



WWF

REPORT

2020



# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS

FINDINGS FROM SURVEY IN MARCH 2020

A REPORT FOR WWF BY

GLOBESCAN

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

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The novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, which is suspected to originate in Wuhan in the Hubei province of China, has now become a global pandemic. With illegal and unregulated wildlife markets likely increase likelihood of infections such as coronavirus, WWF commissioned GlobeScan to conduct a survey among the general public in Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Myanmar,

Thailand, and Vietnam to measure and better understand opinions on what support looks like for the closure of all illegal and unregulated markets, within the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

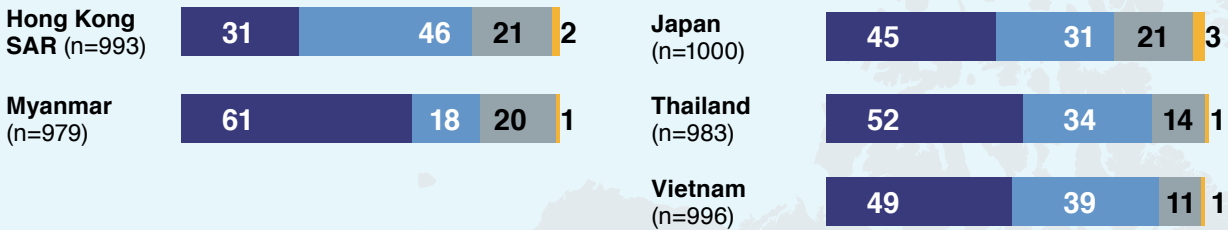
Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, 2020, GlobeScan interviewed  $n=1000$  respondents in each of the 5 markets, totaling 5,000 respondents. Respondents were randomly selected and were representative of gender and age of the online population of their respective market. In Myanmar, because it is a new market for research, the online population was skewed toward younger individuals.

Respondents were asked about their sentiments on the coronavirus outbreak in their respective country and their opinions on illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. For the purpose of this survey, 'wild animals' are defined as non-domesticated, non-livestock terrestrial animals (non-insect and non-aquatic).

# OVERVIEW OF ALL 5 SURVEYED ASIAN MARKETS

## Overall level of worry about the coronavirus outbreak

Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %



Total (5 markets) (n=4951)



**EXTREMELY WORRIED**



**VERY WORRIED**



**A BIT WORRIED**

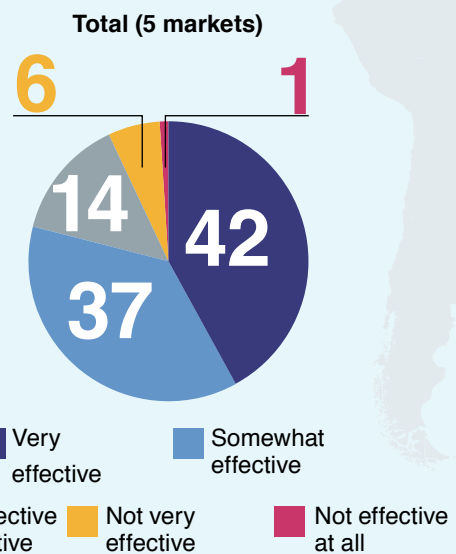
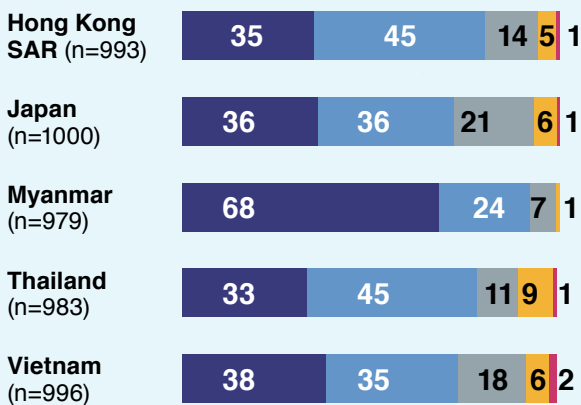


