



OFFLINE AND IN THE WILD

A Progress Report
of the Coalition
to End Wildlife
Trafficking Online


TRAFFIC



ifaw

**The world's most
endangered
species are
under threat
from an
unexpected source:
the internet**





Advances in technology and access to connectivity across the world, combined with rising buying power and demand for illegal wildlife products, have increased the ease of exchange from poacher to consumer across continents. Products derived from species like elephants, pangolins and marine turtles, as well as live tiger cubs, reptiles, primates and birds for the exotic pet trade are readily available for purchase online. Buyers don't need advanced detection skills to seek out these animals, but rather can quickly find the rare and exotic for sale on widely used platforms. The scale and anonymous nature of online trafficking, which includes everchanging usernames, the security of offline chats and cloaked VPNs, means it is essential that tech companies take charge in detecting and disrupting online wildlife criminals. E-commerce, social media and tech companies can operate at an unprecedented scale, preventing or removing millions of listings of protected wildlife in collaboration with wildlife experts.

A COALITION APPROACH



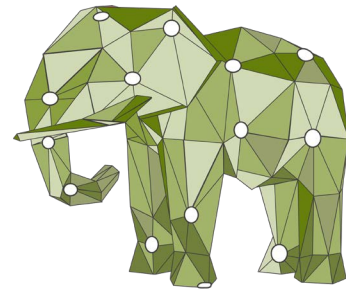
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In 2018, WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW launched the Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online with 21 of the world's biggest tech companies after years of behind-the-scenes collaborations bringing companies to the table. The Coalition brings together e-commerce, search and social media companies across the world in partnership with these three leading wildlife organizations that support this industry-wide approach to reduce wildlife trafficking online on company platforms by 80% by 2020. This bold and ambitious goal has inspired 34 global tech companies to join forces and proactively tackle the issue of illegal wildlife trade online before it becomes unstoppable. Upon joining, Coalition companies develop a confidential, platform-specific action plan in collaboration with the wildlife organizations to address the unique threats on their platform.

The trade in illegal wildlife online is constantly evolving, with sellers transitioning to different platforms, using evolving search words and deploying avoidance tactics. It is the aim of the Coalition to prevent this pop-up effect across platforms through industry collaboration, acknowledging that for wildlife, companies don't need to be limited by competitive interests.

**The Coalition
brings together
e-commerce,
search, and
social media
companies for
an industry-wide
approach to
reduce wildlife
trafficking online.**

As of March 2020, the Coalition is comprised of 34 companies including Alibaba, Artron, Baidu, Baixing, eBay, Etsy, Facebook, Google, Huaxia Collection, Hantang Collection, Instagram, Kuaishou, Kupatana, Mall for Africa, Leboncoin, letgo, Microsoft, OfferUp, OLX, Pinterest, Qyer, Rakuten, Ruby Lane, Sapo, Shengshi Collection, Sina Weibo, Sougou, Tencent, Tortoise Friends, Wen Wan Tian Xia, Zhong Hua Gu Wan, Zhongyikupai, Zhuanzhuan and 58 Group and jointly convened by WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW.



COALITION TO END
WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING ONLINE



Convened by: **TRAFFIC**  **ifaw**

34
COMPANIES

9 billion+
USER ACCOUNTS

ACTIVITIES

Coalition action plan activities are broken into six major categories:



Policy: Review and update prohibited content, community standards and ad policies to ensure that comprehensive and enforceable wildlife trade policies are in place and consistent across company platforms, aligning with the *Coalition Prohibited Wildlife Policy Framework*.



Staff Training: Roll out training materials aimed at increasing prohibited species detection capacity for enforcement staff, either in-person or via the Coalition e-learning program, called OWLET, and provide reinforcement training including updated trend information.



User Education: Educate users about the issue of wildlife trafficking and engage them in reporting suspicious listings found on their platforms.



Citizen Science: Harness the power of crowdsourcing by actively participating in and actioning the reported listings of the Coalition's Wildlife Cyber Spotter Program.



