

WILDLIFE COUNTS

STOP WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

WHAT IS WILDLIFE
TRAFFICKING AND
WHY SHOULD IT
STOP?

NGOS
ANIMALS LEBANON
AND
LEBANESE WILDLIFE'S
TAKES ON WILDLIFE
TRAFFICKING

COVID-19:
WAS IT A RESULT
OF WILDLIFE
TRAFFICKING?



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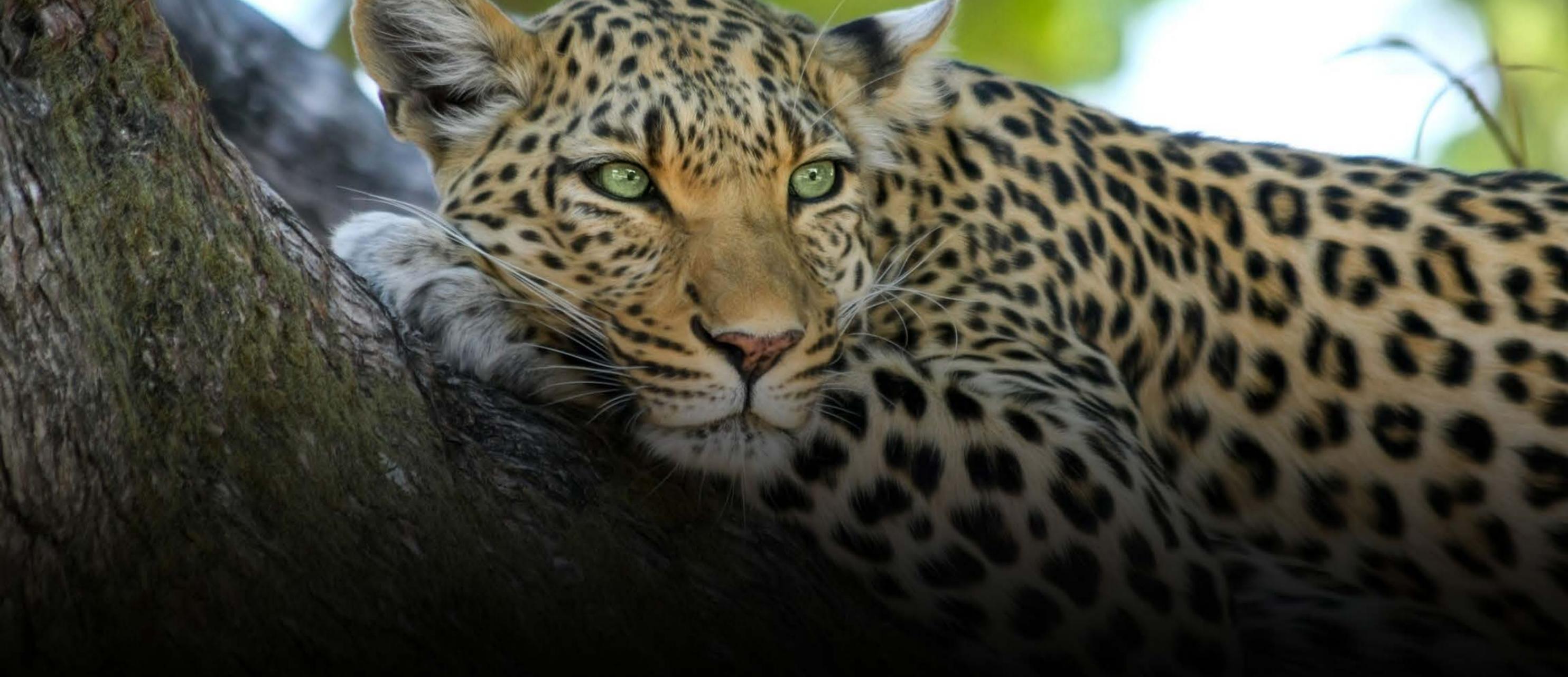
The amount of problems which surround our world is unbelievable. From devastating fires destroying entire regions of green areas to a worldwide pandemic putting our lives on hold, we can clearly see that our earth isn't going through its best time.

We created this magazine in order to explore one of these problems, one that is definitely not getting as much attention as it should get even though its impacts are dangerously destructive for animals, the environment and even humans:
Wildlife trafficking.

Some of you might be familiar with this term, and some of you might not be. But don't worry, we got you covered!

This magazine will tell you about all you need to know on the illegal trade of wildlife animals, an activity that is considered as one of the largest types of illegal trades in the world.

Make yourself comfortable and get ready as we take you to an exciting trip full of surprises, and find out how COVID-19 might have come into existence because of this very problem.



Wildlife Trafficking

An illegal business worth millions of dollars

In one of their research studies, South and Wyatt, PhDs, defined wildlife trafficking as **“any environment-related crime that involves the illegal trade, smuggling, poaching, capture or collection of endangered and protected wildlife species”**. Even though wildlife is a term that includes both animals and plants, in this magazine, we’ll be focusing more on animals. Because of their many uses and the high demand on them, millions of endangered and protected wild animals are illegally captured and sold every year as part of a multibillion-dollar business.

Source: South and Wyatt (2011)

The many uses of wildlife

- Their parts are used as house decorations
- They are hanged on walls as trophies
- They are used as religious amulets
- They are used in medicine
- They are brought to houses alive and become “pets”
- Their parts (such as fur or skin) are used to make clothes/accessories
- They are killed and become food
- They are used for entertainment in zoos or circuses

Source: Patel et al (2015)

A modern interior space featuring a zebra-print rug on a light-colored floor. In the foreground, a dark, round side table holds a decorative vase with a tiered top and a potted orchid. Large windows in the background offer a view of a bright outdoor area with a white chair and a potted plant.

EVERY OBJECT
HAS A **STORY**

A man and a child standing in a savanna landscape. The man is wearing a cap and sunglasses, and the child is wearing a green shirt. They are standing next to a zebra that is lying down on the ground. The background shows a grassy hillside under a clear blue sky.

BUT IT'S NOT ALWAYS
A **PRETTY ONE**

Every year, billions of wild animals are captured and killed illegally to become house decorations, clothes and accessories.
Say no to this outrageous act.

[#StopWildlifeTrafficking](#)
[#WildlifeCounts](#)

AVOID THE CONFUSION! WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING VS WILDLIFE TRADE

Throughout the magazine, we'll be using the terms **wildlife trafficking** or **illegal wildlife trade** to refer to the illegal aspect of capturing and selling wildlife. However, capturing wildlife is not always illegal. The legal aspect of this activity is referred to as **wildlife trade**.

