

Correspondent: Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation,
Broadlands Business Campus, Langhurstwood Road, Horsham RH12 4QP, United Kingdom
markj@bornfree.org.uk

Joint open letter to:

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director General
World Health Organisation
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Inger Andersen
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
PO Box 30552
00100 Nairobi
Kenya

Dr Monique Eloit
Director General
Office International Epizootologie
12 Rue de Prony
75017 Paris
France

11th February, 2020

Live Wild Animal Markets, Human and Animal Health, and Biodiversity Protection

Distinguished Colleagues,

The undersigned 208 organisations and individuals are writing to urge you to strongly encourage governments across the world to introduce and enforce legislation to close wildlife markets, particularly those at which trade in live animals is commonplace, and to introduce mechanisms designed to significantly and demonstrably reduce demand for live wild animals and products derived from them.

Markets selling live wild animals are found in many countries. However, rapidly growing human populations, increased access to even the most remote wildlife areas through changes in land use and infrastructure development, greater disposable income, increasing urbanisation, and the changing nature of demand, has resulted in the rapid expansion and commercialisation of such markets, increasing the risks to global human and animal health, compromising animal welfare, and placing biodiversity under unsustainable pressure.

The current coronavirus epidemic sweeping across parts of China is believed to have originated in wildlife, and may have been transmitted to people via wildlife markets in the city of Wuhan, although the precise source of human infection has not yet been definitively established. At the time of writing, tens of thousands of people are believed to have been exposed, hundreds have died, and the virus is known to have spread to at least 25 countries. It is notable that a group of 19 prominent researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the nation's top universities called on the

government in China to crack down on wildlife markets such as the one at the centre of the Wuhan outbreak. The government responded by announcing a temporary ban on the trade in wild animals and the closure of all wildlife markets across the country, and there have been calls for these measures to be made permanent.

Previous global epidemics have also been associated with wildlife markets. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which in 2002-2003 resulted in more than 8,000 human cases across 17 countries, and almost 800 deaths, is reported to have spread to humans via wild mammals commonly traded live in Chinese markets. The Ebola virus epidemics in West and Central Africa are thought to have originated from bats, with primates and other wild mammals believed to be intermediate hosts through which people were infected; many such animals are also traded live in wildlife markets in the countries in which the outbreaks first occurred.

The closure of wildlife markets in order to protect human health has precedent. In 2005 the European Union introduced a ban on the importation of most species of live wild-caught birds, primarily to reduce the risk of introducing avian influenza virus. Subsequent reports suggest that this action had a significant impact on the global trade in live birds.

The trade in wildlife not only threatens human health; it is also a major contributor to the global decline in wildlife and biodiversity. According to the Global Biodiversity Assessment published by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in 2019, nature's decline is "unprecedented in human history" with a million species at risk of extinction. Direct exploitation is identified as the second most important driver of biodiversity loss, behind changes in land and sea use. The report described the current global response to this crisis as insufficient, urged that "transformative changes" are needed to restore and protect nature, and asserted that "opposition from vested interests can be overcome for the public good."

The extraction of wild animals for domestic and international trade forms a significant part of the direct exploitation identified by IPBES. In many countries, animals are taken from the wild to be slaughtered at markets, or traded live in order to supply restaurants, tourist facilities, the vast and expanding international demand for exotic pets, and for other purposes. In some countries domestic animals, including dogs and cats, are also traded live through markets in this way, with associated risks to human health and safety. These activities have severe negative consequences for the welfare of many millions of individual animals.

Addressing the trade in wildlife driven by such markets, and the demand for live wild animals or parts and products derived from them, comes with social, cultural and economic challenges. Nevertheless, we urge you to consider the risk that these same challenges may be far greater should the root cause of epidemics such as the current coronavirus emergency fail to be decisively addressed. Global action to permanently curb the trade will help to significantly reduce the risks of future infectious disease epidemics among both wildlife and people, and go some way to addressing the threat posed to individual animals and wider biodiversity through direct exploitation.

