

# Animal Circuses and the Animal Welfare Bill: *vote to stop the beatings*

The Animal Welfare Bill presents an opportunity to end one of the most archaic and unpopular uses of animals - in travelling circuses. Whilst the Bill will need to get to grips with ending the ill treatment of animals in other sectors of the entertainment industry through regulation - the area of *travelling circuses* is one where MPs can act decisively and with full public support.

**65%** say ban  
ALL animal circus  
acts.

**80%** say ban all  
wild animal circus  
acts.

**90%** against  
whipping and  
beating when  
training circus  
animals.

And, all the  
evidence says:  
“Stop circus  
suffering”



Horse whipped.



Tiger beaten over head with metal bar.



Camel hit in the face with broomhandle.

## Abuse of animals in circuses is well documented on video.



A lioness is 'encouraged' along.



Lioness hit in face with metal pole.



Hippo hit in the head with metal rod.



Elephant hooked about the head and ears.



Camel hit in the face with a fibre glass rod.



Tiger hit over the head with metal rod.



Tiger struck about the body with metal pole.



Donkey kicked.



Pony whipped.



Two people take turns to hit sick elephant.



Camel beaten with broomhandle.



Elephant hit with hook.



## The Evidence

Over the last fifteen years, ADI has built up a formidable body of film and photographic evidence that reveals the extent of animal suffering in travelling circuses. Our reports on the use of animals in circuses in the UK in 1998, 2001 and 2003 and 2004 have demonstrated that travelling animal circuses, by their very nature, cause distress and suffering.

Apart from violence, severe confinement and lack of environmental enrichment produces psychological effects such as abnormal weaving, swaying, head bobbing and pacing in a variety of species. We found that, for example:

**Horses and ponies spend up to 96% of the time tied on short ropes and in stalls**

**Tigers and lions spend between 75-99% of their time in their travelling cages, on the back of transporters, in severely cramped conditions**

**Elephants were shown to be spending 70-98% of their time chained to the ground by two legs, only able to take one step forwards and one backwards**

**Circus bears were seen to perform prolonged or undirected pacing for 30% of the time**

Many MPs will recall the horrific scenes of violence and severe confinement when we launched the results of the most comprehensive study to date, *'The Ugliest Show on Earth'* report and video, in the House of Commons. The launch in the Commons resulted in two Early Day Motions calling for an end to the use of animals in circuses, one supported by over 200 signatures, and the other with just under 200 signatures.

A team of ADI Field Officers had observed 13 travelling circuses and winter quarters in the UK, and 5 foreign circuses presenting animals from the UK. Over 7,000 hours of observations were recorded, backed up by 800 hours of videotape. Remote cameras had been used in the barns and training rings at Mary Chipperfield Promotions, Hampshire, suppliers to circuses, advertising, and the film industry (including, for example, the Disney production of 101 Dalmatians).

The evidence gathered in this study resulted in the first ever convictions for cruelty of circus and film industry trainer Mary Chipperfield, her husband Roger Cawley (at the time a Government Zoo inspector), and their elephant keeper (who was imprisoned). Prosecutions against other circuses featured in this investigation were dropped through lack of time to instigate proceedings and the sheer quantity of evidence gathered.

**With the best will in the world, in circumstances of constant travelling and temporary accommodation, welfare will *always* be compromised.**



Significantly, it was established at the 1999 Chipperfield trials that the law allows any level of violence to be inflicted upon an animal up to the point that it complies with the command. Only if the beating continues

after the animal has complied, it is illegal. As the magistrate at the time stated: *"...it is not for us to judge if that is right – it is legal"*.

ADI is often asked why there have been so few prosecutions for cruelty; in fact the reasons are simple. Due to the nature of circuses, moving quickly from town to town combined with their secretive and closely-knit culture, outsiders see little of the animals' lives. Anyone who witnesses any cruelty would have to report the incident to the police; an investigation would be conducted and statements taken. By the time that any proceedings could start, the circus has left the area. For example during the investigation, a female lion, Narla, was attacked and very seriously injured by a male tiger. The circus treated her injuries themselves, and when a local RSPCA Inspector called to look around the circus, the workers hid Narla in her cage, behind bales of straw. The Inspector was filmed standing outside the cage containing the lioness, completely unaware of her plight.

Similarly, local Environmental Health Officers have frequently commented that if they do manage to conduct a health and safety inspection, there is little time to take action over any infringements before the circus leaves the area.