But what is really the difference between **wildlife trade** and **wildlife trafficking**?
The environmental NGO Lebanese Wildlife answered this question:

"Wildlife trade means each animal is registered and approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, limited species allowed based on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and measures taken based on the OIE (The World Organisation for Animal Health) from vaccinations to means of transport specific to each species. The trade is diverse, ranging from live animals and plants to a vast array of wildlife products derived from them, including food products, exotic leather goods, and timber.

Wildlife trafficking is the black market. Animals are brought in horrible conditions, many die during inadequate transportation; many get sick and end up bringing some zoonotic diseases that affect the local wildlife and human population putting our healthcare sector at risk. Animals end up in unknown locations, with inexperienced people, and no quality care, as money tops their welfare."

Lebanese Wildlife also revealed to us that if it is done sustainably and legally, wildlife trade does have advantages:

"Sustainable and legal wildlife trade can be a powerful nature-based solution for meeting challenges such as enhancing livelihoods and safeguarding certain species from overexploitation. Another thought is that many wildlife species in trade are not endangered, but the existence of sustainable and legal wildlife trade is important in order to safeguard these species and their ecosystem services for the future. Wildlife trade is also used positively for reinforcing populations in decline or to reintroduce certain species, based on captive breeding programs."





The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

It is obvious that the diverse trade of animals and plants which includes millions of species is a factor that could lead to many negative impacts including the extinction of these species. This threat required the presence of an international agreement made between governments over the world to regulate this trade and make sure that the survival of some species is not threatened because of it. This agreement which is known as CITES started being applied in 1975. CITES lists species of animals and plants on 3 appendices depending on how endangered species are, and declares that the trade of these listed species should be banned or authorized by condition of having a permit. Governments that join the agreement should respect it and find their own legislations to implement it in their country. So far, 183 countries joined CITES including Lebanon which joined the agreement in 2013.

Source: CITES website

DID YOU KNOW

That the rhinoceros horn has many uses which includes the use of it in religious ceremonies or in houses where it is placed as a trophy or even in traditional Chinese medicine. However, due to the many uses of the rhinoceros horn and the high demand on it, 3 of the 5 remaining species of the animal are currently critically endangered, but the trafficking is still persisting even though CITES has banned the trade of rhinos in 1977.



Source: Bending (2015)

**FIND THE 5
HIDDEN LETTERS AND GUESS THE WORD!**



Why should wildlife trafficking STOP?



Endangerment and extinction of species

Animals captured illegally are often endangered species protected by CITES which bans the trade of these species. But some people do not respect this ban and resume illegal procedures. As a result, many wild animals are threatened to go extinct such as the Spix macaw that is now considered to be extinct in the wild due to the illegal trafficking of this species of birds.

Collapse of ecosystems

All species of animals perform a role in ecosystems and the extinction of species due to wildlife trafficking can have a great impact on these ecosystems even if this impact is not visible instantly.

Spread of diseases among humans and animals

Animals which are captured illegally do not go through medical examinations and could be carrying diseases. These animals could transmit the disease to other animals and even to humans when they come in contact with them: For example, it was found that hawk-eagles which were being trafficked had a type of influenza virus which doesn't only cause a danger to other birds, but to humans as well. In addition, it is not confirmed yet but chances that the COVID-19 virus came as a result of wildlife trafficking are pretty high.

How can the extinction of species affect the ENVIRONMENT?



Source: Flickr

Case study: The sea otter

Now that we know that wildlife trafficking could lead to the extinction of many wildlife species, you might be asking yourself: What if a species goes extinct? Does it really matter? Well we are here to tell you that it does matter. All animals that go extinct would make a change in the environment, and some animals going extinct could even affect the survival of other species of animals and would make a huge impact on earth if they disappear. These species are called "keystone species" and one example of a keystone species we are going to talk about is the sea otter.

At first sight, the sea otter appears as a cute and lovable creature. But this little marine mammal plays a much bigger role than you would imagine in preserving kelp. Kelp is an underwater plant which has many benefits: It was found that kelp absorbs high amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and that many species such as fish, seals and other aquatic organisms depend on it in many ways. Sea otters eat sea urchins which eat kelp. So without the sea otters to eat them, the sea urchins would increase in number and eat all the kelp, which would result in the disappearance of the species which depended on this kelp, and this is exactly what happened in some areas during the 18th and 19th century when sea otters were captured and exterminated over huge areas for food and fur. Thankfully, sea otters have been saved from extinction and are now a protected species.



This is what the underwater life would look like without sea otters: An area full of sea urchins, with no kelp to attract other types of creatures.

This is what it would look like with the presence of sea otters.

Source: Seaotters.org

We'll leave it up to you to decide which image looks better.

Whenever a species goes extinct, we would be taking risks of making huge changes to the environment and even chances of ecosystems collapsing and us humans would eventually be affected by these changes, and not in good way. This is why stopping wildlife trafficking would play a major role in preserving these beautiful environments and eventually preserving ourselves.



BEFORE

KEEP THEM ALIVE



AFTER

TO KEEP US ALIVE

YOUR OWN HEALTH IS AT RISK



As you already know, illegal wildlife trade could lead to the transmission of diseases to other animals and to humans. Actually, there is a risk of diseases being transmitted even when the trade is done legally, but this risk is way higher when wild animals are trafficked because in such cases there is no wildlife disease monitoring and surveillance which is essential in order to avoid the spread of diseases to other animals or to humans. We've listed for you some of the diseases that originated from wildlife:

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS): It is still unknown from what animal SARS first originated, but it then spread to civet cats which were imported to China and infected humans. Back in 2003, this dangerous virus caused an outbreak in 26 countries and infected around 8000 people, with a fatality rate of 10%.

Avian Influenza: The most known form of this virus is H5N1. It originated from wild birds, and can infect humans who come in close contact with infected birds. The virus does not seem to infect humans easily, but when it does the death rate is of 60% which makes it pretty scary.

Monkeypox: Another virus which came from wild animals (mainly rodents and primates) and which can infect humans. The disease isn't very common and it mainly occurs in Africa but it has been found in 2003 in the United States as well where rodents were imported from Africa. The rodents infected prairie dogs which then infected humans. Monkeypox's death rate is up to 10%.

Ebola: You probably heard of this one before since the last outbreak wasn't so long ago. In late 2013, an 18 months old boy in Guinea was infected with the virus from bats. The virus then spread in West Africa and in 7 other countries, resulting in more than 28000 cases and 11000 deaths.

These are only some of the many diseases that we can get from wildlife. All the deaths that such diseases caused and are still causing today are why it is crucial to minimize the risks of transmission. One way of doing so is by applying measures for trading these animals safely around the world in order to prevent, detect, and control the diseases they might spread. These measures certainly cannot be taken if the animals are traded illegally.

MORE THAN 60%
OF HUMAN DISEASES
ARE FROM ANIMAL ORIGIN
AND THE MAJORITY
ARE FROM
WILDLIFE

Did wildlife trafficking lead to the outbreak of COVID-19?

