

# NEWS RELEASE *from* MARTIN HORWOOD



Member of Parliament for Cheltenham  
*working for a fairer, greener, safer Cheltenham*

---

**Date:** 15 December 2009

**Embargo date:** Immediate

## Martin wins national animal welfare award

CHELTHENHAM MP Martin Horwood has won national recognition for his campaigning work on animal welfare, being named Animal Welfare Champion 2009 after a vote by his parliamentary colleagues of all parties. Martin was nominated for the honour by Cheltenham-based charity Naturewatch which has worked with Martin on a series of issues but most successfully on a campaign to win extra funding for alternatives to animal research which resulted in a £1 million cash boost for the national centre that carries out the alternative research. He has also supported the campaign by the RSPCA and Speak Out For Animals (SOFA) to promote the microchipping of dogs and tackle the problems associated with dangerous dogs.

Most recently he became involved in the Shark Trust campaign to tighten EU shark finning legislation, adding his weight to the lobby to ban the removal of shark fins at sea, a goal that was successfully attained in October. That campaign was drawn to Martin's attention by Leckhampton Primary School pupil Jake Batty. Martin has supported a range of other animal welfare causes from trying to stop the last remaining whaling ships to banning the use of wild animals in circuses.

The Animal Welfare Champion award was presented to Martin at the Dods Charity Champions 2009 awards ceremony in London. Martin was shortlisted by a judging panel including Dame Suzi Leather, chair of the Charity Commission. All parliamentarians were then asked to vote for the nominees in each category and Martin won the Animal Welfare Champion category.

Dawn Lewis, Campaign Manager at Naturewatch said "Naturewatch is delighted that Martins invaluable contribution to animal welfare has been recognised. His hard work over many years and tremendous support of our campaigns has ensured animal welfare issues have remained high on the political agenda. Martin has always made time to support animal welfare, whilst also working tirelessly on many other issues of local and national importance, from protecting valuable greenbelt to local health services. Martin is truly deserving of the title Animal Welfare Champion".

Ali Hood, Director of Conservation for the Shark Trust commented, "Martin's sponsorship of an Early Day Motion to gain MP support for improved shark finning legislation was a real boost to the Shark Trust's campaign and helped encourage the

UK Minister to take positive action, improving shark management not only in UK waters but where ever UK vessels fish worldwide.”

Martin said "I don't really deserve this on my own. The hardest work has been done by the brilliant charities involved like RSPCA, Shark Trust and of course our very own Naturewatch, by my brilliant team of researchers and volunteers in Westminster and by people like young Jake who told me about cruel practices such as shark-finning. Without their ideas and organisation the victories we've won would not have been possible and I'm delighted to have won this award on their behalf. I'm particularly touched because this was voted on by my parliamentary colleagues of all parties, perhaps demonstrating that politics doesn't always have to divide along party lines."

He added: "Animals don't have votes and don't have a public voice of their own. Even in a country that prides itself on being a nation of animal-lovers, it is still important to speak out for animal rights and animal welfare."

ENDS

- The Dods Charity Champions Awards ceremony took place at Institute of Civil Engineering last night. For more information see [www.charitychampionawards.com](http://www.charitychampionawards.com) . Dods is the publisher of the House magazine, Dods parliamentary companion and other parliamentary publications.
- Martin was shortlisted along with Conservative MP Mark Pritchard in the Animal Welfare Champion category.