Since that study, ADI has continued to observe, monitor, and investigate the use of animals in travelling circuses. Further reports were published in 2001 and 2003. The findings of these studies confirmed the earlier findings.

However, it is not just physical beatings that are the concern with travelling circuses. More than any other industry, due to the nature of a travelling circus with the concomitant restrictions on cage sizes and poor environment, our film and photographic evidence has shown that travelling circuses cannot adequately provide for the basic welfare and environmental needs of the animals in their care. Inherently, travelling circuses present a series of recognised animal welfare problems, all of which are acknowledged to cause suffering. These include:

- Excessive periods of time spent shut inside transporters – whether travelling or not;
- Temporary facilities lacking space and environmental enrichment for most of the year;
- Limited exercise enclosures that are either not used, or only some animals can benefit from them (for example too many animals for the space provided; difficult animals (usually the males) not allowed into enclosures)
- Travelling whilst sick, injured, or pregnant, and forced to give birth on the road in a noisy environment;
- Violence and force being commonplace and accepted as a means to move animals in the circus culture;
- Complex or unnatural tricks (such as hind leg walking) requiring very close control and domination during training.

**No matter what the species,  
space is always limited.**

There have been two major published studies of the use of animals in circuses. Disturbed, stereotypic behaviours from stress have been identified *in all circus species* in both of these studies (Kiley-Worthington, M. 'Animals in Circuses', 1989, Creamer et al 'The Ugliest Show on Earth', 1998). Circus animals suffer as a result of the severe confinement, inappropriate environment, inappropriate groupings (e.g. mixing of species, prey species close to predators, herd species kept alone) which are commonplace in the travelling circus environment.

The evidence that has been presented against the use of animals in circuses can be viewed at [www.ad-international.org](http://www.ad-international.org)



## The Support - public and political

It can be argued that never before has a major animal protection issue come before Parliament with such clear public and political support. A MORI Public Opinion Poll commissioned by ADI in autumn 2005 on public attitudes towards animal circuses reveals that:

**80% would like to see a ban all wild animal circus acts.**

**65% would like to see a ban all animal circus acts.**

**90% are against whipping and beating when training circus animals.**

**Only 7% strongly opposed the calls for bans.**

In 2004 an NOP opinion poll commissioned by ADI revealed that 63% of the public wanted to see all animal acts banned from circuses – only 8% disagreed.

A survey of 318 local authorities, found that: 39% had banned all animal acts; 17% had banned just wild animal acts; 21.5% said they never received requests from circuses with animals; 22.5% continued to allow animal circuses. Banning the use of animal acts from circuses has been politically tested and enforced on local authority land.



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The launch in the House of Commons in January 1998 of ADI's '*The Ugliest Show on Earth*' report and video (which remains the most detailed and candid study to date) sent shock waves around the world and have led to national legislation on animal circuses elsewhere. **Within months the number of UK animal circuses had halved.** Many believed the Animal Welfare Bill would be the time that MPs would be able to make good the commitment they showed after this launch, when hundreds signed the EDMs calling for an end to the use of animals in circuses. We believe the opportunity is there.

### **An animal ban would be a positive move for the circus industry**

The animal circus industry has receded year on year since the launch of the campaign. In 1997, there were over 300 animals touring with UK circuses, including 16 elephants and 31 lions and tigers. In 2005, this had dropped to less than 200 animals, including one elephant and 12 lions and tigers. Statistically at least, there is a clear correlation that **as an animal circus closes it is replaced with an animal-free circus.**

ADI commissioned opinion polls have also reflected this. Our latest poll (autumn 2005) reveals that **more than twice as many people now visit animal-free circuses** as opposed to those with animals. In the last five years, those attending **animal-free circuses has risen from 6% to 16%.**

Animal circuses remain slumped at 7% attendance. The most popular forms of animal entertainment attended are aquariums (50% of respondents), zoos (39%), safari parks (22%), showing that people see circuses as an area where specific action is urgently required by the Government – even if they do not oppose the broader issue of animals in captivity.