Today, the entire world faces a major health crisis with the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) which, by the time of writing this article, has already infected more than 3 million individuals and killed more than 220 thousand ones since it first emerged in December 2019. These extremely high numbers have led many countries to declare the state of emergency and take measures to prevent this virus from spreading even more. But where did this new virus come from and how did it spread to humans?

According to World Health Organization, the first human cases of COVID-19 were identified in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019. Although the original source of the virus is still unknown, it is believed that the virus came from bats. It is most likely that the bats that carried the virus infected pangolins which were brought to China illegally, and that these pangolins then infected humans. It is true that this is a theory that we're not completely sure of yet, but what is certain is that COVID-19, just like the other viruses that are from the coronavirus family (such as SARS which we discussed in the last article) are **zoonotic**. This means that these viruses are transmitted between animals and humans.

SARS which caused an outbreak in 2003 and COVID-19 both jumped from animals to humans, more likely through an intermediate host, which is another animal species more likely to be handled by humans. In the case of COVID-19, the intermediate host may be the pangolin, and for SARS it is civet cats.

The outbreak of COVID-19 is one of the many examples that show why it is so important to stop wildlife trafficking and to take the necessary precautions to avoid letting animals that might carry diseases come in contact with humans. Of course, these animals are not to blame and you should definitely not be scared of them, it is rather our responsibility as humans to be more careful and to protect these animals in order to protect ourselves and reduce the risks of such a crisis happening again in the future.



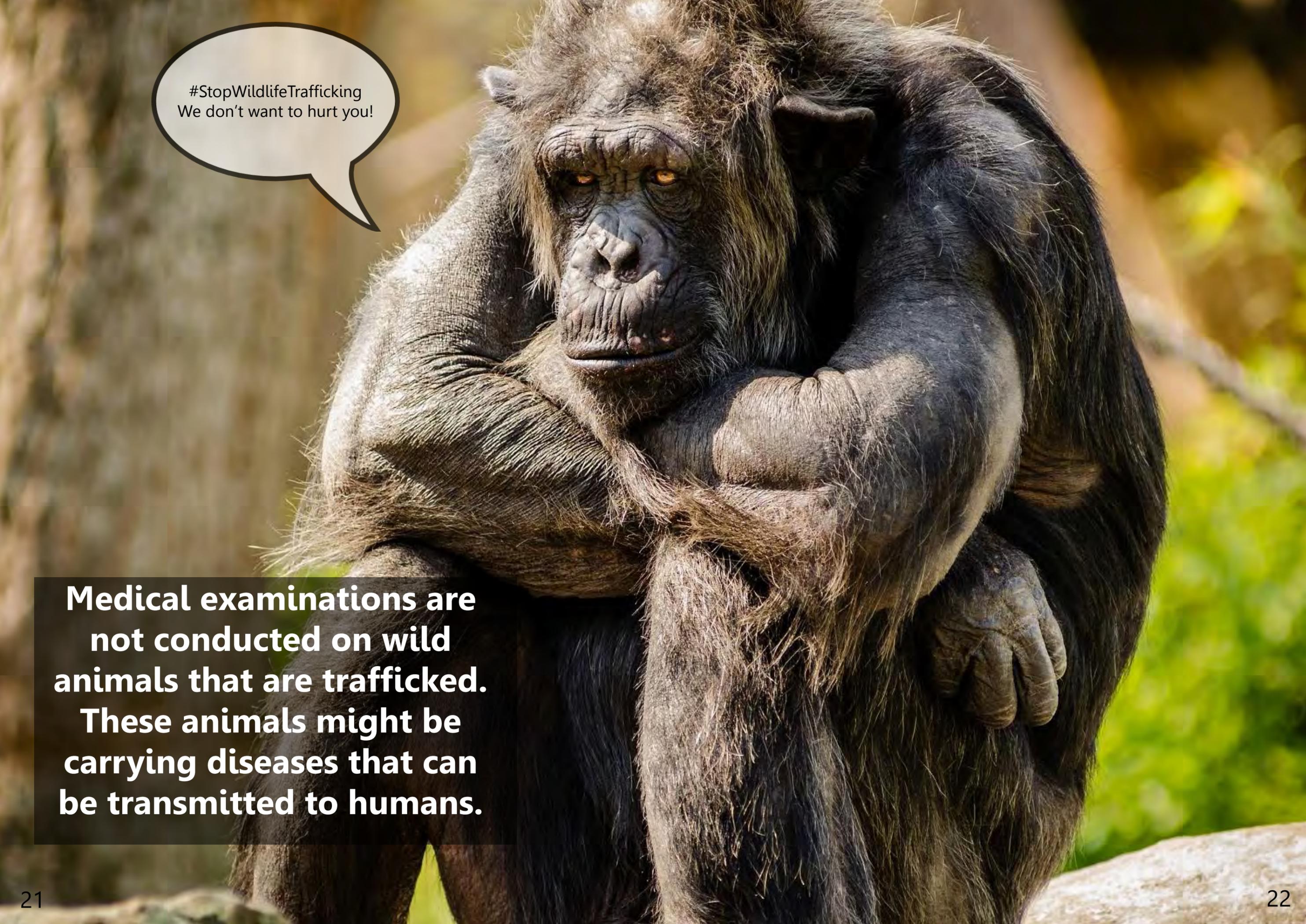
The world's most trafficked mammal

Pangolins are believed to make up 20% of all illegal wildlife trade. These mammals are trafficked for their scale that is used in traditional medicine and for their meat which is considered as luxury food in some countries. In Africa, it is consumed as bushmeat and is used for rituals.



"We need to be really attentive to how we interact with wildlife and the activities that bring humans and wildlife together. We obviously don't want pandemics of this scale. We need to find ways to co-exist safely with wildlife, as they have no shortages of viruses to give us,"

Lead author **Christine Kreuder Johnson**
Director of the EpiCenter for Disease Dynamics at the One Health Institute
The Guardian.



#StopWildlifeTrafficking
We don't want to hurt you!

Medical examinations are not conducted on wild animals that are trafficked. These animals might be carrying diseases that can be transmitted to humans.

FIND THE **5**
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PICTURES!



A scenic landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. Silhouettes of tall pine trees are visible against the bright sky. A flock of birds is flying across the sky in front of the sun. The foreground is filled with dense, green vegetation, including bushes and tall grasses. The word "WILD" is overlaid in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters across the lower portion of the image.

WILD



4 Facts About Wildlife Trafficking in Lebanon

As this industry might not be commonly known in Lebanon, here's a quick start for you to get to know general and interesting facts about wildlife trafficking in Lebanon.

Beirut holds strategic importance to wildlife trafficking

Its location serves as a crossroad between the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe and a gateway to the east.

Around 40 locations in Lebanon keep exotic pets on private or public display.

