

Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online: 2021 Progress Update



© Dr. Sanjay K Shukla/ WWF-International

Background:

Hidden among popular dance-off videos, viral memes and virtual shopping carts lies an illegal online trade in wild species like elephants, tigers, pangolins and birds. With the cloak of anonymity and ease of connecting with other users worldwide, wildlife traffickers are able to identify interested buyers and complete transactions using everyday apps and services. Desired for their parts as ornaments, fashion, food and medicine, or as live pets, and fueled further by the promotion of exotic pet ownership on social media, wild populations have been decimated by this illicit activity. Fortunately, conservation organizations WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW have convened the online technology sector through a Coalition approach to help keep wildlife **#OfflineAndInTheWild**.



Coalition companies have reported blocking or removing **11,631,819 posts and listings** of illegal wildlife for sale.



Member companies more than doubled from 21 in 2018 to **47** in 2021, comprising more than **11 billion user accounts** around the world.



Company user communications received **1,088,679,149 impressions and engagements on social media**, helping users become aware of the threats to endangered species, understand what is prohibited on company platforms and report suspicious content.



Through the Coalition's e-learning program, OWLET, and in-person training sessions, **2,376 company staff** have **received training** to detect illegal wildlife on their platforms.



More than **11,000 listings** for illegal wildlife have been reported to company members through the Coalition's citizen science Cyber Spotter program.



The Coalition has developed a key search words database with over **2,500 known search terms** in multiple languages used to avoid detection online that is shared regularly with companies to enhance automation.

Upcoming priority activities for the Coalition include:

- Expanding geographic reach to additional platforms in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas.
- Increased collaboration with law enforcement agencies to build out a coordinated approach to tackling organized criminal groups trading online.
- Strategically reaching more users through communications, raising awareness of the issue and helping to empower billions to report suspicious content around the world.
- Enhancing automated detection through the development of image repositories and robust training sets to advance block filters and reduce dependence on manual review from conservation partners.



About the Coalition:

The Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online launched in 2018 with conservation convenors WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW. Now comprising 47 tech company members, including Alibaba, eBay, DeineTierwelt, Facebook, Google, TikTok and Tencent, the Coalition has doubled in size and includes operations across Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. This collaboration aims to unite the tech industry to standardize prohibited wildlife policies, train staff to better detect illicit wildlife products, enhance automated detection filters and educate and empower users to report suspicious listings. At the core of this effort is sharing learning and best practices across company platforms to avoid duplication of efforts and prevent wildlife traffickers from shifting activities from one platform to the next. The Coalition aims to complement additional approaches, such as those of law enforcement agencies, to help reduce wildlife trafficking online. Get involved at www.endwildlifetraffickingonline.org.

