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[Animals](#)

# A Cabinet member's wife lambasted the Trump administration for letting a man import a lion trophy

(Gerald Herbert/AP)

By [Marisa Iati](#)

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Louise Linton's [Instagram account](#) in recent months has largely been a repository for animal photos: baby bears separated from their mothers, puppies sniffing roses and monkeys in captivity.

The Scottish-born actress posts frequently about animal rights, so her message on Wednesday criticizing lion poaching and urging support for a ban on animal-trophy imports was on-brand. The target of her ire, however, was notable: the Trump administration, for which her husband, Steven Mnuchin, is the treasury secretary.

Alongside a photo of a lion, Linton pasted part of [a statement](#) that the Center for Biological Diversity released in September to decry the government's authorization of a U.S. hunter to import a lion trophy from Tanzania. The permission given to this hunter was the first since lions were protected by the Endangered Species Act in 2016, according to the Arizona-based environmental organization.

"Americans should not be permitted to kill exotic animals for fun!!" [Linton wrote](#) next to the passage from the Center for Biological Diversity. She asked her followers to pressure Congress to pass the Conserving Ecosystems by Ceasing the Importation of Large Animal Trophies (CECIL) Act, which would [prohibit the import or export](#) of threatened or endangered species.

Linton has taken public issue with the Trump administration's policies about endangered species before. She told [Los Angeles Magazine](#) that she was upset last summer when the administration softened its ban on hunting wild game — although when asked whether she told President Trump about her opposition, she responded, "It doesn't work like that."

The Trump administration has rolled back Obama-era protections of endangered species to reduce government regulations on corporations. The Fish and Wildlife Service last year [removed a ban](#) on importing hunted elephant trophies from Zimbabwe and Zambia.

In August, the Interior and Commerce departments [finalized rules](#) that would let the administration decrease the size of the habitats designated for wildlife, eradicate tools that officials use to gauge the future harm to species from climate change and reveal the financial costs of protecting wildlife.

Scientists condemned that decision, emphasizing the scientific consensus that climate change is a man-made, mass extinction event and that such a period is the wrong time to weaken protections for at-risk species. At least 277 plants and animals in North America have become extinct, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

"Not a Republican. Not a Democrat. Just a bipartisan and filmmaker who loves everyone," Linton's Instagram bio reads. She has made news with her account several times for posts that were lambasted as pretentious and out-of-touch.

In August 2017, Linton shared a photo of herself and Mnuchin [stepping off a government plane](#) while she was dressed in designer clothing, whose brands she tagged in the picture. In a screed attached to that post, she lashed out at a random Instagram user and pointed out that she and Mnuchin pay a lot of taxes.

Linton and Mnuchin also posed for a photo while holding a newly minted sheet of U.S. currency, prompting allegations that they were [flaunting their wealth](#). Her self-published memoir about living in Zambia for a year was slammed as a contribution to the ["White-Savior-in-Africa" genre](#).

On issues other than wildlife protections where Linton disagrees with the Trump administration's policies — such as LGBTQ rights — she told Los Angeles Magazine she faces a difficult choice: Express her beliefs, in opposition to her husband and his boss, or stay quiet and face criticism from others.

"It's like walking a tightrope of dental floss in high heels and trying not to fall left or right," Linton told the magazine. "I'm just trying to walk the line in a way that isn't going to piss anybody off."

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