Automated Detection: Work with wildlife experts, academia and company engineers to enhance automated detection technologies such as image recognition to better detect and block prohibited species products for sale online.



Share Learning: Actively engage with the Coalition and share lessons learned in addressing wildlife trafficking online through meetings, events, newsletters and company to company dialogues. Include wildlife trafficking awareness and outreach via internal company channels to inform and inspire integrated approaches and solutions.



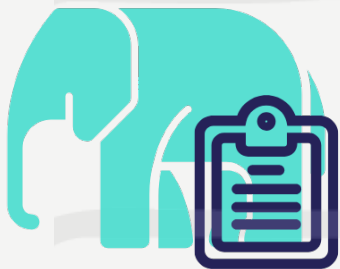
3 million+

LISTINGS REMOVED OR BLOCKED

By March 2020, Coalition companies working with WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW reported removing or blocking 3,335,381 endangered species listings from their platforms. The number of listings removed across the industry is likely significantly higher as companies are continuing to enhance their ability to measure impact. This has resulted from strengthened wildlife policies, an increase in staff ability to detect illegal wildlife products, regular monitoring and data sharing from wildlife experts, reports sent in by volunteers through the Cyber Spotter program, enhanced algorithms resulting from key search word monitoring and collation and shared learning. This figure shows direct action taken by companies and a commitment to keeping endangered wildlife off their platforms. It also demonstrates to cybercriminals that the once-unpoliced cloud-based trade routes they relied on for exploiting wildlife are now shutting down.

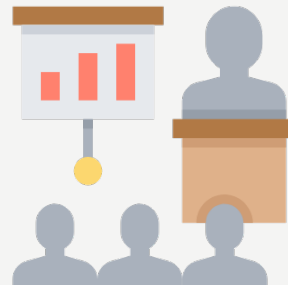
COALITION YEAR 2

by the numbers



100%

OF MEMBERS ARE ALIGNING
WITH THE COALITION
WILDLIFE POLICY



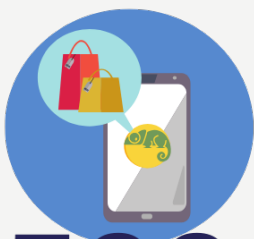
~470

STAFF TRAINED IN-PERSON
OR USING THE ONLINE
OWLET TRAINING
PLATFORM



3M+

PROHIBITED SPECIES LISTINGS
REMOVED OR BLOCKED



4,500+

ONLINE WILDLIFE
PRODUCTS FLAGGED BY
COALITION CYBER
SPOTTERS



1,170

SUSPICIOUS WILDLIFE
CODE WORDS COLLECTED
FOR DETECTION



95%

ACCURACY AMONG US-BASED
CYBER SPOTTER VOLUNTEERS

PROGRESS BY SECOND ANNIVERSARY

Harmonizing Wildlife Policies

All Coalition company partners have strong wildlife policies either in place or under development that align with the Coalition Prohibited Wildlife Policy Framework, which was created in 2016 and updated in 2017 and 2020 to ensure the latest wildlife trafficking threats are incorporated. Several partners, such as Facebook, which now bans the trade in all live animals that are not from a verified vendor, have gone beyond the Coalition policy to curb specific challenges.

Training Resource Development

A comprehensive online learning training program called OWLET was launched in English in 2018 and French in 2019 and is available to all company partners. The interactive modules aim to increase staff ability to detect products from elephants, marine turtles, pangolins, rhinos and big cats, as well as live primates, birds, reptiles and big cats involved in the exotic pet trade. This resource is now available to thousands of company enforcement staff globally and can easily be updated to reflect changes in trafficking trends as needed. Modules include images of products and common lookalikes, associated search words and visual clues to look for.

All China-based companies received in-person training for at least one enforcement staff in 2019. To date, the Coalition has trained 139 staff in-person and the OWLET program has been completed by 327 staff.

