PM must back a wildlife trade ban to help prevent a future coronavirus say public and Alesha Dixon Embargoed 2 June 00:01

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PM must back a wildlife trade ban to help prevent a future coronavirus say public and animal welfare charities

Embargoed 2 June 00:01:
Appeals for Boris Johnson to call for a global wildlife trade ban at the G20 meeting of global leaders in November to help prevent a future coronavirus would be backed by 86%[1]
of Brits, including TV star Alesha Dixon, according to new research by Campaign to End Wildlife Trade.

With COVID-19 widely thought to have emerged at a wet market in Wuhan, where wildlife was sold alongside fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, and 70% of emerging infectious diseases coming from wild animals[2], it is critical everything is done to help prevent a future global pandemic.

Wildlife globally has been packaged up and sold on an industrial scale so that animals are taken from their natural environments or commercially farmed, exposing them to stress and cruelty and creating a hotbed for disease. As we have seen with COVID-19, these diseases can then be transferred to humans.

Campaign to End Wildlife Trade is supported by 16 leading animal protection and wildlife conservation groups including World Animal Protection, Compassion in World Farming, Four Paws UK and Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting.

Sonul Badiani-Hamment from World Animal Protection, said, “COVID-19 is a wakeup call for the world – and the case for a global wildlife trade ban has never been more urgent. SARS, Ebola and now COVID-19 are all believed to have passed from wildlife to humans[3]. Boris Johnson and the UK government must provide global leadership in this public health and wildlife crisis and call for a wildlife trade ban at the G20 meeting of global leaders in November to help prevent future pandemics.”

Alesha Dixon, singer, TV personality and animal welfare ambassador, said, "Bringing an end to the multi-billion-dollar wildlife trade has overwhelming public support and is something global leaders can do to help safeguard our future and the planet. This is an opportunity for the world to re-evaluate our relationship with wild animals. We need to stop seeing wildlife as

a product and start treating wild animals with respect and compassion for a healthier, more positive and sustainable future for all."

Campaign to End Wildlife Trade’s research also shows that over a quarter of people would feel safer if wildlife trade was banned (26%), 18% are more concerned about the trade since lockdown and over half (51%) were unaware of the scale of the legal trade of protected wild animals into the UK.

As well as the public health and conservation risk, wild animals are sentient beings who feel pleasure, distress, excitement, fear and pain and they suffer immensely in the billion-dollar wildlife trade. After being stolen from the wild they are stuffed into bags, taken to cramped and unsuitable holding pens and crammed into crates and shipped all over the world with most animals suffocating in the process.

The global wildlife trade is fuelled by the demand for exotic pets, traditional medicine and the entertainment industry. Millions of wild animals including snakes, parrots, iguanas, lizards, tortoises, and even otters are captured each year for the exotic pet trade. Wild animals are farmed for Traditional Asian Medicine such as bear bile which has ironically been recommended by the Chinese Government to treat symptoms for COVID-19.

The UK currently imports thousands of protected wild animals, including tortoises, pythons and monitor lizards, captured from the wild and legally imported into the UK each year, according to the group.

Sign the petition here (to go live on June 2nd) calling on the UK government to secure a global wildlife trade ban and end the import and export of wild animals into the UK.

-Ends-

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Notes to Editor

- For an interview with a spokesperson contact Emily Cunningham at emilycunningham@worldanimalprotection.org.uk or call (0)20 7239 0634
- For images and b-roll please click here

About Campaign to End Wildlife Trade

Campaign to End Wildlife Trade is calling for a global wildlife ban to help prevent future pandemics such as COVID-19 and to protect wild animals caught in the multi-billion-dollar trade. The organisations backing these calls are: World Animal Protection, Four Paws UK, Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting, Compassion in World Farming, League Against Cruel Sports, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), OneKind, Animal Defenders International, Animal Aid, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, People's Trust for Endangered Species, Voice4Lions, Cruelty Free International, Catholic Concern for Animals, Action for Primates, Animal Protection Agency Foundation.

YouGov research

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,686 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 13th - 14th May 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

[1]
Research conducted by YouGov in May 2020 using a representative sample of 1686 GB adults

[2] Kuiken et al., 2005; Wang and Crameri, 2014)-www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2351989418302312#bib53

[3] https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701(20)30099-2/fulltext

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