We therefore urge you to commit your organisations to working with Governments across the world, with the aim of ending the exploitation of wild animals for trade, closing markets that trade in live animals, and reducing the commercial demand for live animals for food and other purposes, including from specimens that have been bred in captivity.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to your response.

For and behalf of the following:

David van Gennep, Chief Executive Officer, AAP Animal Advocacy and Protection

Pei F Su, Chief Executive Officer, ACTAsia

Ms Jordan Sosnowski, Advocacy Director, Action for Dolphins

Maria Mossman, Founder, Action for Elephants

Josphat Ngunyo, Executive Director, Africa Network for Animal Welfare

Bernie Wright, Spokesperson, Alliance for Animal Rights

Gilda Ho Thi Kim, Asia Director, Alliance for Earth, Life, Liberty & Advocacy

Mahesh Agarwal, President, Andhra Pradesh Goshala Federation

Liz White, CEO, Animal Alliance of Canada

Maho Cavalier, International Relations, All Life In A Viable Environment

Ms Sabrina Brando, Owner/Director, AnimalConcepts

Anbarasi Boopal, Deputy Chief Executive, Animal Concerns Research & Education Society

Jan Creamer, President, Animal Defenders International

Wolf Gordon Clifton, Executive Director, Animal People

Gilda Ho Thi Kim, Co-Founder, Animal Friendly Alliance

Bernard V. Franolic, Campaigns Co-ordinator, Animal Friends Croatia

Mrs Angelina Pane, Co-founder & Program Manager, Animal Friends Jogja

Gil Michaels, Executive Director, Animal Guardians

Greg Quimpo, Animal Kingdom Foundation

Uttam Kafle, Executive Director, Animal Nepal

Kim Bartlett, President, Animal People Forum

Ms Stephanie Santiago, Office Manager, Animal Projects & Environmental Education Sdn Bhd

Dawn Magowan, Founder, Animal Protection and Environmental Sanctuary

Ms Betty Thøgersen, International advisor, Animal Protection Denmark / Dyrenes Beskyttelse

Martina Mayr, Founder/Director, Animal Rescue Cambodia

Chihiro Okada, Representative Director, Animal Rights Center Japan

Brigita Kymantaitė, Director, Animal Rights Protection Organisation Lithuania

Annette Elizabeth Pipe, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Animal Sanctuary Trust Indonesia

Gaurav Dattatray Kshatriya, Founder, Animal Welfare And Anti Harassment Society

Cathy Liss, President, Animal Welfare Institute

Mr Albano Martins, President & CEO, Anima-Society for the Protection of Animals (Macau)

Marco Ciampi, President, ARCA Brasil Humane Society

Christophe Coret, President, AVES France

Dominic Dyer, Chief Executive, Badger Trust

Janice Girardi, Founder, Bali Animal Welfare Association

Dr Smaragda Louw, Director, Ban Animal Trading

Ms Kit Stoner, Chief Executive, Bat Conservation Trust

Koen Cuyten, Project Manager, Bears in Mind

Mrs Carole Baskin, CEO, Big Cat Rescue

Sathya Radhakrishnan, Honorary Joint Secretary, Blue Cross of India

Dr Siew Te Wong, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre

Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation

Mia MacDonald, Executive Director, Brighter Green, USA

Jane Howorth, Founder & CEO, British Hen Welfare Trust

Drew Abrahamson, Founder & Director, Captured in Africa Foundation

Chris Mercer, Director, Campaign Against Canned Hunting

Mrs Ericka Ceballos, CEO, CATCA Environmental and Wildlife Society, Canada

Mr Chris Fegan, Chief Executive, Catholic Concern for Animals

Christine Grandjean, CEO, C'est Assez!