User Engagement

The dissemination of awareness materials is a critical piece of reducing wildlife trafficking online as it can inform and empower the 4.54 billion+ users of web-based platforms globally to help report endangered species products for sale. Company partners participated in key communications moments including World Elephant Day, Global Tiger Day and World Pangolin Day, calling for users to play a key role in the solution to illegal wildlife trade online.

Citizen Science Mobilization

The Coalition designed and launched the novel Wildlife Cyber Spotter Program, which is a volunteer-based citizen science initiative. Since 2017 nearly 400 volunteers in the Americas, Europe and Asia have been trained by WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW wildlife experts to detect and flag suspicious wildlife products for removal on Coalition company platforms. The Cyber Spotters have collectively flagged over 4,500 prohibited elephant, big cat, pangolin, marine turtle, and rhino products, as well as live cats, primates, birds and reptiles for sale online that have been removed in real time by company enforcement staff. US volunteers have an average accuracy of 95%, and volunteers across the globe have uncovered trends including new synthetic ivories and keywords that have been shared as early alerts to companies.

Advancing Automation

Coalition partners conduct regular monitoring of online platforms to identify emerging search words and anti-detection methodologies. Through this, a list of 1,170 search words and hashtags have been collated and shared with company members to build into automation models aiming to detect and block illegal listings.

RAISING THE PROFILE OF IWT ONLINE



The Coalition grew the visibility of the issue of wildlife trafficking online and role of the private sector in combatting it through key global fora including the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade (2018), INTERPOL/ IFAW Cyber-Enabled Wildlife Crime Workshop (2018), CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP) 18 (2019), INTERPOL Wildlife Crime Working Group (2019), First High Level Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Americas (2019), Crime Stoppers International Conference (2019) and INTERPOL's Debriefing on Operation Thunderball against Wildlife Smuggling. These events focused on catalyzing important policy changes and encouraging multi-sector collaboration with NGOs, policy makers and law enforcement.



The Coalition launched on March 7, 2018 with 21 companies. Prior to the second anniversary in March 2020, the number of partner companies have grown to 34, with representation growing into Africa, Asia and Europe.

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook banned the trade in all live animals and all products from species listed on CITES Appendix I, a critical success given the prevalence of trade on the platform globally. To encourage user reporting, Facebook and Instagram launched an animal-specific reporting pathway for users to flag prohibited species listings in real-time.

Instagram launched a hashtag pop-up alert in 2017 that educates users about illegal wildlife trade when searching for one of the ~250 search terms associated with wildlife trafficking. An update to this list is currently in process.

Pinterest designed an advisory alert for users searching for prohibited wildlife products for sale as well as a special Pinterest board featuring the work of the Coalition.

Tencent's support for law enforcement has contributed to a criminal network being uncovered and dismantled, 129 suspects arrested, and 216 live pangolins, 66kg of pangolin scales, 20 Tibetan antelope horns and a batch of other wildlife products being seized, alongside the confiscation of over 18 million Chinese yuan transaction funds in 2018. In 2019, the "Tencent 110" reporting platform of Penguin Loves Earth project initiated by Tencent received nearly 10,000 reports about illegal wildlife trade from WeChat users. A total of 2,000 WeChat accounts with prohibited wildlife products for sale were warned or shut down.

Over 328,000 **Weibo** users have already committed to not consuming illegal wildlife, with 1.4 million interactions reaching over 20.52 million exposures and 38,860 views in their Global Tiger Day messaging.

E-COMMERCE

Between 2017-2019, **eBay** removed or blocked over 265,000 listings for items prohibited under its Animal Products Policy. In that timeframe, eBay hosted Coalition trainers for an in-person training to their enforcement staff, actioned on data shared through the Coalition Cyber Spotter program and by Coalition wildlife experts, enhanced its policy and enforcement to address new trends and rolled out messaging to the eBay community for World Elephant Day and Global Tiger Day.