**NOT WORRIED AT ALL**

**79%**  
VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE

## Perceived effectiveness of the closure of illegal and unregulated markets where wild animals are sold, in order to prevent similar pandemics from occurring in the future

Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %



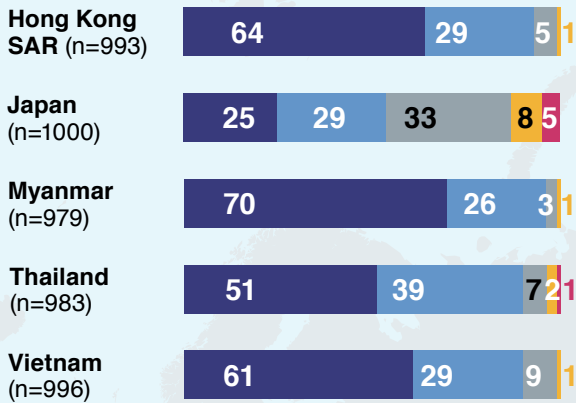


# 93%

## VERY LIKELY OR LIKELY

### Likelihood of supporting efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling animals from the wild

Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %

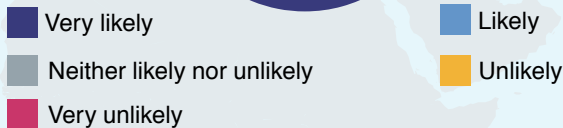
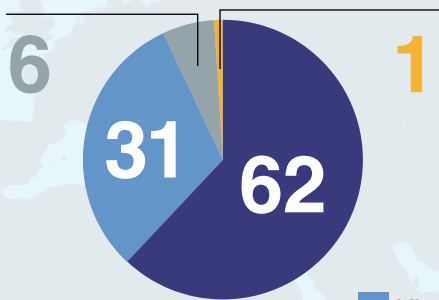


#### Note to reader:

In all markets, except for Japan, 90% or more of the people surveyed were very likely or likely to support efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife in their country. However, in Japan, 59% of the respondents reported that there are no such markets in their country. This supports WWF's research that the black market for the sale of wild meat does not exist in Japan. Therefore, this may explain why only 54% claimed that they would support such government efforts.

For this reason, the charts related to questions about the closure of illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife include only the results from the other 4 markets; we excluded Japan from this total, as it was not relevant.

Total (4 markets)

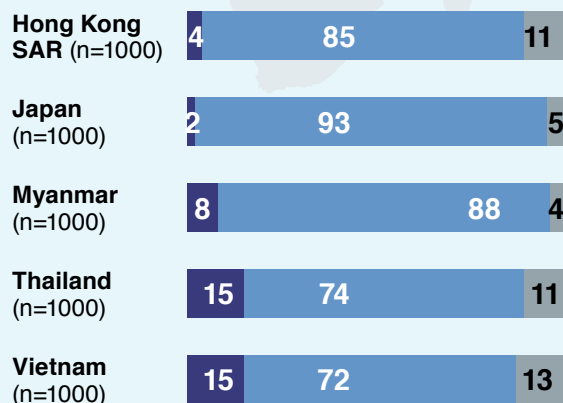


# 9%

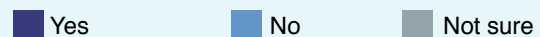
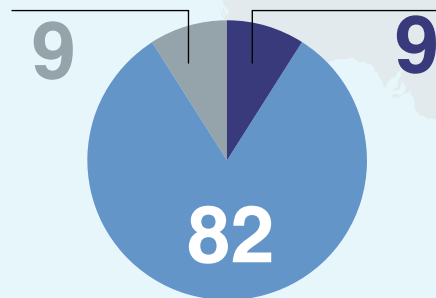
## PURCHASED

### Purchases in the past 12 months of wildlife products (made by the respondent or anyone known) in an open wildlife market