These locations include zoos, pet stores, and even family homes.

Wildlife trade in Lebanon has economic importance

A study derived an estimated value of wildlife trade in Lebanon to be 431,371 US dollars.

There is a high level of wild and captive species exported at risk of being extinct such as bird species

Like the *Serinus syriacus* and reptiles such as the Spur-thighed tortoise *testudo graeca*; these species are considered vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), meaning they are at a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Sources: Abi-Said et al (2018), Mounir et al (2018)

ANIMAL PROTECTION AND WELFARE LAW



Even after Lebanon joined CITES in 2013, the country was still in need of a strong law to guarantee the protection and wellbeing of animals, put requirements on establishments that handle animals and give penalties to those who don't abide by the law. "The Animal Protection and Welfare law" was drafted by the NGO Animals Lebanon who worked with the government and was able to get it enacted in 2017 as law 47/2017.

Animals Lebanon's executive director Jason Mier gave us more details on how this law protects wildlife: "The animal protection and welfare law regulated the trade, transport and keeping of wildlife, and CITES gives further specifications and regulations. Penalties for crimes involving wildlife are doubled in the law because of the seriousness, and include such things as confiscation of animals, closing of facilities, fines, and imprisonment."

But did this law really make a difference when it comes to the smuggling of wild animals in Lebanon?

According to Mier, it is not easy to know if there has been an increase or decrease in cases of animals smuggled and that is because "this is a hidden activity and we only know about cases which are discovered or intercepted" and there isn't enough "research and data to come up with a baseline of how many cases of trafficking happen per time period."

But despite that, Mier also told us that there is a positive change happening: "there is more awareness at all levels, more action has been taken by airport authorities to try and prevent trade, and it is easier for us to act if a case is identified. Over the last couple years we were able to stop ani-

mals at the airport before they ever entered the country, including three baby tigers and another shipment of two very rare monkeys."

Lebanese Wildlife, another NGO that works on the protection of wildlife also notices some improvements after the law was enacted: "Zoos are not allowed to bring in more animals without legal permits, and the Ministry of Agriculture is forced to implement the law. This does not mean wildlife is not being illegally smuggled, they are but there has been a step of improvement as the country tackles this issue; we still have a long way to go." Lebanese Wildlife revealed to us that the reason why the trafficking persists is because "it is a very profitable business for the seller making it their main livelihood. When it comes to the buyers, they are not only individuals with zoos, but individuals interested in having a private collection."

So we can say that, thanks to this new law, there have been some improvements in Lebanon with how it deals with wildlife crimes, but there are still many illegal actions that are taken against wildlife like "not abiding by laws in place such as Animal Welfare and Protection Law 47/2017, and Hunting Law 580/2004, not conducting proper EIA (Environmental impact assessment), and not prosecuting individuals doing any of these illegal acts appropriately." as Lebanese Wildlife stated.

Nevertheless, it is great to see change happening little by little, and we do hope to keep seeing such positive changes with how animal-related crimes are being dealt with not only in Lebanon but in the entire world as well.

You can check out the full text of the law on www.animalslebanon.org/pdf/Animal_Protection_and_Welfare_Law.pdf

FIND THE **6**
HIDDEN ANIMALS IN THE PICTURE!





Jason Mier, the executive director of the NGO Animals Lebanon answered some of our questions about wildlife trafficking. This is what he had to say:

Do you think Wildlife trade should be stopped whether legal or not?

In some cases the trade of wildlife can be beneficial, and it is not always necessarily harmful. For example, it may be necessary to move wildlife for the purposes of conservation or breeding that is beneficial for their survival. The kind of work Animals Lebanon does is still 'trade', but this is not commercial and is moving rescued animals for their own welfare.

Why is it crucial to spread awareness about wildlife trafficking in Lebanon?

Wildlife trade, and the impacts of such trade, are not widely known in the Middle East. This is one of the last regions to have most countries join CITES, the convention that regulates such trade. It is like any other issue that people may be unaware of or do not understand the

importance of. With education and training though this can be changed and we are seeing this change happen.

"Wildlife trafficking is an issue which affects everyone, even if they can't see it clearly."

It is said that COVID-19 pandemic came from wildlife trade. Do you think decreasing the illegal trade of animals around the world would decrease the chance of the creation and spread of such diseases?

The majority of new viruses are zoonotic, coming from animals. Farmed animals are a factor, as well as wildlife. As people move into new areas of habitat, upsetting that balance, and coming into greater contact with wild animals, there is an increased risk.

"When animals are trafficked, their health often suffers, and they are also less likely to have the required vaccinations and medical checks. This can be further compounded when numbers of animals in poor states of health are mixed with other species that they normally would not be in close contact with."

Based on your personal experience and expertise, what are the effects of wildlife trafficking?

Trafficking of wildlife undermines basic rule of law. This is a multi billion dollar industry involving high organized criminal enterprises. It endangers wild populations of animals and biodiversity, and can pose health hazards to people and other animals.

It can also cause harm to local communities through loss of tourism and other initiatives that bring benefits through sustainable use of wildlife.



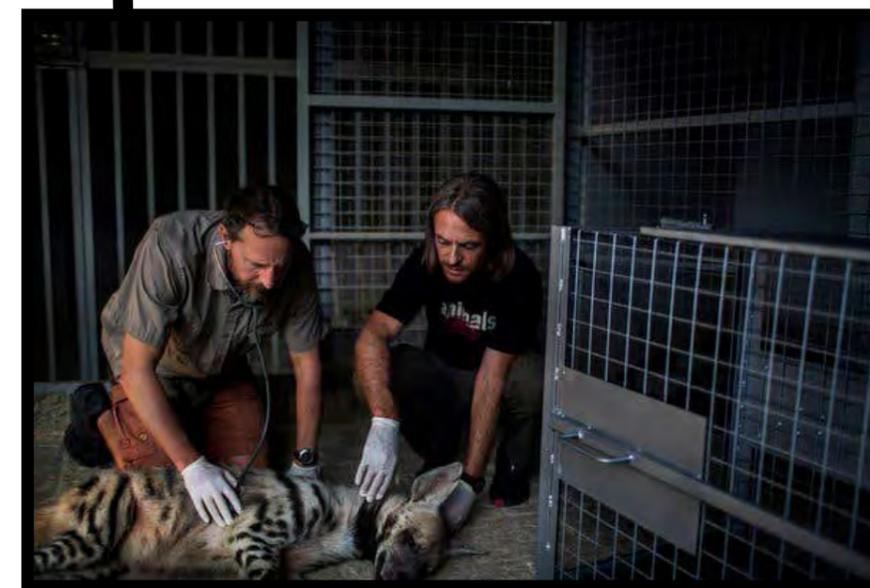
Your "Last Chance for Big cats" campaign could be one of the most famous campaigns, did you record any big cat cases in Lebanon?

