



Care for the Wild International

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Rebecca Kenner
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Animal Welfare Act Implementation Team,
Area 8B,
9 Millbank,
c/o 17 Smith Square,
London, SW1P 3JR

5th February 2010

Dear Ms Kenner,

Consultation on the use of wild animals in circuses

On behalf of Care for the Wild International (CWI), a wildlife conservation charity based in Horsham, W.Sussex, I would like to submit comments as part of the consultation on the use of wild animals in circuses, currently being conducted by DEFRA. I have already completed the online survey on the DEFRA website; the following represents a summary of our views on this subject.

- CWI firmly supports a complete ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses.
- Clearly, wild animals in travelling circuses are covered by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 according to the criteria set out in Section 1 of the Act. CWI believes that the purposes for which wild animals in circuses are used, makes satisfying certain requirements under Section 9 of the Act 2006 impossible, specifically:
 - Section 9.2.a (the need for a suitable environment)
 - Section 9.2.c (the need for animals) to be able to exhibit normal patterns of behaviourand in some circumstances:
 - Section 9.2.d (the need for animals) to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
 - Section 9.2.e (animals') need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury or disease
- CWI believes that, because of the necessarily mobile nature of travelling circuses, satisfactory animal welfare conditions during transport of wild animals in travelling circuses are difficult if not impossible to achieve
- CWI believes that, because of the necessarily mobile nature of travelling circuses, effective inspection of the facilities for, condition of and treatment of wild animals, would be difficult if not impossible to achieve and guarantee
- There have been a number of high profile reports highlighting the poor treatment and condition of wild animals in travelling circuses, including the exposure by Animal Defenders International of mistreatment of and injury to elephants owned by the Great British Circus in 2009, which resulted in the sacking of a keeper. In the light of such evidence, CWI believes that self-regulation would be entirely inappropriate
- CWI believes that the majority of the UK public support a complete ban on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses. The reduction in the number of travelling circuses using wild animals, and the growth in those that do not, suggests the circus industry can maintain or increase its business and income without using wild animals.

- The relatively small number of wild animals currently in use in travelling circuses in the UK should allow for the rapid identification of appropriate rescue centres or other facilities operating to high standards of animal welfare, so that those animals affected by a ban can be rapidly relocated

Several countries have recently announced partial or complete bans on the use of wild animals in travelling circuses, notably Bolivia, Brazil, and India. The UK government made a commitment to ban the use of wild animals in circuses during the passage of the Animal Welfare Act in 2006. It's sad to see the UK, which prides itself in its long history of world leadership in the development of animal welfare law and standards, lagging behind other nations on this issue. It is time the UK government honoured its commitment and banned the use of wild animals (and indeed all animals) in travelling circuses.

CWI is not currently listed as a consultee for this issue on your website (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/circus-wild-animals/consultees.htm>). However, we would appreciate due consideration of our comments, and would like to be included in any further consultation on this and other wildlife issues.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Jones', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Mark Jones
Programmes and Fundraising Director
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