



**ENDANGERED
WILDLIFE TRUST**
Protecting forever, together.

29 January 2020

Endangered Wildlife Trust statement on China's ban on wildlife markets

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) works tirelessly across a range of projects to build capacity to combat illegal trade. We do this to achieve our conservation mission and to support an environment that sustains healthy wildlife and people. We therefore welcome the decision by Chinese authorities to ban the trade of wild animals, and we call for the government to make this a permanent rather than temporary ban.

China's ban aims to block the spread of the coronavirus, which by 29 January had claimed the lives of [at least 132 people](#). At this time no wildlife can be sold in or moved between markets, including online markets. The EWT recognises that international trade in wildlife [has been linked](#) to disease transmission across the globe. Illegal markets threaten endangered species and lead to overexploitation of natural resources. Of particular concern is the spread of contagious diseases between animals in wildlife markets and humans who come into contact with them. Illegal wildlife markets are therefore not only a conservation and welfare issue, but a public health issue.

The Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention tested 585 samples of wildlife specimens present at the Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market during the course of January and found 33 of these samples [contained the coronavirus](#). In this market, as in so many throughout China, customers could purchase carcasses and live animals from local and international origins. African animals, such as crocodiles and pangolins, [are on offer](#).

Disease is not the only danger consumers face from wildlife products. In Africa, many of the animals that end up in the trade chain are killed using highly toxic pesticides. Residues of these poisons have been detected on animal parts from vultures, leopards, and a range of other species. The EWT works to create awareness of this public health threat to local and international consumers, but this effort must be supported by governments and organisations in the relevant countries, including China. The Chinese government has in recent years taken increasing steps to curb the demand for wildlife products from Africa, which often end up in these wildlife markets. In 2017 the government [announced its plans](#) to shut down domestic ivory trade. In 2019, Chinese officials [joined African countries](#) in calling for an end to wildlife trafficking.

If the demand for illegal wildlife products persists, and markets go unregulated, populations will continue to be threatened by zoonotic diseases (those that spread between animals and people).

These markets threaten survival of endangered and threatened species and lead to overexploitation of our planet's limited resources. The closest China has come to closing its wildlife markets was in 2003, following the SARS outbreak that [killed almost 800 people](#). This effort dissipated months later and regulation remained unchanged. Understanding the threats these markets represent to both humans and wildlife, now is the right time for China to announce a permanent ban on wildlife markets.

End

About the Endangered Wildlife Trust

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) has worked tirelessly for close to 50 years to save wildlife and habitats, with our vision being a world in which both humans and wildlife prosper in harmony with nature. From the smallest frog, to the majestic rhino; from sweeping grasslands to arid drylands; from our shorelines to winding rivers: the EWT is working with you, to protect our world.

The EWT's team of field-based specialists works across southern and East Africa, where committed conservation action is needed the most. Working with our partners, including businesses and governments, the EWT is at the forefront of conducting applied research, supporting community conservation and livelihoods, training and building capacity, addressing human wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion.

A beacon of hope for Africa's wildlife, landscapes and communities, the EWT is protecting forever, together. Find out more at www.ewt.org.za

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