We have done a tremendous amount of work with big cats. Over the year we have taken in about 20 lions and tigers, and one baby leopard. Lions, and to a lesser extent tigers, are kept as status symbols and to show off. They have been found at private homes, unregulated zoos, and even restaurants. One juvenile lion we rescued from a zoo recently was to travel to a sanctuary in the US the first week of March. With coronavirus and travel disruptions, her flight was cancelled by the airline and she is stuck here until flights open back up.

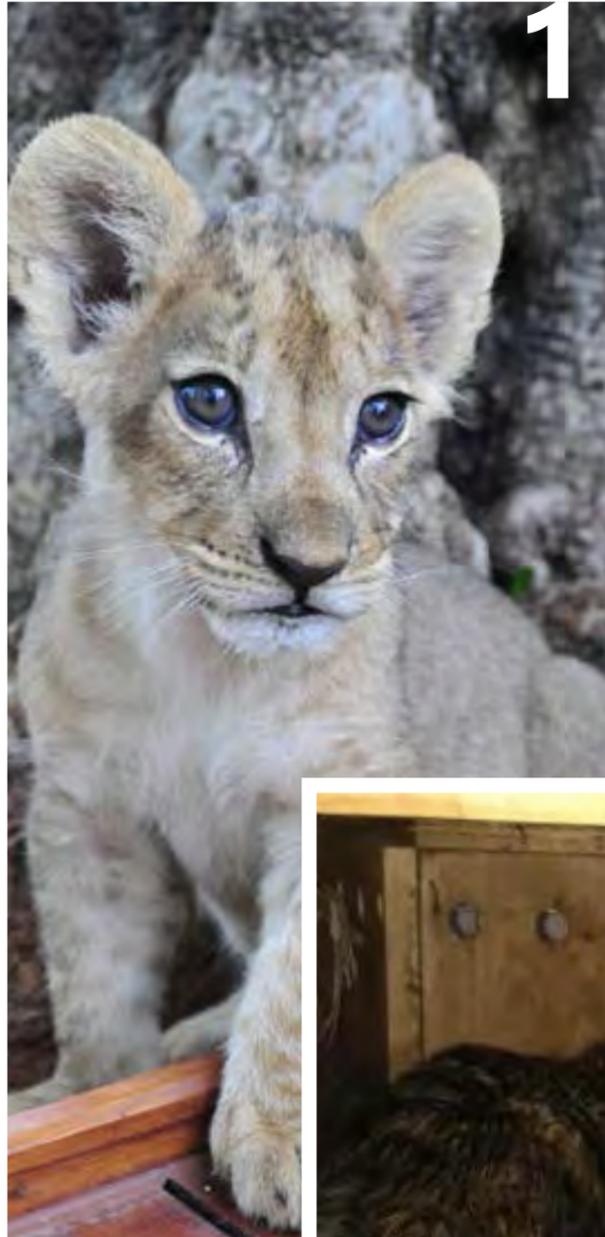


Given the current epidemic and economic crisis, how has this affected your work?

The economic crisis since October 2019, and now the new coronavirus, has made operations nearly impossible. The banking restrictions affect us as an organization and employees, so it is hard to access our money. At the same time, costs have risen drastically and many suppliers insist on dollars which are hard to come by.



When eyes speak louder than words...



These reports took place even after Lebanon had joined CITES and the Animal Protection and Welfare Law had been enforced. The thing about this particular topic is the fact that the people doing it have no idea about the risk they're putting themselves and others at. Lack of information and education regarding this process are mainly what cause the suffering at hand. Here's an inside look on some of the wildlife trafficking and private ownership cases which have occurred in Lebanon, recorded and handled by Animals Lebanon:

1) Lion cub living on a balcony in 2011

The largest carnivore in Africa and the second largest species in the cat family was being treated as a pet. A species which can run for miles was given the space of a typical balcony in Beirut. Such scenarios defy the law of nature inevitably. According to Animals Lebanon's website, the five-week old cub was smuggled into Lebanon before ending up as a private pet. "The keeping of lions as pets has drastically increased in the last two years, and we regularly receive reports about new cubs" said Lana El-Khalil, President of Animals Lebanon. "Within the first couple of months of life a lion becomes too large and strong to be kept in a house, only to end up locked in a backyard cage or sold to a private zoo."

El-Khalil also pointed out that the series of cubs being smuggled into Lebanon has led the NGO to uncover zoos in Syria offering new born lion cubs for \$350 each, and workers offered to advise on how best to bring a lion to Lebanon.

"One zoo owner in Lebanon reported bringing in eight lions from Syria, and admitted that they all died within weeks as they were too young."