Atty. David Kaplan, President, Cetacean Society International

Lola Webber, Founder, Change for Animals Foundation

Mrs and Mr CJ and Luis Muñoz, Executive Directors, Chelui4lions, Spain

Jinfeng Zhou, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation

Tozie Zokufa, Regional Coordinator, Coalition of African Animal Welfare Organisations (CAAWO)

Alexandra Morette, Director, Code Animal

Dr Angela Wright, Chief Scientific Adviser, Compassion in World Farming

Suparna Baksi-Ganguly, Co-founder Trustee, Compassion Unlimited Plus Action

Carrie Le Blanc, Executive Director, Compassion Works International

Dr Nanditha Krishna, Director, CPR Environmental Education Centre

Eva Filipczykova MSc, PhD Candidate, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague

Piet Wit, Secretary, Daridibó, Guinea Bissau

Yogita Chettri, Darjeeling Animal Shelter

Karen Botha, Chief Executive Officer, David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Bob Dreher, Senior Vice-President Conservation Programs, Defenders of Wildlife

James Bruckner, Head of Species Protection Department, Deutscher Tierschutzbund

Daniel Rolke, Founder and President, Djurrättsalliansen (The Animal Rights Alliance)

Asa Hagelstedt, Secretary General, Djurskyddet Sverige (Animal Welfare Sweden)

Nicola Stoev, Founder & Manager, Dobro Surtse

Dr Lisa Warden, Founder, Dogstop

Diederik Visser PhD, Chair, Dutch Gorilla Foundation

Dr Femmie Smit, Program Manager Wildlife, Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (Dierenbescherming)

Ms Theresa Concepcion, Executive Director, Earth Island Institute Asia Pacific

Ms Sarah Elzea, Program Manager, Earth Island Institute Int'l Marine Mammal Project

Fran Duthie, President, Elephanatics

Mr Brett Mitchell, Chairman, Elephant Reintegration Trust

Chrissy Pratt, Executive Director, Elephation

Michele Pickover, Director, EMS Foundation

Debbie Banks, Campaign Leader Tigers & Wildlife Crime, Environmental Investigation Agency

Wu Hung, Chief Executive Officer, Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan (EAST)

Ella Todd, Managing Director, Environment Films

Reineke Hameleers, CEO, Eurogroup for Animals

Miriam Martinez, Wildlife Programme Manager, Fundación FAADA (Fundación para el Asesoramiento y Acción en Defensa de los Animales)

Varda Mehrotra, Convenor, Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations

Marison Guciano, FLIGHT

Dr Henk Smit, Chai, FONA Conservation, The Netherlands

Hedia Baccar, Advisor for MENA and Francophone Africa, Fondation Franz Weber

Ms Anna Kogan, CEO, Forgotten Animals

Miss Tanya Erzinclioglu, Founder/Director, For Tigers

Brother William Ng OFM, Main Contact, Franciscan Order - Hong Kong

Upreshpal Singh, Director, Friends of the Orangutans Malaysia

Stefania Falcon, Future 4 Wildlife

Ms Heike Henderson, Board Member, Future for Elephants

Katherine Blais, Director of Elephant Health and Well-Being, Global Sanctuary for Elephants

Christine Dorchak, President and General Counsel, GREY2K USA Worldwide

Miss Lucinda Read, Trustee/Director, Greyhound Compassion

Elileen Weintraub, Founding Director, Help Animals India

Barbara Webb, Treasurer, Himalayan Animal Rescue Trust

Alina Guzinska, Hollow Paws

David Coggan, Humanebeing Education & Training Consultancy

Dr Peter Li, HSI Asia Consultant, Humane Society International

Teresa M. Telecky PhD, Vice President Wildlife, Humane Society International

Matthew Hamity, Campaign Director, In Defence of Animals USA

Sudnya Patkar, Founder/Trustee, In Defence of Animals, India

Mr Ben Yoxon, Research and Education Officer, International Otter Survival Fund

Dr Shirley McGreal OBE, Founder, International Primate Protection League

Stephen A Wiggins, Founder, International Wildlife Bond

Shabir Rather, Chief Executive, IQRA Foundation

Dr Andrew Kelly, CEO, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ISPCA

Femke Den Haas, Founder & Coordinator Wildlife Protection Programs, Jakarta Animal Aid Network

