



Craig Whittaker MP

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Response to Wildlife cybercrime (International Fund for Animal Welfare campaign) – July 2017

Thank you for contacting me about the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) campaign on wildlife crime committed over the internet.

I am fully committed to conserving the world's wildlife and to tackling and preventing wildlife crime, and so I am delighted that Ministers have agreed to fund the UK's specialist National Wildlife Crime Unit fully until at least 2020. In addition to the annual £136,000 that the Home Office and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will each provide, and Defra will also provide up to an additional £29,000 a year specifically to tackle wildlife crime conducted online.

I think this appropriately reflects concerns that the internet can be used as a route for illegal trade. Fortunately the authorities do have powers to tackle it, and the laws governing the situation are the same as for any other wildlife trading offence.

Legislation covering the Control of Trade in Endangered Species is, however, being reviewed. This work involves examining trends including the increased use of the internet, and how enforcement practices may need to evolve to combat it. A public consultation sought further information and evidence on wildlife cybercrime, and the IFAW report will be considered alongside research by the National Wildlife Crime Unit as Ministers work to finalise a new Statutory Instrument.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP