



PEOPLE FOR  
THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT  
OF ANIMALS

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## PETA's Written Evidence to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee on the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill

These comments are submitted on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Foundation, which has approximately 1.2 million members and supporters in the UK, in response to the Wild Animals and Circuses (Wales) Bill. PETA – whose motto reads, in part, that “animals are not ours to use for entertainment” – supports the bill in its current form.

PETA believes that the use of any wild animal in travelling circuses must be completely banned, as a circus environment cannot adequately fulfil the exceptional physical, social, and psychological needs of wild animals.

### Welfare Concerns

We support the ban's introduction on ethical grounds. However, we feel it is important to emphasise the numerous welfare concerns that are inherent in the use of wild animals in circuses. Animal welfare issues are the reason why every animal protection organisation in the country is calling for a ban on wild-animal circuses. [As the British Veterinary Association – the expert on such issues – states](#), “The welfare needs of non-domesticated, wild animals cannot be met within a travelling circus – in terms of housing or being able to express normal behaviour.”

Circuses tear animals from their natural habitats, force them to spend most of their lives chained or penned, and transport them up and down the country – year in and year out – in order to make them perform confusing and often painful tricks, typically through force, intimidation, and pain. The whips, muzzles, chains, steel rods, electric prods, and other “tools” used in circuses are a visual reminder of this. Other “training” methods include food and water deprivation, hooking, paw burning, application of caustic chemicals, and isolation.

In 2016, a PETA Asia eyewitness went inside [10 animal circuses in Suzhou, China](#), an area that is home to more than 300 circuses. The investigation exposed the circus industry's abusive training methods, which included forcibly taking bear cubs from their mothers (causing them to cry out in distress) and chaining them by the neck to force them to stand on their hind legs. Big cats, who were hit with metal poles and made to jump through hoops, paced relentlessly in barren enclosures. And monkeys were chained and confined to filthy cages, causing them to bounce neurotically and screech.

Animal Defenders International (ADI) released undercover footage in 2016 documenting that lions and tigers used by Thomas Chipperfield displayed abnormal behaviour patterns, such as stereotypic pacing, demonstrating that they are not coping with their unnatural environment.

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Chipperfield only recently stopped visiting Wales with these big cats act after he was refused a licence renewal by Defra.

ADI's investigation confirms that the suffering uncovered by PETA Asia's investigation is not localised to China but rather endemic in the circus industry.

## Suggested Amendments to the Bill

### 1. Inclusion of Static Circuses

As described above, the welfare problems experienced by animals in travelling circuses are inherent. Importantly, these concerns encompass all aspects of animals' lives in a circus environment; they are not limited to the suffering caused by frequent transportation from one venue to another. In addition to the stress of travelling, animals are also subjected to premature maternal separation, the constant threat of physical punishment, and prolonged and unnatural confinement, and they are deprived of the opportunity to satisfy virtually all their species-specific needs and instincts.

### 2. Power to Seize Animals

We would like the bill to give inspectors the power to seize an animal if they have reason to believe that the animal is unwell, suffering, or in danger of being abused by any person or persons affiliated with the travelling circus. The seizure of animals is currently prohibited by Section 11(k); only objects that can be used as evidence of an offence may be confiscated.

### 3. Measures for Repeat Offenders

We urge the government to include a provision for repeat offenders to be liable to a community or prison sentence.

### 4. Definition of 'Wild Animals'

Any legislation must specifically include zebras, camels, raccoons, and reindeer, who are commonly exploited by travelling circuses yet are often, mistakenly, referred to as semi-domesticated. Circuses cannot adequately provide for the exceptional physical, social, and psychological needs of any wild animal, and all species deserve protection from cruelty and exploitation.

The newly adopted legislation in England and Scotland prohibits the use of wild animals in travelling circuses, but without a ban in Wales, these animals can still legally be used by circuses performing on Welsh land. These include circuses from elsewhere in Europe that force giraffes, elephants, and big cats to live in appalling conditions and subject them to cruel training methods. The Welsh government must ban wild-animal circuses, which are an archaic and patently inhumane form of animal exploitation.

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