Base: All respondents, %

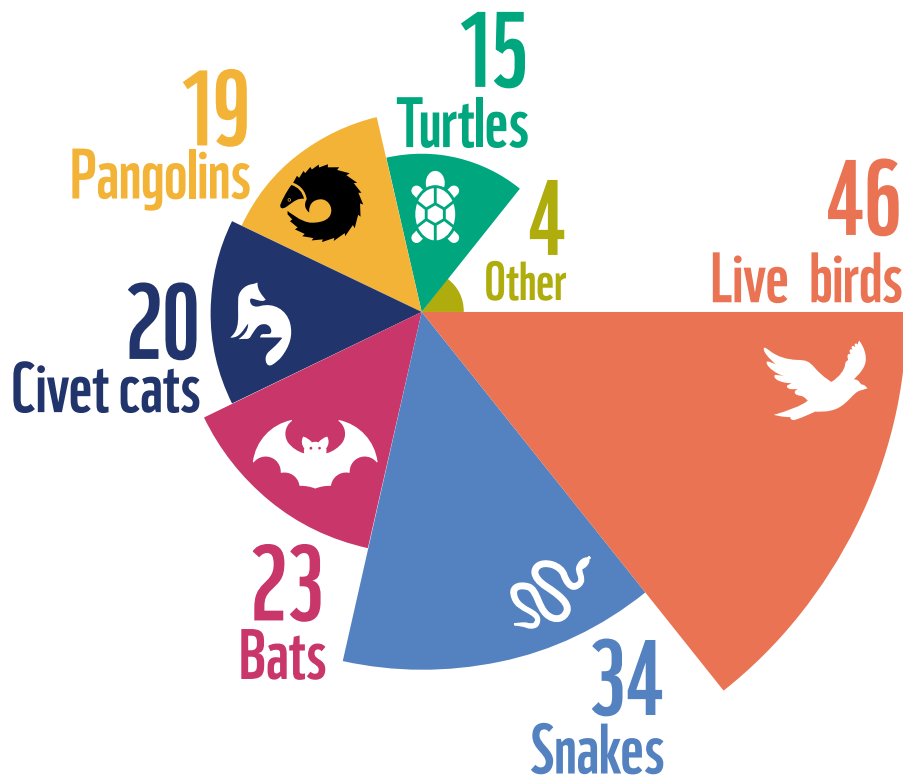


Total (5 markets)



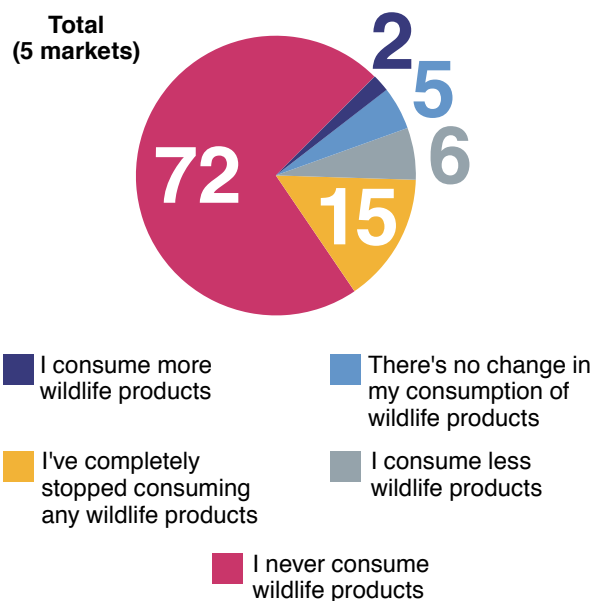
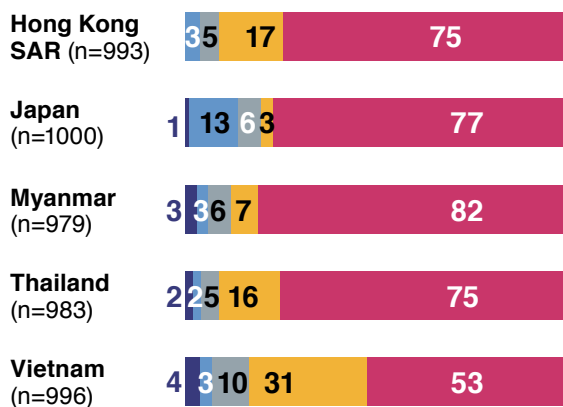
**Type of wildlife species purchased (by the respondent or someone known to them) in an open wildlife market in the past 12 months – Total 5 markets (n=443)**