Since joining the Coalition, Marketplace Africa, which was created by **Mall for Africa**, has blocked 1,325 user accounts for violating wildlife policies. In Spring 2020, they will incorporate wildlife into their Africa Made Product Standards (AMPS) to ensure that sellers aren't listing products made from endangered species products.

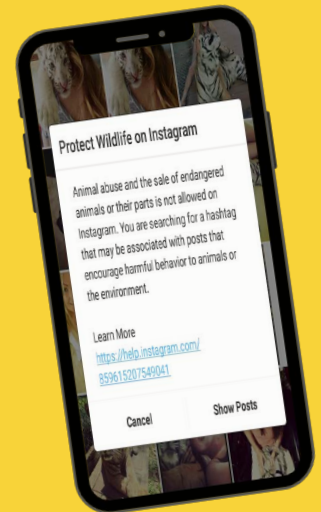
Leboncoin, a French online marketplace with 28 million users per month, has worked with the Coalition to support the implementation of its wildlife-friendly policies, rolled out an action plan and promoted a pro-conservation message to its customers. The e-training platform has been translated into French so it can be used by Leboncoin staff.

In just 10 months as a Coalition member, **letgo** removed or blocked 3,648 prohibited wildlife listings. The classifieds marketplace participated in the Cyber Spotter program and issued communications to educate users about wildlife trafficking.

Despite being one of the newest members to the Coalition, the **OLX Group** has already made headway in strengthening its policies and assigning responsibility for implementing them across its 30+ markets to a newly created staff position. Furthermore, in showing their commitment and enthusiasm for the Coalition, the OLX Group will also be hosting the Coalition's first Africa regional meeting in Cape Town, South Africa in May 2020.

Alibaba's Taobao platform has an automatic pop-up that educates users searching for prohibited species products on the impacts of trafficking, and provides an in-app interactive, virtual scenario for users to understand the issues affecting endangered species. In 2019, Alibaba's Taobao platform blocked or removed more than 1.35 million illegal wildlife trade related listings. The platform received reports of illegal wildlife trade information from 43,000 users. Taobao communications attracted 3 million clicks, educating a critical user-base about illegal wildlife trade.

Rakuten has helped elevate the conversation of wildlife trafficking online to an international stage, educating government officials, companies and the general public on the importance of a private sector approach in tackling wildlife crime, at the London Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference in 2018.



Instagram pop-up alert implemented in 2017

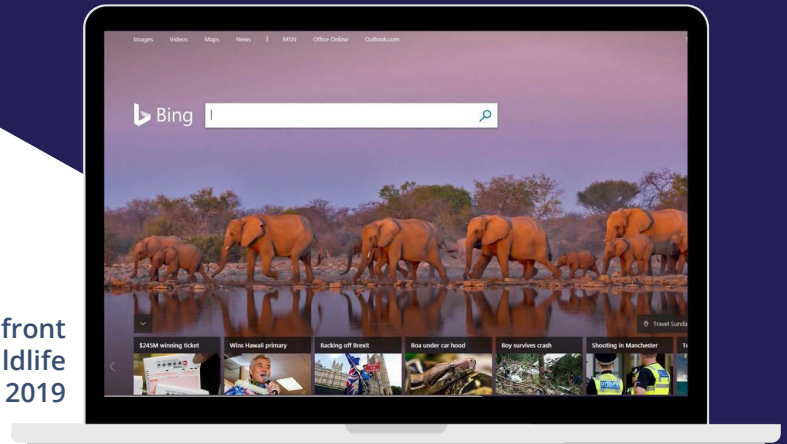


Alibaba's Taobao wildlife awareness campaign



Tencent's Penguin Loves Earth project encourages users to report prohibited wildlife

Microsoft Bing front page on World Wildlife Day 2019



SEARCH & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Baidu launched its Baidu for Biodiversity Initiative in June 2018, bringing together all major Baidu platforms to jointly tackle online wildlife trafficking. The initiative focuses on developing artificial intelligence solutions to detecting wildlife listings, including image detection. In 2019, Baidu deleted 263,001 illegal wildlife listings, blocked illegal wildlife information from transferring 1,400,000 times, permanently banned 117 Tieba user accounts and closed 68 Tieba groups.