**The number of animal circuses is now at its lowest for decades. There are now more animal-free circuses than ever before.**





## **Amending the Animal Welfare Bill to ban animal circuses**

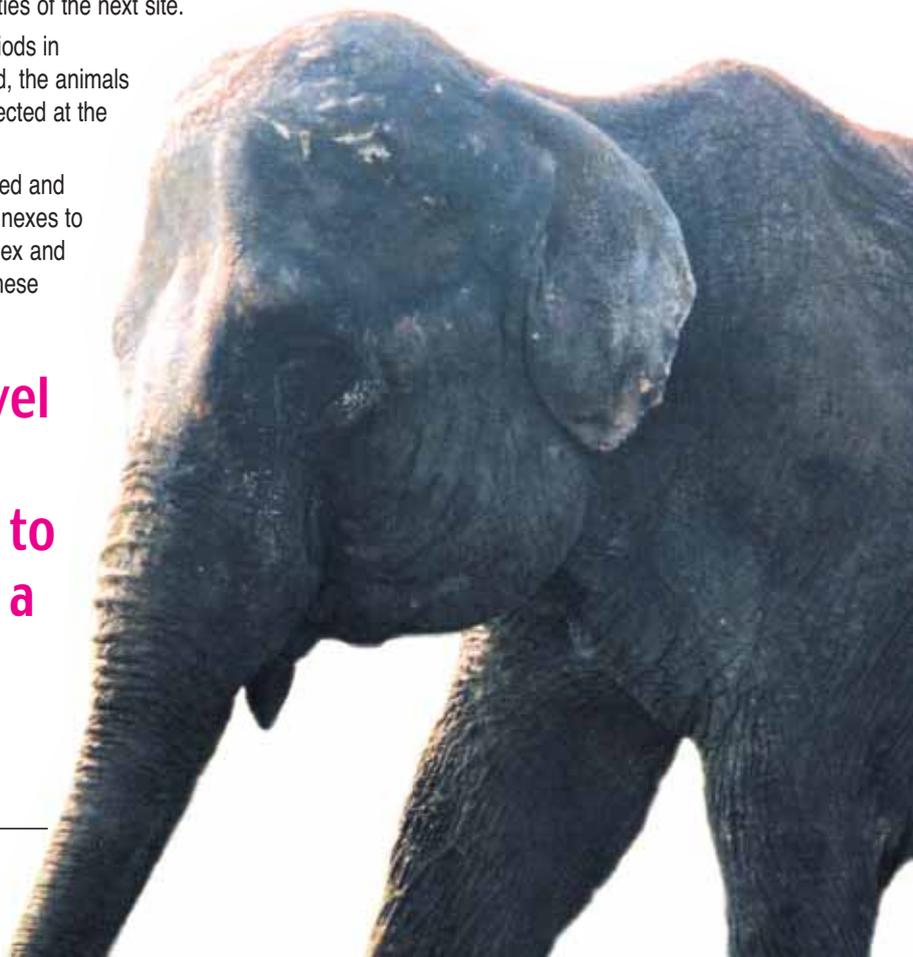
It is hoped that the Animal Welfare Bill will do much to raise standards in the current effectively unregulated use of other performing animals (for advertising, films etc. and static performances). This will be a complex task (with animals often living on set for extended periods and training conducted in secret) but at least starts with the advantage that the main accommodation for the animals throughout the year is fixed and can be monitored and raised to meet modern standards.

For travelling circus animals there are at least two types of accommodation – the permanent quarters used for approximately 4 months per year, and temporary/travelling accommodation used for approximately 8 months of the year – with the latter changing week by week depending on the available space and facilities of the next site.