Base: Buyers of wildlife products in the past 12 months, %



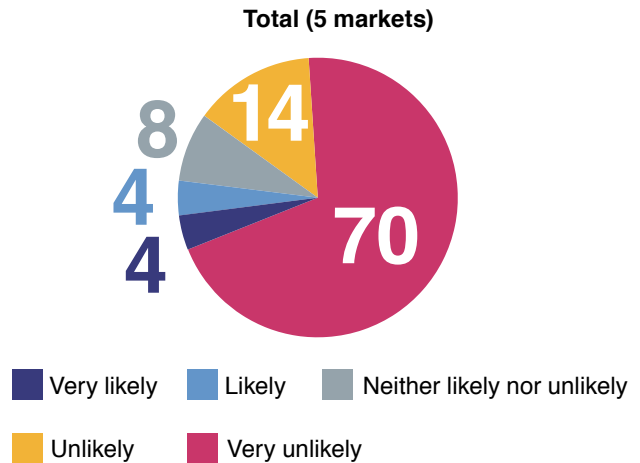
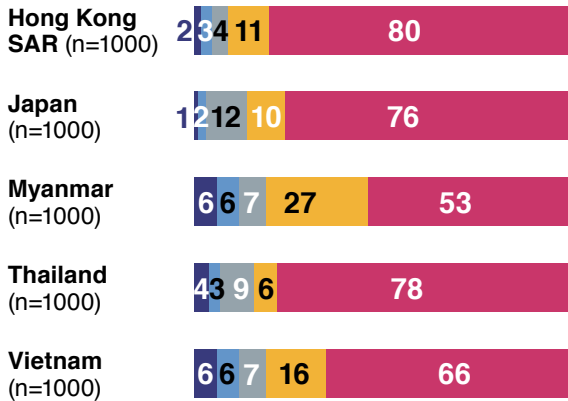
 **87%**  
**NO CONSUMPTION**