Ms Satoko Wazaki, Head of the Secretariat, Japan Anti-Vivisection Association

Motokazu Ando, President, Japan Wildlife Conservation Society

Dr Sashanka Sekhar Dutta, Chief Functionary, JBF (India) Trust

C Narendra Reddy, Secretary, Karuna Society for Animals & Nature

Louis Schweitzer, President, La Fondation Droit Animal, Ethique et Sciences

Monica Vaccaro, Landmark Foundation

Mrs Yvette Taylor, Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization

Martin Sims, Director of Investigations, League Against Cruel Sports

Hans de longh, Chair, Leo Foundation, The Netherlands

Jenny Desmond, Founder, Liberia Chimpanzee Rescue & Protection

Sheila McClelland, Chair, Lifelong Animal Protection

Ms Nancy Lynne Gibson, Founder & President, Love Wildlife Foundation

Jacqueline Kyle, Co-Founder, MelbournDolphin

Gina Moon, Founder, moonbears.org

Miss Amy Jones, Co-Founder, Moving Animals

Caroline Ruane, CEO, Naturewatch Foundation

Brooke Aldrich, Trustee, Neotropical Primate Conservation

Ananda Dahal, Nepal Animal Welfare and Research Center

Hilary Kloetzil, Founder/Executive Director, Nepal Street Animal Rescue

Dr Ranjit Kaur Mendhir, Veterinary Surgeon, Noahs Ark Ipoh, Malaysia (Ipoh Animal Welfare Society)

Dr Karin Hartman, Field Director/Researcher, Nova Atlantis Foundation Portugal

Hannah Surowinski, Director, Nowzad

William Rossiter, Vice President, NY4WHALES

Courtney S. Vail, Director of Strategic Campaigns, Oceanic Preservation Society (OPS)

Bob Elliot, Director, OneKind

Jim Ries, President, One More Generation

Monsieur Aquilas Gnomblea, PDG, ONG Sante Animale Afrique

Mara McCaffery, Founder & Chairperson, Orangutan Aid

Clive Martins, Chair, Orca Rescues Foundation

**Ms Kim PS DA Ribeira, Director, Outraged South African Citizens Against Poaching
OSCAP**

Dr Gregg Tully, Executive Director, Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (PASA)

Amy Baron, Founder, PAWS Bangkok

Ms Sachiko Azuma, PEACE (Put an End to Animal Cruelty and Exploitation)

Sanjib Kumar Das, Member Secretary, People for Animals, Odisha

Jill Nelson, Chief Executive, People's Trust for Endangered Species

**Catherine Doyle MS, Director of Science Research and Advocacy, Performing Animal
Welfare Society**

Rochelle Regodon, Policy Manager, PETA Asia 亚洲善待动物组织

Mr Nilesh Bhanage, CEO, Plants and Animals Welfare Society (PAWS Asia)

Dr Marion Garai, Pro Elephant Network

Dr Sandra Altherr, Co-Founder, Pro Wildlife Germany

Mr Rohit Gangwal, President, RAKSHA

Amal el Bekri, General Secretary, RAPAD Maroc

Charlotte Nithart, Director, Robin des Bois

**Adam Grogan BSc MCIEEM, Head of Wildlife, Royal Society for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Animals RSPCA**

**Ms Mageswari Sangaralingam, Honorary Secretary, Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends
of the Earth Malaysia)**

Pamela Malhotra, Trustee, SAI (Save Animals Initiative) Sanctuary Trust

Dr Nandita Shah, Founder – Director, Sanctuary for Health & Reconnection to Animals & Nature