2) Animals Lebanon saving endangered slow loris trafficked into Lebanon in 2018

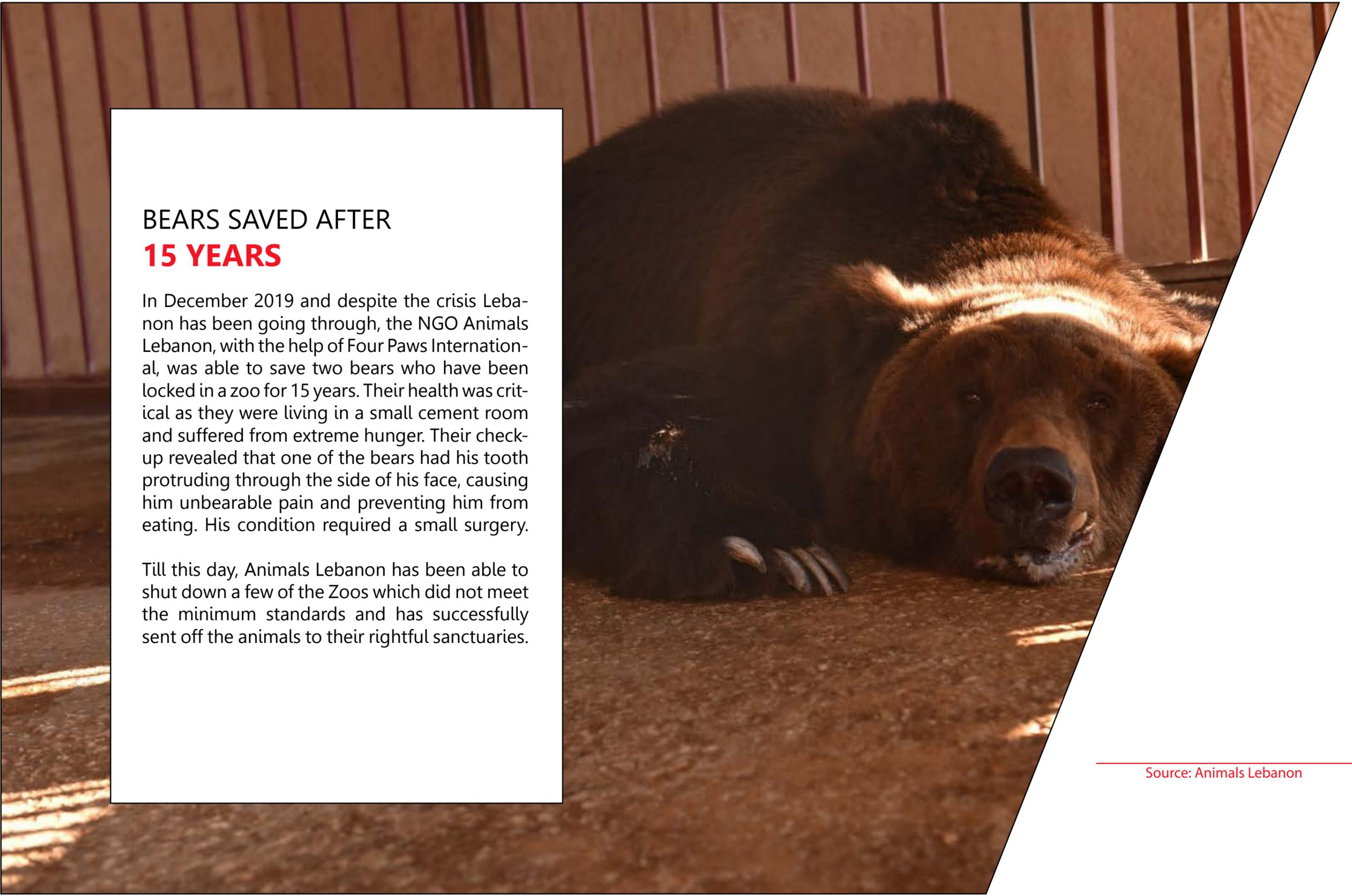
The loris was in luck because for the first time Animals Lebanon was able to confiscate the loris under the new animal welfare law, the pet shop was trying to sell the two-month old animal for \$2000. Little Nora weighed 130 grams only! The NGO was given custody over her and she was sent off to a sanctuary in the UK known as Monkey World.

3) Saving three dehydrated baby tigers stuck at the airport in 2017

This was a significant event because it had happened despite having a ban issued against trafficking big cats and keeping them in zoos or as exotic pets due to it leading to their death from malnourishment, mistreatment, and abandonment. According to New Arab News, Animals Lebanon's Vice President Maggie Shaarawi reported that they spent a week inside a wooden crate at the Beirut airport, due to confusion regarding their travel arrangement. Shaarawi said "They were swimming in their feces and urine with no bowl for water and the crate which was barely a third of a cubic meter, was screwed together, with just small holes for ventilation"

Jason Mier, executive director of Animals Lebanon, believes that there is a shocking presence of ignorance toward animal welfare. Based on the previously mentioned experiences, he believes that the culture approves of acts such as wild pets' ownership for the sake of showing off, and the public is unaware of the dire consequences which some might take seriously and stop supporting such processes.

Source: Animals Lebanon

A photograph of a brown bear lying down in a cage. The bear is the central focus, with its head resting on the ground and its body extending towards the left. The cage walls are made of vertical metal bars, and the floor is a reddish-brown color. The lighting is warm, suggesting an indoor setting with artificial light. The bear's fur is dark brown, and its eyes are visible, looking directly at the camera.

BEARS SAVED AFTER **15 YEARS**

In December 2019 and despite the crisis Lebanon has been going through, the NGO Animals Lebanon, with the help of Four Paws International, was able to save two bears who have been locked in a zoo for 15 years. Their health was critical as they were living in a small cement room and suffered from extreme hunger. Their check-up revealed that one of the bears had his tooth protruding through the side of his face, causing him unbearable pain and preventing him from eating. His condition required a small surgery.

Till this day, Animals Lebanon has been able to shut down a few of the Zoos which did not meet the minimum standards and has successfully sent off the animals to their rightful sanctuaries.

Source: Animals Lebanon

20 WORDS CAN YOU FIND THEM ALL?

K	A	P	A	N	G	O	L	I	N	K	V	G	E	R
E	C	O	S	Y	S	T	E	M	E	Z	Y	S	X	F
Y	P	T	D	I	S	E	A	S	E	L	A	T	T	T
S	A	H	J	N	K	L	I	O	P	E	S	F	I	R
T	R	M	H	C	H	I	L	I	O	N	D	E	N	A
O	R	O	W	I	L	D	L	I	F	E	V	N	C	F
N	O	N	J	T	Z	Y	E	R	F	A	S	V	T	F
E	T	K	Z	E	O	U	G	A	C	M	Y	I	I	I
S	P	E	T	S	O	N	A	L	N	M	G	R	O	C
P	A	Y	I	T	N	B	L	E	B	A	N	O	N	K
E	N	U	G	E	O	H	T	V	A	S	F	N	G	I
C	D	H	E	A	T	H	R	H	I	N	O	M	Y	N
I	A	F	R	B	I	F	A	Z	C	D	Y	E	H	G
E	T	D	T	Y	C	S	D	O	H	B	J	N	I	U
S	F	D	K	V	E	Q	E	O	I	O	C	T	M	J

MOTHER NATURE IS CALLING

Will you pick up the call?





ZOOS IN LEBANON

A DEATHZONE FOR WILDLIFE

Here's a fun fact: According to the NGO Animals Lebanon, zoos in Lebanon are all privately owned which means they barely have any regulations or rules to make sure the wild animals are safe. Negligence is reportedly present in both private zoos and the ones open for the public. According to their sources, Animals Lebanon realized that all zoos regularly import trafficked animals and keep them in barren cement and metal bar cages to live their whole lives. These animals are neglected for as long as they live. With no emotional or medical care, most of them die early. Animals Lebanon also reported that some animals are found dead in their cages after having the owners abandoning the zoo, leaving them all behind.

Zoo owners revealed they import wildlife illegally and what's worse is that they have even said that they wanted to import elephants, zebras and giraffes. Some animals have been lucky enough to be saved by Animals Lebanon, here's one of the cases:

CHIMPANZEE FREED AFTER 9 YEARS OF BEING SMUGGLED INTO LEBANON

Meet Charlie, reportedly the last chimpanzee in Lebanon that was saved after 8 years of Animals Lebanon campaigning to rescue him. Charlie was smuggled into the country when he was only a few months old. According to Animals Lebanon, Charlie was kept at a local pet shop before being sold to the Zoo.

Rescuing the little guy was not an easy task at all as in 2006 an attempt to confiscate him had failed. It wasn't till years later, and so much persistence from the NGO, that Charlie discovered the meaning of a life.

And it was a well-deserved freedom, for Charlie, just like other chimpanzees, lived a miserable life as he was taken away from his mother and displayed as a mean of entertainment, never to know what freedom is.