**Impact of coronavirus on consumption of wildlife products**  
Among those aware of COVID-19, %



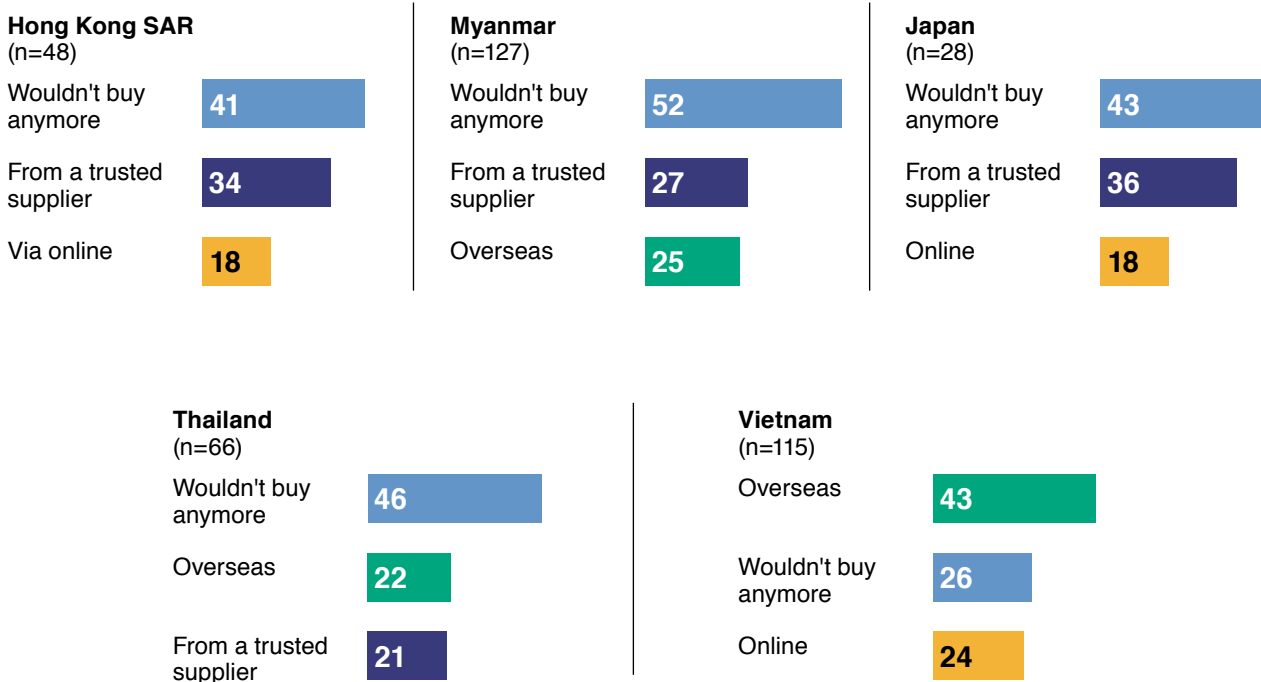
**84%**  
UNLIKELY OR VERY UNLIKELY

**Likelihood of buying wildlife products in open wildlife markets in the future**  
Among those aware of COVID-19, %



**Different channels to buy wildlife products if these wildlife markets are closed in the future (top 3 chosen)**

Base: Of those likely to purchase wildlife products in the future, %





# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS: HONG KONG SAR



94%

ARE LIKELY TO  
SUPPORT THE  
CLOSURE OF ALL  
ILLEGAL AND  
UNREGULATED  
MARKETS  
SELLING  
WILDLIFE

**78%** responded that they are extremely or very worried about the outbreak of the coronavirus. Females were more worried (81%), and people with children even more so (82%). People under the age of 41 (averaging at 81%) were found to be more worried about the coronavirus than those older than 41 (averaging at 75%).

**THE TOP 3** most important institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak were perceived to be, in ranking order: medical professionals (51%), the municipality/local government (49%) and fellow citizens (44%). Medical professionals are also the most trusted to combat the coronavirus outbreak (70%), followed by scientific/academic research institutions (49%) and the municipality/local government (32%).

**80%** believed that a closure of the illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild would prevent similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future. If no measures are taken to close these markets or to strictly regulate them, 85% claimed that they would be extremely worried or very worried that a similar pandemic outbreak could happen in the future.

**94%** were very likely or likely to support efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. They were also willing to support initiatives and efforts by: stopping eating wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (51%), convincing others not to buy/eat wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (46%) and by sharing news related to wildlife markets online via social media (42%).

**4%** claimed that they or someone they know purchased wildlife products in open wildlife markets in the past 12 months. These buyers were mostly males (69%) and aged 56+ (49%). The main wildlife species they bought were snakes (58%), civet cats (46%) and pangolins (35%).

**91%** are unlikely or very unlikely to buy wildlife products in illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild in the future.





# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS: JAPAN



54%

ARE LIKELY TO  
SUPPORT THE  
CLOSURE OF ALL  
ILLEGAL AND  
UNREGULATED  
MARKETS  
SELLING  
WILDLIFE

**76%** responded that they are extremely or very worried about the outbreak of the coronavirus. Females were more worried (81%), as well as people with children (79%). People aged 21-30 (82%) and 61 or older (81%) were more worried about the coronavirus outbreak.