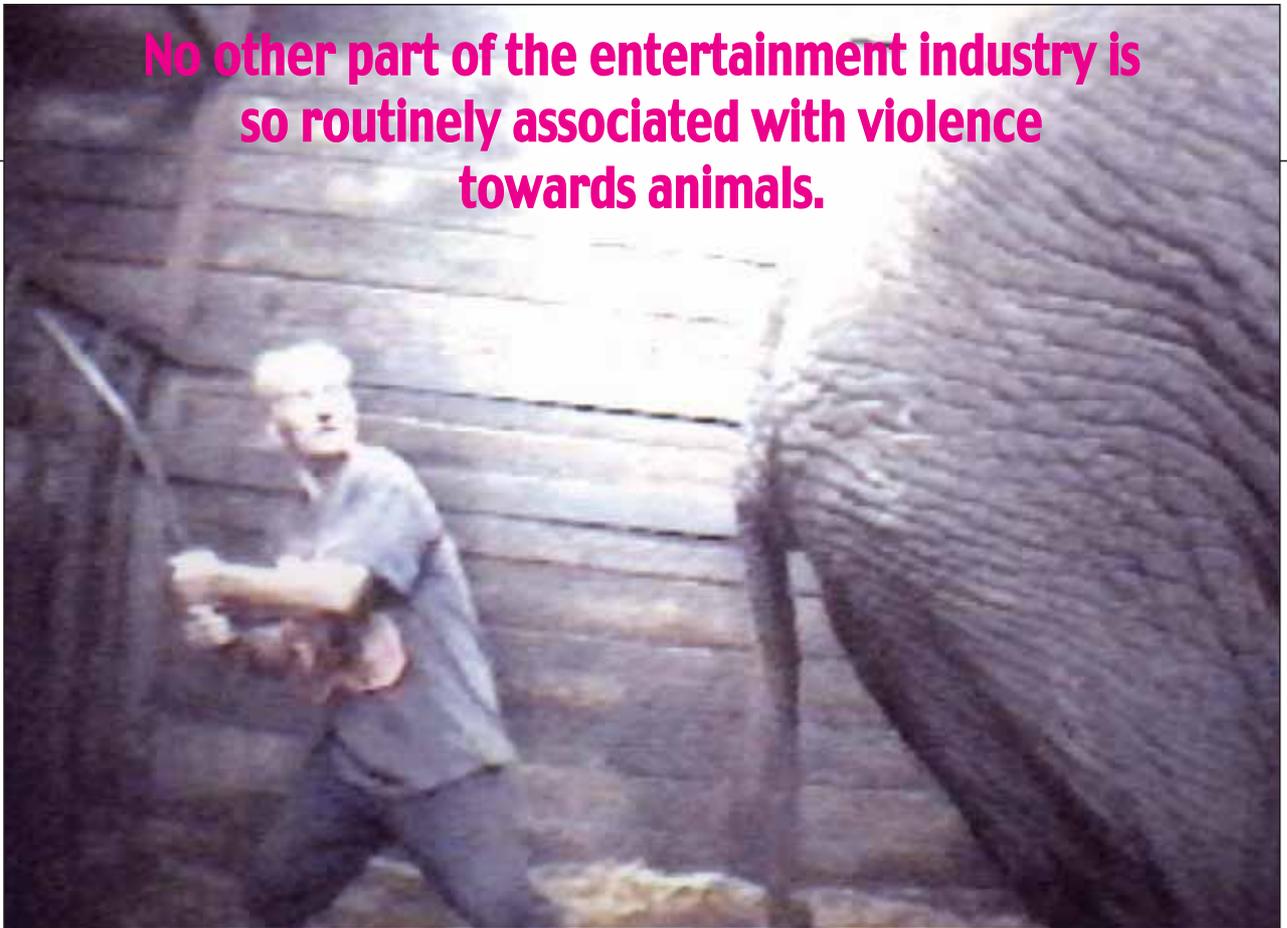
In addition, studies show that animals spend very long periods in transporters (up to 24 hours) whilst the circus is dismantled, the animals are driven to the new site, and the new stable tents are erected at the new site.

In effect three clear types of husbandry need to be inspected and monitored, making the annual inspection outlined in the Annexes to the Draft Bill impractical from the outset. A far more complex and expensive system would need to be incorporated to give these animals any hope of genuine protection.

**Animals continue to travel  
whilst sick, injured, or  
pregnant, and are forced to  
give birth on the road in a  
noisy environment**



**No other part of the entertainment industry is so routinely associated with violence towards animals.**



*With all of the evidence and the public concern on this issue, amending the Animal Welfare Bill to ban the use of all animals in travelling circuses and live shows remains the most morally imperative and effective way of addressing animal welfare concerns in this day and age.*

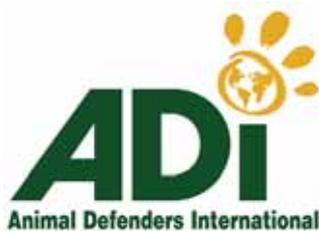
## **How to Help the vote to stop the beatings:**

Animal Defenders International is recommending a range of amendments which are available to Members of Parliament on request. The key amendments we would like to see made to this Bill are:-

- a ban on the use of animals in travelling circuses
- that the regulations (Clause 10) provide for the prohibition of the keeping of animals of a specified kind in specified circumstances
- that the regulations (Clause 10) provide for the prohibition of the use of animals of a specified kind for a specified purpose.

These two amendments to Clause 10 regulations would bring back into the Bill provisions which have been removed since the Draft Bill. Contact us for the full detail of the amendments we are supporting.

Please support a call for a free vote on this issue.



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