals in travelling circuses compromise respect for the animals concerned? Why?

Yes

## 18. Comments

The Born Free Foundation is an organization that works to keep wildlife in the wild. We have long experience working on issues relating to wild animals in captivity, and it is our measured assessment that the use of wild animals in travelling circuses categorically conflicts with messages of respect and understanding of animals and their welfare. Viewing any wild animal in isolation from its natural environment is, at best, a misrepresentation; suggesting that wild animals can be transported from place to place and made to perform tricks for "entertainment" further compounds this situation.

19. Consultation Question 2: Do you believe that the exhibitions and performances required of wild animals in travelling circuses have an adverse impact on the development of respectful and responsible attitudes towards animals in children and young people? Why

Yes

## 20. Comments

It is our measured assessment, based on long experience, that the use of wild animals in travelling circuses categorically conflicts with messages of respect and understanding of animals and their welfare. There is emerging evidence that the use of animals in performances negatively affects attitudes and compromises educational / conservation messages (Ross et al. 2011).

It is highly likely that an adverse influence on attitudes of respect and responsibility will be strong amongst children and young people exposed to wild animals in circuses. We consider it to be vital for children and young people to learn about wild animals in their natural habitat, performing natural behavior.

Ref: Ross, SR, Vreeman, VM & Lonsdorf EV (2011). Specific image characteristics influence attitudes about chimpanzee conservation and use as pets. PLOS One 6(7): e22050. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0022050

21. Consultation Question 3: Do you consider that concerns relating to respect for animals could be resolved without banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. If so how?

No

## 22. Comments

We consider the use of wild animals in circuses to be incompatible with engendering respect and responsibility for animals, and therefore it would be impossible to resolve these concerns without a ban.

23. Consultation Question 4: Do you believe that the ability of none, some, or all wild animals to undertake natural behaviours are compromised within the travelling circus environment? Which species? Which needs? Why?

All

## 24. Comments

It is vital to consider what is meant by a wild animal (versus a domesticated animal). There is no meaningful difference between the biology and innate behaviour of a wild animal in captivity and its counterparts in the wild. In contrast, domesticated species have been selected over millennia for various physical and behavioural characteristics, often including tractability and ability to cope with life in close proximity to humans.

We believe the case is clear that by their very nature, travelling circuses cannot provide for the needs of wild animals. The itinerant nature and restricted environment of the circus is the major factor affecting animal welfare in circuses, coupled with the stresses of performance and training. Circuses cannot provide the basic conditions offered to the same species of wild animals in zoos or other captive situations. We believe that the most proportionate and effective way to ensure and promote animal welfare in relation to travelling circuses is a complete ban on all wild animals.

25. Consultation Question 5: Do you consider that it is possible to facilitate the natural behaviour of none, some, or all wild animals within the travelling circus environment? Which species? How?

None

## 26. Comments

See response to Q4

27. Consultation Question 6: Do you consider that the concerns raised surrounding the travelling environment could be resolved without banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses? How?

No

## 28. Comments

The itinerant nature of a travelling circus means that the only way to prevent the inherent compromises and to promote animal welfare would be through a ban on the use of wild animals.

29. Consultation Question 7: Do you consider that there are any benefits to be gained from having wild animals in travelling circuses? What are they?

No

## 30. Comments

None

31. Consultation Question 8: Do you believe that there are sufficient benefits to justify the potential compromise to the wider well-being of wild animals kept in the travelling circus? Why?

No

## 32. Comments

None

33. Consultation Question 9: Do you consider that the potential conflict between compromising the well-being of wild animals and obtaining any benefit could be resolved without banning the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. If so how?

No

## 34. Comments

None

## 38. Don't Know

Don't know

39. **Comments**

We do not hold data on this, but have been informed that at least one circus with wild animals travelled in Scotland within the last few years.

40. **Consultation Question 11: What effect do you think a ban on the use and exhibition of wild animals would have on the revenue of such circuses? Why?**

Increase

41. **Comments**

Wild animals can be expensive to maintain, house and feed: a ban would remove this financial burden from circuses. Similarly, there may be an increase in attendance following a ban, given the large constituency of the public that find the use of wild animals unacceptable.

42. **Consultation Question 12: If a ban on the use and exhibition of wild animals was imposed, do you think that such circuses would still visit Scotland without the wild animals? Why?**

Yes

43. **Comments**

Since circuses without wild animals visit Scotland, there is little reason to assume that circuses would cease to visit Scotland in the event of a ban on wild animals in travelling circuses.