Kati Pulli, Executive Director, SEY Animal Welfare Finland

Rebecca D'Cruz, Sarawak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Mr Ali Gea, Executive Director, Scorpion Foundation Indonesia

Mr Robert Brandford, Executive Director, Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

Janet Enoch, Investigator/Administrator, Showing Animals Respect and Kindness

Nara Narayan Sharma, President, Society for Animal Welfare and Management

Cynthia Ng, Hon. Secretary, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – Penang

Fiona Woodhouse, Deputy Director Welfare, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)

Wong Ee Lynn, Farm Animal Welfare Programme, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Selangor

Dr Jaipal Gill, Executive Director, Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Singapore

Ivan Kurajov, Society for the Protection of Animals Ljubimci

Leanne Fogarty, Founder and Director, Society for Travelers Respecting Animal Welfare

Mr John Dalley, President, Soi Dog Foundation

Ms Aia Abnett, Director, Southern African Fight For Rhinos

Will Travers OBE, President, Species Survival Network

Simone Eckhardt, Director, SPOTS (Save and Protect Our Treasures)

Ron van der A, Chairman, Stichting Painted Dog Conservation

Vasanthi Kumar, Co-Founder and Chairperson, Stray Relief and Animal Welfare

Dr Gabriella Fredriksson, Co-chair, Sun Bear Expert Team BSG/IUCN/SSC Sun Bear Centre – Kalimantan

Connie Chiang, Co-Founder & Executive Director, Taiwan SPCA 台灣防止虐待動物協會

Carine Bambara, Senior Manager Global External Affairs, The Brooke

Kedar Gore, Director, The Corbett Foundation

Ms Maho Cavalier, Corporate Relations Specialist, The Humane League Japan

Manoj Gautam, Executive Director, The Jane Goodall Institute – Nepal

Dr Gay Bradshaw, Executive Director, The Kerulos Center for Nonviolence

Leif Cocks, President, The Orangutan Project

Anna Hashim-Cabrera, Executive Director, The Philippines Animal Welfare Society

Mr Philip Wollen, Founder, The Winsome Constance Kindness Trust

J Brand MSc, Coordinator, Trésor Foundation, The Netherlands

Nedim C Buyukmihci, President, Unexpected Wildlife Refuge

Professor Claudio Sillero, Professor of Conservation Biology, University of Oxford

Mr Dave Du Toit, Founder, Vervet Monkey Foundation

Gerald Dick, Chief Programmes Officer, Vier Pforten International

Ms Sue Ehret, Principle Administrator, Voice for dogs abroad

Kaori Sakamoto, Representative, Voice for Zoo Animals

Miss Sarah Dyer, Co-Founder, Voice4Lions

Hongmei Yu, VShine Animal Protection Association

Jo-Anne McArthur, Founder, We Animals Media

Andrew N Rowan DPhil, President, WellBeing International

Daniela Schrudde, Program Director, Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V. (WTG)

Chris Butler-Stroud, Chief Executive Officer, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Ms Rachel Hevesi, Director, Wild Futures

Ms Amy Van Nice, Deputy Director of Programs, Wildlife Alliance

Belinda Wright OBE, Executive Director, Wildlife Protection Society of India

Mr Nadeem Shehzad, Co-Founder, Wildlife Rescue

Suparna Ganguly, Co-founder Trustee, Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre

Ms Georgina Groves, Executive Director, Wild Welfare

Lee Morgan-Kellow, Secretary, Working for Animals

Jessica Bridgers, Executive Director, World Animal Net

Kate Nustedt, Programme Director Animals in the Wild, World Animal Protection

Ms Sharyn Taylor, Chair Campaigns, World Cetacean Alliance

Edmund Lanca, National Chairman, Zimbabwe National SPCA

Robert Laidlaw, CEO, Zoocheck Canada

Julie Woodyer, Campaign Director/Manager, Zoocheck Inc.