As the original convener of the Coalition, **Google** has helped catalyze the industry to address wildlife trafficking globally, hosting events in the US and will help launch a regional Asia-Pacific hub in 2020. As pilot participants of the Cyber Spotter program, Google is testing an employee engagement extension of the program in early 2020.

Microsoft has continuously pushed for the protection of endangered species through its efforts on species identification as part of AI for Earth. On World Elephant Day, Microsoft highlighted elephants on its Bing homepage, featured stories on their sustainability and Microsoft Advertising blogs around the importance of protecting species and recapped the Coalition impact to date through social amplification. Microsoft also convened the Coalition's inaugural workshop on AI solutions to wildlife trafficking online.

Sogou launched its public education campaign featuring commonly traded endangered wildlife such as elephants, rhinos and African grey parrots. From January 1-6, 2020, the Sogou app promoted wildlife protection on its landing page, urging consumers not to buy illegal wildlife. The campaign has been viewed more than 26 million times.

2020 & BEYOND

ACHIEVING 80% REDUCTION IN ONLINE TRAFFICKING ON COMPANY PLATFORMS BY 2020

Determining a baseline for the number of illegal wildlife products online at any point in time is challenging due to the global scale of the issue, the multitude of platforms in the space of e-commerce, social media and search, the fleeting nature of listings, the changing behavior of traffickers and the continued prevalence of private, encrypted messaging and offline conversations to complete transactions. Additionally, limitations in capacity and funding prevent the extensive and frequent monitoring necessary to quantify the global availability of illegal wildlife products online. The Coalition has adopted measures that provide estimates and indications of meeting the 2020 goal of reducing online trafficking on Coalition member platforms by 80% by 2020. Despite a shifting baseline of illegal wildlife trade online, what is clearly measurable is the collective progress that tech companies have made on the Coalition's indicators of change over the past two years.

