

TROPHY HUNTING TIMELINE

In 2014, the Obama Administration banned the import of legally-hunted elephant remains from Zimbabwe and Zambia, noting the lack of information to support that trophy hunts help conserve species. Recently, however, the U.S. Government has taken concerning steps and made inconsistent statements to suggest that it may reverse these and other bans, and encourage international trophy hunts. We are still awaiting an update or a decision from the Federal Government.

- November 8, 2017:** U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced the creation of the International Wildlife Conservation Council, which “will advise the Secretary of the Interior on the benefits that international recreational hunting has on foreign wildlife and habitat conservation, anti-poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking programs, and other ways in which international hunting benefits human populations in these areas.” Secretary Zinke claims that the Council “will provide important insight into the ways that American sportsmen and women benefit international conservation from boosting economies and creating hundreds of jobs to enhancing wildlife conservation.”
- November 14, 2017:** Under the Trump Administration, USFWS officials announced at a Safari Club International (pro-hunting) event in Tanzania that it would soon allow hunters to import elephant trophies from Zimbabwe and Zambia.
- November 16, 2017:** USFWS announced that it had lifted the Obama-era ban on importing sport-hunted trophies of elephants from Zimbabwe and Zambia, stating: “Legal, well-regulated sport hunting as part of a sound management program can benefit certain species by providing incentives to local communities to conserve those species and by putting much-needed revenue back into conservation.” USFWS also claimed that “the hunting and management programs for African elephants in Zimbabwe and Zambia will enhance the survival of the species in the wild.”
- November 17, 2017:** USFWS “made a finding that the killing of African elephant trophy animals in Zimbabwe, on or after January 21, 2016, and on or before December 31, 2018, will enhance the survival of the African elephant. Applications to import trophies hunted during this time period will be considered to have met the enhancement requirement, unless we issue a new finding based on available information.”
- November 17, 2017:** President Donald Trump tweeted, “Put big game trophy decision on hold until such time as I review all conservation facts. Under study for years. Will update soon with Secretary Zinke. Thank you!”
- November 17, 2017:** After President Trump’s tweet, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke issued a statement: “President Trump and I have talked and both believe that conservation and healthy herds are critical. As a result, in a manner compliant with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, the issuing of permits is being put on hold as the decision is being reviewed.”
- November 19, 2017:** President Trump tweeted, “Big-game trophy decision will be announced next week but will be very hard pressed to change my mind that this horror show in any way helps conservation of Elephants or any other animal.”