44. **Consultation Question 13: What effect do you think a ban on the use and exhibition of wild animals in travelling circuses would have on the revenue of other types of circuses (e.g. static or those travelling without wild animals)? Why?**

No Change

46. **Consultation Question 14: What effect do you think a ban on the use and exhibition of wild animals in travelling circuses would have on the revenue of circus venues? Why?**

No change

47. **Comments**

See responses to Q11 and Q12

48. **Consultation Question 15: Do you consider that a ban on wild animals in travelling circuses could have an impact on other industries? If so, which industries, what would be the effect and why?**

Film

- No impact

TV - drama

- No impact

TV - documentary

- No impact

TV - childrens

- No impact

Advertising - TV

- No impact

Advertising - other

- No impact

Other

- No impact

Other

- No impact

Other

- No impact

49. **Comments**

A ban on wild animals in travelling circuses does not remove the possibility of those individual animals currently in circuses being used in the future in the audiovisual industry, nor does it prevent animal trainers from training animals for use in the audiovisual industry. As such, it is difficult to imagine how a ban on wild animals in travelling circuses would significantly impact on the use of animals in other industries. We are not aware of any impact on other industries in countries with bans on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.

The use of animals in wider performances and entertainment should be the subject of scrutiny, but the use of wild animals in travelling circuses should be dealt with as a distinct matter and as a priority.

50. **Consultation Question 16: Do you agree that the use of wild animals for performance in travelling circuses should be banned in Scotland? Why?**

Yes

51. **Comments**

We firmly agree that the use of wild animals for performance in travelling circuses should be banned on the grounds of animal welfare and ethical considerations. The travelling circus environment can in no way replicate the natural habitat of any wild animal, and as such it places the biology of animals in circuses in conflict with their living environment. Frequent transport, small living quarters, and frequent loading and unloading are inherent with life in the circus. Performance and training are additional stressors. There is no evidence that performance or training compensate for the deprivations of life in a travelling circus, despite claims to the contrary from within the industry. Furthermore, the use of wild animals in circuses provides no benefit beyond amusement for a minority, and more likely undermines important educational and conservation messages about the natural world.

It is possible to train wild animals to perform, but that in no way makes it right or ethical.

52. **Consultation Question 17: Do you agree that the use of wild animals for exhibition in travelling circuses should be banned in Scotland? Why?**

Yes

53. **Comments**

Performance is a relatively small part of the animals' day in travelling circuses. Consequently, performing and exhibition animals experience very similar situations, the same living environments and many of the same stressors. There is no logical reason to make a distinction between animals that travel with the circus for exhibition and those that travel to perform. In our opinion, both practices should be banned.

54. **Consultation Question 18: Do you consider that any ban should be a blanket ban on all wild animals in travelling circuses? Why?**

Yes

55. **Comments**

Evidence outlined in Iossa et al. (2009) presents the case for the species of wild animal currently in use in circuses being unsuitable to a travelling circus life. Moreover, we believe the case is clear that by their very nature, travelling circuses cannot provide for the needs of any species of wild animals. Circuses cannot provide the basic conditions offered to the same species of wild animals in the most basic zoos or other captive situations.

Furthermore, it has repeatedly been shown that the majority of the British public find the use of all wild animals in circuses to be unacceptable.

Ref: Iossa, G, Soulsbury CD & Harris S (2009). Are wild animals suited to a travelling circus life? *Animal Welfare* 18: 129-140

56. **Consultation Question 19: Do you consider that any specific species of animal not commonly domesticated in the British Islands should be permitted to be used in travelling circuses in Scotland? If so, which species and why?**

No

57. **Comments**

As above

58. **Consultation Question 20: Do you consider that there are key species that should be covered by a ban in the event that a blanket ban could not be achieved? If so, which species and why?**

Yes

59. **Comments**

We support a full ban on all wild animal species. In the event that such a ban is unachievable, we would hope that the Scottish Government would only allow the use of animals in circuses where there is significant evidence that their welfare will not be compromised. Nonetheless, it is difficult to envisage how it might be considered more ethical to use certain species of wild animals than others.

60. **Consultation Question 21: Do you have any other comments on whether/how the use of wild animals in travelling circuses should be banned from Scotland?**

Yes

61. **Comments**

The Born Free Foundation, alongside the other major animal welfare organisations involved in this issue, have stated their willingness to assist in offering more suitable homes for any wild animals currently in circuses in the event of a complete ban. We strongly advocate the adoption of official rehoming plans to ensure humane and effective dispersal and retirement of wild animals from travelling circuses in the event of a ban.

62. **Consultation Question 22: Do you consider that the consultation paper explained the key issues sufficiently for you to properly consider your responses?**

Yes

Yes

66. Consultation Question 24: Do you have any other comments on the way this consultation has been conducted?

No

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