COVERING EVERY CORNER

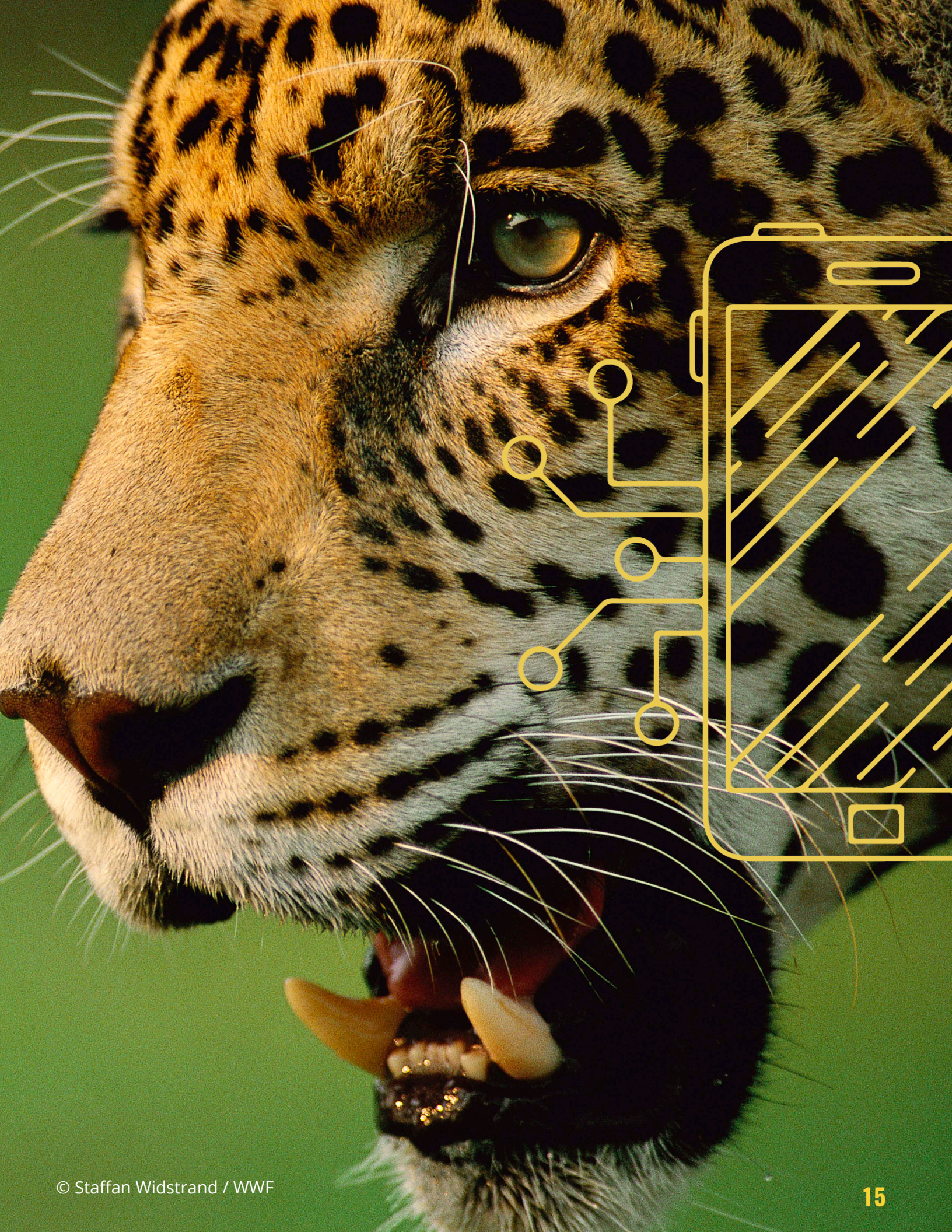
The Coalition has made great progress expanding into emerging online markets and will continue to prioritize this expansion in 2020. Regional hubs will be established in Asia Pacific and Africa in May 2020 to launch industry collaboration in countries that are not only rapidly growing in technology usage, but that also serve as critical source and demand countries for endangered species.

MOBILIZING USERS

With significant progress made to enhance internal company policies and protocols for preventing and removing illegal wildlife products, efforts will shift to target the billions of company users across critical demand and source countries to stand up against wildlife trafficking. An emphasis will be placed on empowering users to become online sentinels for wildlife, to report suspicious activity and to avoid purchasing endangered species products online in 2020 and beyond. Activating and mobilizing the general public will amplify company efforts and create a global ripple of accountability from both companies and users.

BEYOND 2020

The Coalition recognizes that wildlife traffickers will continue to avoid detection on the internet to trade illicit products, despite time-bound goals such as an 80% reduction by 2020. However, significant progress has been made towards transforming the open web from a once rampant route for traffickers into one with a higher barrier to entry and risk of being caught. WWF, TRAFFIC and IFAW are grateful to the Coalition companies and their dedicated staff who care so much about wildlife, and will find ways to help support and promote company efforts to keep prohibited wildlife off platforms.



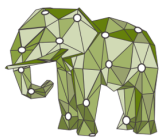
Coalition to End Wildlife Trafficking Online

In 2020 and beyond, the Coalition will continue to work with companies on refining wildlife policies as new threats emerge, expand training for enforcement staff, and provide guidance on interventions, while increasing media attention, pushing towards a global movement of users activated to report illegal products, and expanding into critical emerging online marketplaces around the world.

Available resources:

- Coalition Prohibited Wildlife Policy Framework
- Communication tools including infographics, one-pagers and an animated video
- OWLET e-learning program and supplemental training materials
- Key search words and hashtags library
- Social media awareness and outreach toolkits
- User messaging and education materials
- WILDLABS combatting wildlife cybercrime collaboration hub
- Wildlife Cyber Spotter training materials

www.endwildlifetraffickingonline.org



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