**THE TOP 3** most important institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak were perceived to be, in ranking order: national government (73%), medical professionals (43%) and fellow citizens (43%). When it comes to the most trusted institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak, respondents answered, in ranking order: national government (55%), medical professionals (51%) and the municipality/local government (39%).

**72%** believed that a closure of illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild would prevent similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future. If no measures are taken to close these markets or to strictly regulate them, 65% claimed that they would be extremely worried or very worried that a similar pandemic outbreak could happen in the future.

**54%** were very likely or likely to support the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. Although this is low compared to other markets, this could be because 59% mentioned that there are no such markets in Japan. Respondents were willing to support initiatives and efforts by stopping eating wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (28%), convincing others not to buy/eat wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (27%) and by stopping visiting and buying in these markets (26%).

**2%** claimed that they or someone they know purchased wildlife products in open wildlife markets (most likely overseas) in the past 12 months, although Japan doesn't have illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. These buyers tended to be male (52%) and between 18-35 years old (47%). The main wildlife species they bought were bats (33%), snakes (24%) and turtles (19%).

**85%** are unlikely or very unlikely to buy wildlife products in illegal and unregulated markets in the future.



# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS: MYANMAR



**96%**

**ARE LIKELY TO  
SUPPORT THE  
CLOSURE OF ALL  
ILLEGAL AND  
UNREGULATED  
MARKETS  
SELLING  
WILDLIFE**

**79%** responded that they are extremely or very worried about the outbreak of the coronavirus. Females were more worried (85%), as well as people aged 41 or above (96%).

**THE TOP 3** most important institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak were perceived to be, in ranking order: national government (45%), fellow citizens (41%) and medical professionals (40%). Similarly, when it comes to the most trusted institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak, respondents answered, in ranking order: national government (41%), fellow citizens (39%), medical professionals and scientific/academic research institutions (37% each).

**91%** believed that a closure of illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild would prevent similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future. If no measures are taken to close these markets or to strictly regulate them, 83% claimed that they would be extremely worried or very worried that a similar pandemic outbreak could happen in the future.

**96%** were very likely or likely to support the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. They were also willing to support initiatives and efforts by sharing news related to wildlife markets online via social media (77%), sharing relevant campaigns online via social media (76%), stopping eating wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals and by convincing others not to buy/eat wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (75% each).

**8%** claimed that they or someone they know purchased wildlife products in open wildlife markets in the past 12 months. These buyers were mostly males (56%) and aged between 18-35 years old (64%). The main wildlife species they bought were live birds (43%), snakes (31%) and civet cats (26%).

**80%** are unlikely or very unlikely to buy wildlife products in illegal and unregulated markets in the future.



# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS: THAILAND



90%

ARE LIKELY TO  
SUPPORT THE  
CLOSURE OF ALL  
ILLEGAL AND  
UNREGULATED  
MARKETS  
SELLING  
WILDLIFE

**86%** responded that they are extremely or very worried about the outbreak of the coronavirus. Females were more worried (88%), as well as people with children (88%). People aged 40 or under (90%) were also found to be more worried about the coronavirus outbreak.

**THE TOP 3** most important institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak were perceived to be, in ranking order: national government (61%), medical professionals (52%) and fellow citizens (42%). However, when it comes to the most trusted institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak, respondents answered, in ranking order: medical professionals (65%), scientific/academic research institutions (50%) and national government (45%).

**79%** believed that a closure of illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild would prevent similar pandemic diseases from occurring in the future. If no measures are taken to close these markets or to strictly regulate them, 80% claimed that they would be extremely worried or very worried that a similar pandemic outbreak could happen in the future.

**90%** were very likely or likely to support the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets selling wildlife. They were also willing to support initiatives and efforts by no longer eating wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (62%), sharing news related to wildlife markets online via social media (57%) and by convincing others not to buy/eat wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (56%).

**15%** claimed that they or someone they know purchased wildlife products in open wildlife markets in the past 12 months. These buyers were mostly males (55%) and aged between 18-35 years old (46%). The main wildlife species they bought were live birds (59%), snakes (37%) and bats (30%).