After being rescued, Animals Lebanon reported Charlie to enjoy his life for the first time ever. It is evident that life in a



Charlie enjoying his mango after a long trip to the sanctuary

zoo is a death zone for any creature's soul.

Before Charlie was able to join the Instituto Anami sanctuary in Brazil, he was put in a quarantine period to make sure he did not have any diseases which he had gotten from the miserable life at the zoo. Soon after, Charlie joined the rest of the chimpanzees in the sanctuary and became a new member of the family.

Charlie was the last chimpanzee to be smuggled into Lebanon, and the last chimpanzee to be rescued.

**YOU'RE IMPRISONED
AT HOME**



**CHARLIE WAS IMPRISONED
AWAY FROM HOME**

**#StopWildlifeTrafficking
#WildlifeCounts**



Introducing you to Lebanese Wildlife

Image source: Lebanese Wildlife Facebook

It is no secret now that wildlife trafficking is a dangerous activity that threatens animals, humans and entire ecosystems. Luckily, we do have individuals and NGOs in Lebanon that are fighting to stop it. One of them is the environmental NGO Lebanese Wildlife which was established in September 2018. This group of individuals who each have 5 to 10 years of experience in rescuing wildlife have gathered and formed an NGO not only to rescue wildlife and return them safely to their homes, but also to spread knowledge about the importance of preserving wildlife to future generations.

Lebanese Wildlife told us about wildlife trafficking and the importance of stopping this terrible and illegal act:

“It is crucial to stop wildlife trafficking and spread awareness about it in the region due to it causing the decrease of wild populations that play a crucial role of providing us with ecosystem services. The introduction of invasive species due to wildlife trafficking would also drastically affect the local wildlife population and then affect the ecosystem services they provide for us. Also, no medical examinations are conducted on these individuals that are being trafficked and could be carriers of zoonotic diseases which in turn could cause pandemics such as the one we are currently living through.”

Lebanese Wildlife spreads awareness about wildlife in many ways. Besides the social media pages on which facts and updates about new rescues are posted, the NGO also gives interactive awareness lectures in schools and universities as well as workshops with scouts and municipalities in order to explain about the different types of wildlife in Lebanon and the ecosystem services they provide. And sometimes they even bring some of their residents with them:

“Our residents are the rescues we did not release or put down, which are living a decent welfare life, and are used for education and support for other rescues (such as decreasing stress in captive care). This helps the audience to observe these species and understand them better.”

In addition to that, Lebanese Wildlife collaborates with other environmental NGOs and also does interviews on TV and radio stations in order to spread their knowledge about wildlife to as many people as possible in a country in which such awareness is much needed.

Unfortunately and as you all know, Lebanon is going through a hard time and this has affected the work of Lebanese Wildlife alongside many other NGOs.

First, the economic crisis has led to the increase of prices of supplies and imported medicines needed for rescuing animals, limiting the NGO's resources and forcing them to turn down many cases of animals needing to be rescued.

Second, the spread of COVID-19 also highly came in the way, preventing them from reaching certain areas for rescuing:

“for such incidents we provide as much information for the individual who reported the case on how to care for the animal or till it is possible to release or till we can make it to them.”

Despite this tough situation, Lebanese Wildlife will keep working to

“improve the quality of local wildlife care through education, observation, and exemplary ethics in their treatment.”

The NGO also aims at establishing a wildlife rehabilitation center in which injured and orphaned wildlife they rescue can be treated and taken care of so that they can be released back to the wild.



Rescuing Wildlife with Lebanese Wildlife



Rescuing wildlife is surely not a piece of cake. NGOs in Lebanon work hard to protect local species and save the ones that are trafficked. In this article, The Lebanese Wildlife NGO revealed to us a few of their most memorable cases.

With the development of technology, it is now possible to sell everything online including animals. A recent victim of this online market is a Stone Marten which was being put on sale on OLX. After knowing about this, Lebanese Wildlife stepped in: "After contacting the seller, we found out that it was caught in a trap in their chicken farm. We met up with the seller and confiscated the Stone Marten." However, not all cases have a happy ending and this one definitely wasn't a happy one. Unfortunately, the little mammal "was old, dehydrated, and in poor condition; she passed away after two days from the rescue."

But don't worry; these kinds of tragedies don't happen every time. Lebanese Wildlife told us about a case that does end happily, here is their story: "We were contacted by the police for help when they were enforcing the Animal Welfare and Protection Law 47/2017. They caught an individual that had stolen 8 Barn Owl chicks from their nest to be sold to the public as pets. The police handed over the chicks to us for rehabilitation and care till they were old enough to be released. We successfully released all of them in one of the local reserves." It is surely great to know that the Lebanese government is taking action towards this matter.



Image source: Pinterest

Of course these are not the only cases Lebanese Wildlife receives: "We also receive several calls concerning exotics, mostly non-native reptiles, such as Pythons, Alligators, Iguanas, etc. The owners would not be able to either handle them anymore, keep up with their growing needs, or have left them in such poor conditions they have contracted injuries and end up wanting to give them away or just release them. We step in and take them into our care, provide the needed rehabilitation and captive requirements for appropriate welfare and then find them a suitable adopter."

