



New Report Reveals Up To \$2 Billion Worth Of Ivory Was Traded Legally In The U.S. Over 15 Years

A new analysis of U.S. wildlife imports from 2000-2014 paints a grim picture of the breadth and scale of the legal wildlife trade

Olympia, Wash. (May 12, 2021) — An analysis released today by research organization [Faunalytics](#) highlights the urgent threats of the legal wildlife trade. When it comes to wildlife protection, many experts and conservationists focus on ending illegal poaching and trafficking. However, using 15 years' worth of data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Faunalytics' [U.S. Wildlife Imports Analysis](#) reveals that the legal side of the industry is a key threat to global conservation.

Key findings from [Faunalytics' analysis](#) include the following:

- **2 million wildlife shipments** were sent to the U.S. between 2000-2014, made up of more than **3 billion live organisms**.
- **78% of live specimens imported to the U.S. were taken from the wild**, emphasizing how the legal wildlife trade directly impacts the environment.
- **Only around 2% of annual shipments were refused or identified as being illegal** over the 15-year timespan. This highlights just how much of the wildlife trade is legal and difficult for governments to enforce.
- **Nearly \$2 billion of ivory carvings and pieces were imported to the U.S., making it one of the highest-value products.** Even though much of the global ivory trade has been banned since 1990, the U.S. still allows ivory to be imported as hunting trophies, and “pre-ban” ivory can be transported across state lines.
- **Of the top 10 most valuable items imported from 2000-2014, at least seven were associated with the fashion industry.** This includes animal skins, garments, leather products, shoes, jewelry, and trim.

Faunalytics' analysis also offers insights on where shipments originate and their most common ports of entry; which products are being traded the most; which species are viewed as most valuable on the market; and the nature of the supply chain. However, it remains unclear how COVID-19 will impact the future of the legal, and illegal, wildlife trade.

“Regardless of how much is done on a global scale to work against illegal wildlife trafficking, our analysis is an important reminder that so much of the industry is, in fact, legal and difficult to enforce,” **said Karol Orzechowski, Faunalytics’ Content Director and the author of the analysis.** “Looking forward, initial insights are suggesting that trade has slowed as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It’s unclear whether these numbers will rebound in the future, but as it stands, there is a growing momentum to ban or restrict the wildlife trade as a preventative measure against future zoonotic disease outbreaks. For advocates, influencers, legislators, and concerned members of the public, the time is now to speak out against trading wildlife, whether it’s done legally or illegally.”

The U.S. Wildlife Imports Analysis is part of Faunalytics’ original research collection, which provides high-impact data to inform animal and environmental protection organizations. It also kicks off Faunalytics’ Wildlife Wednesdays campaign, a year-long initiative to support the efforts of wild animal advocates around the world. Wildlife Wednesdays will feature data-driven fact sheets, guest blogs, videos, social media content, and other evidence-based resources about the complex issues surrounding wild animal protection. The analysis, and the Wildlife Wednesdays campaign, has been generously supported by the [Park Foundation](#).

[Click here](#) to access the U.S. Wildlife Imports Analysis. A complete list of Faunalytics’ upcoming and previous original studies is available [here](#).

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Contact:

Casey Riordan

Communications & Development Manager, Faunalytics

casey@faunalytics.org

+1 732-810-3968

About Faunalytics

Faunalytics is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that empowers animal advocates with access to research, analysis, strategies, and messages that improve their effectiveness to reduce animal suffering. For more than 20 years, Faunalytics has conducted and disseminated original research that delves into essential animal advocacy issues. Faunalytics also houses the world’s largest collection of opinion and behavior research on animals and offers pro-bono support to other animal advocacy organizations looking to increase their impact. For more information, visit

www.faunalytics.org.