**85%** are unlikely or very unlikely to buy wildlife products in illegal and unregulated markets in the future.



# OPINION SURVEY ON COVID-19 AND WILDLIFE TRADE IN 5 ASIAN MARKETS: VIETNAM



90%

ARE LIKELY TO  
SUPPORT THE  
CLOSURE OF ALL  
ILLEGAL AND  
UNREGULATED  
MARKETS  
SELLING  
WILDLIFE

**88%** responded that they are extremely or very worried about the outbreak of the coronavirus. Females were more worried (92%), as well as people aged 41-60 (91%).

**THE TOP 3** most important institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak were perceived to be, in ranking order: national government (51%), medical professionals (50%) and the municipality/ local government (40%). When it comes to the most trusted institutions to combat the coronavirus outbreak, respondents answered, in ranking order: medical professionals (55%), national government (52%) and United Nations (40%).

**73%** believed that a closure of illegal and unregulated markets selling animals coming from the wild would prevent similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future. And 72% believed that the same measurement for illegal and unregulated restaurants selling wildlife would contribute to prevention as well. If no measures are taken to close these markets or to strictly regulate them, 83% claimed that they would be extremely worried or very worried that a similar pandemic outbreak could happen in the future.

**90%** were very likely or likely to support the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all illegal and unregulated markets that are selling wildlife. And 91% have the same kind of support to close illegal and unregulated restaurants selling wildlife. They were also willing to support initiatives and efforts by sharing relevant campaigns online via social media (56%), stopping the consumption of wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (49%) and by convincing others not to buy/eat wildlife products and bushmeat (meat from wild/non-farmed) animals (49%).

**15%** claimed that they or someone they know purchased wildlife products in open wildlife markets in the past 12 months. These buyers were mostly males (55%) and aged between 36-45 years old (37%). The main wildlife species they bought were live birds (48%), snakes (28%) and bats (23%).

**82%** are unlikely or very unlikely to buy wildlife products in illegal and unregulated markets in the future.

# FINDINGS

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The survey found a strong understanding among respondents about the connection between wildlife and outbreaks like COVID-19.

It also found almost universal support across Southeast Asia for government action to eliminate illegal and unregulated wildlife markets. Such efforts were seen as an effective measure to help prevent similar outbreaks from happening in the future by 79% of the respondents. People said they would support the closure of these markets by not eating wildlife products (55%) and convincing others not to buy or eat wildlife products (53%), as well as by sharing relevant campaigns and news (50%) or sharing information on wildlife protection (49%).

Among those who report that they would likely buy wildlife products in open markets in the future, 41 percent say if those markets were shut down, they would not buy any wildlife products from any other channel, indicating the potential effectiveness of such deterrents.

In the event that no measures were taken to close high-risk wildlife markets, almost 8 out of 10 respondents in the 5 markets say they would be extremely worried or very worried that another similar outbreak would occur in the future.

Cracking down on illegal and unregulated wildlife trade is important to mitigate the risk of future zoonotic epidemics and safeguard people's well-being and lives. With such illegal and unregulated market closures, a sizeable downward impact on the purchase of wildlife products in the future could be expected, thereby also impacting the flows of illegal and unsustainable wildlife trade.

Unsustainable wildlife trade is the second-largest direct threat to biodiversity globally, after habitat destruction. WWF is working to bring its wildlife expertise together with that of global health experts to help stop the spread of zoonotic diseases at their source and work together as a global community to close illegal and unregulated wildlife markets.



# Opinion Survey on Covid-19 and Wildlife Trade in 5 Asian Markets

93%

likelihood of supporting governments to close all illegal and unregulated markets.

79%

perceived effectiveness of closure of markets where wild animals are sold.



9%

either purchased or know someone that purchased wildlife products in the past 12 months.

84%

unlikely to buy wildlife products in open markets again.



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