GUESS THE **5**
ENDANGERED ANIMALS
AND THE **2** EXTINCT ONES

Siberian Tiger



Harp Seal



Humpback Whale



Western Black Rhino



Sea Otter



American Flamingo



Hawksbill Sea Turtle



Red Panda



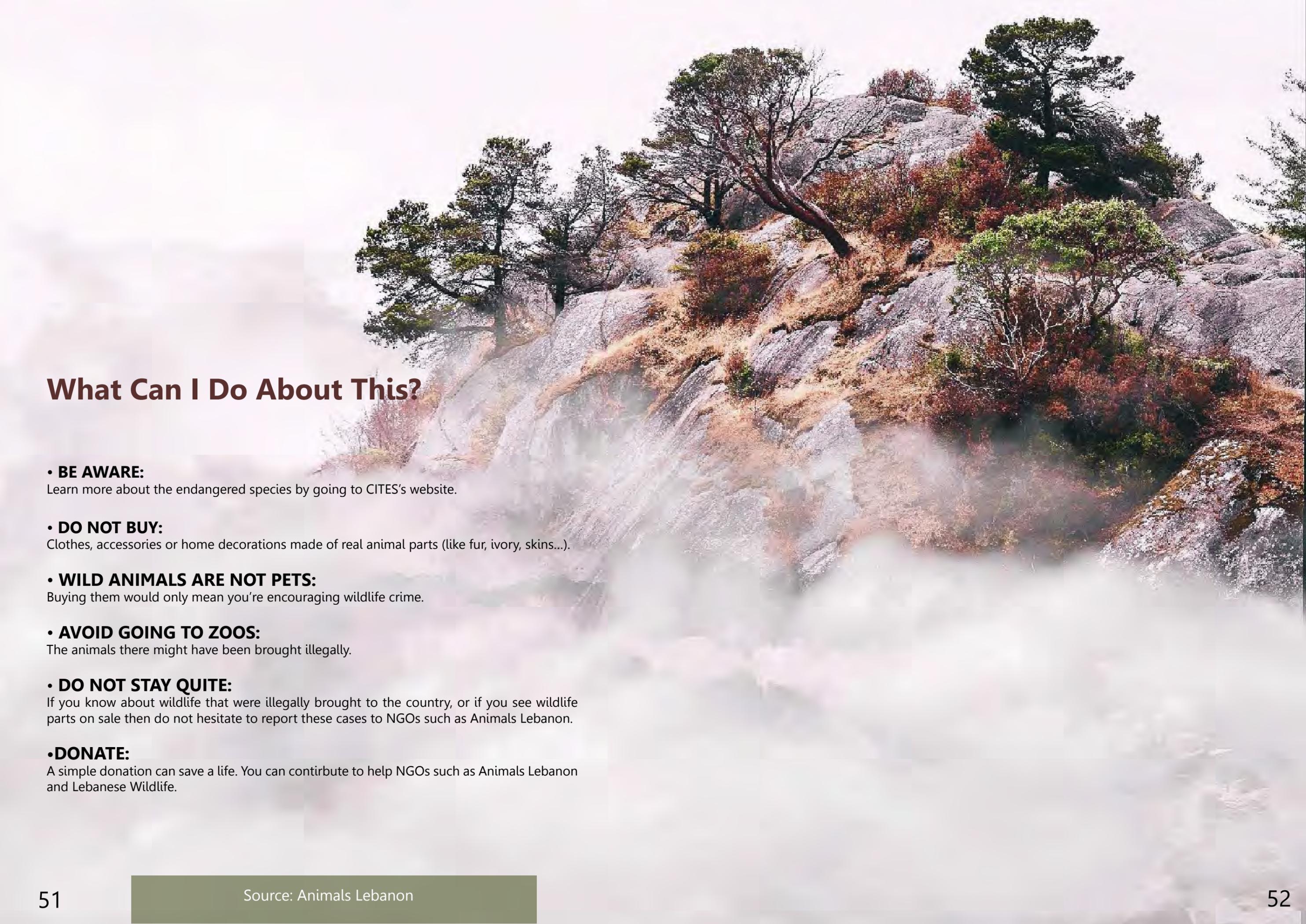
Bornean Orangutan



Spix Macaw



Image sources: Flickr, Pinterest, Worldwildlife, Save the rhino, BB



What Can I Do About This?

- **BE AWARE:**

Learn more about the endangered species by going to CITES's website.

- **DO NOT BUY:**

Clothes, accessories or home decorations made of real animal parts (like fur, ivory, skins...).

- **WILD ANIMALS ARE NOT PETS:**

Buying them would only mean you're encouraging wildlife crime.

- **AVOID GOING TO ZOOS:**

The animals there might have been brought illegally.

- **DO NOT STAY QUIET:**

If you know about wildlife that were illegally brought to the country, or if you see wildlife parts on sale then do not hesitate to report these cases to NGOs such as Animals Lebanon.

- **DONATE:**

A simple donation can save a life. You can contribute to help NGOs such as Animals Lebanon and Lebanese Wildlife.

K	A	P	A	N	G	O	L	I	N	K	V	G	E	R
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Y	P	T	D	I	S	E	A	S	E	L	A	T	T	T
S	A	H	J	N	K	L	I	O	P	E	S	F	I	R
T	R	M	H	C	H	I	L	I	O	N	D	E	N	A
O	R	O	W	I	L	D	L	I	F	E	V	N	C	F
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Columns are from left to right and rows from up to down

- KEystone SPECIES:** column 1, row 1, downwards
- ECOSYSTEM:** column 1, row 2, left to right
- PARROT:** Column 2, row 3, downwards
- PANDA:** Column 2, row 9, downwards
- MONKEY:** Column 3, row 5, downwards
- PETS:** Column 2, row 9, left to right
- WILDLIFE:** Column 4, row 6, left to right
- CITES:** Column 5, row 5, downwards
- ILLEGAL TRADE:** Column 8, row 4, downwards
- LEBANON:** Column 8, row 10, left to right
- RHINO:** Column 8, row 12, left to right
- ZOO:** Column 9, row 13, downwards
- EXTINCTION:** Column 14, row 1, downwards
- TRAFFICKING:** column 15, row 3, downwards
- ENVIRONMENT:** Column 13, row 5, downwards
- ZOONOTIC:** Column 6, row 7, downwards
- DISEASE:** Column 4, row 3, left to right
- TIGER:** Column 4, row 9, downwards
- LION:** Column 8, row 5, left to right
- PANGOLIN:** Column 3, row 1, left to right

The 5 endangered species are:

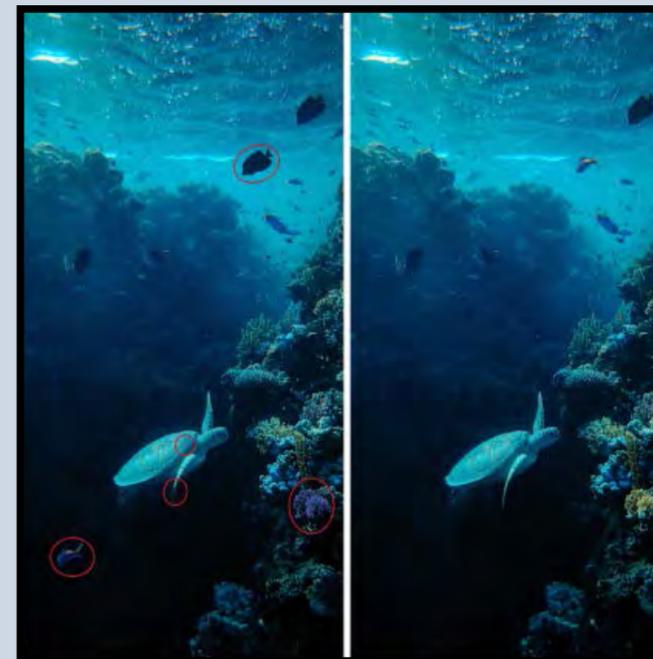
- Siberian Tiger
- Bornean Orangutan
- Sea Otter
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle
- Red Panda

The 2 extinct species are:

- Western Black Rhino
- Spix Macaw (extinct in the wild)

The 3 remaining species are neither endangered nor extinct:

- Humpback Whale
- Harp Seal
- American Flamingo



WITH YOUR **HELP** WE CAN MAKE THE **CHANGE**



special thanks to:



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