

# Killing with Keystrokes 2.0

IFAW's investigation into the European online ivory trade

# INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings of a series of two-week investigations in 2011 into the Internet trade in ivory in five European countries: France, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the UK.

IFAW has been investigating the online trade in wildlife and wildlife products since 2004. These investigations have highlighted the scale of online trade in wildlife and in particular the trade in ivory, the most commonly available product for sale on websites IFAW has surveyed.

Investigators in these most recent surveys in the five countries found nearly 700 ivory products for sale on 43 websites over the two-week period. Only two percent of the postings identified had any documentary proof to demonstrate that they complied with the law or website policies on trade in wildlife products.

The Internet is the world's largest shop front window. Always open for business and offering anonymity to sellers, the Internet provides opportunities for illegal trade, including that in wildlife. These surveys confirm the results of previous IFAW investigations that the World Wide Web continues to offer a platform for the trading of endangered species products of questionable legality.



# Contents

- Introduction ..... 2
- IFAW Investigations into Online Wildlife Trade ..... 4
- Internet Trade in Wildlife in Europe ..... 5
- The Threat to Elephant Populations from Ivory Trade ..... 6
- Methodology ..... 7
- Categories of Potential Violations ..... 7
- Findings ..... 8
- Value of the Trade ..... 9
- Levels of Potential Violations ..... 10
- Website Providers ..... 10
- The Success of eBay's Ivory Ban ..... 11, 12
- Ivory Sellers ..... 12
- Shipping ..... 12
- Ivory in Spain and Portugal: a High Value Trade ..... 13
- The Challenges of Internet Wildlife Trade for Enforcement Bodies ..... 14
- Conclusions ..... 15
- Recommendations ..... 16, 17
- Appendix I Data from Each Country ..... 18, 19
- Appendix II Recorded Data Description ..... 19

## IFAW Investigations into Online Wildlife Trade

IFAW's first investigation into Internet trade in 2004 uncovered a thriving trade in ivory on the Internet in the United Kingdom. A 2007 follow-up report focusing specifically on ivory trade on eBay found 2,275 ivory items for sale on eight national eBay websites in a single week.

IFAW's largest ever survey into Internet trade took place in 2008, spanning three months and involving investigations over a six-week period into 183 publicly accessible websites in 11 countries, looking at both wildlife product and live animal trade in species on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) – those most at threat from extinction and that are, or may be affected by trade. The findings, published in the report *Killing with Keystrokes: An Investigation of the Illegal Wildlife Trade on the World Wide Web (2008)*, recorded a staggering 7,122 online auctions, advertisements and classifieds, with an advertised value of US \$3.87m. The report also identified ivory as a major area for trade, representing more than 73% of the activity monitored.

Shortly after it was revealed in the report that 83% of the ivory items found worldwide in the investigation were for sale on eBay sites, eBay Inc. instituted a global ban on ivory sales on all its websites. IFAW's ongoing work with other major online marketplaces has resulted in Alibaba ([www.taobao.com](http://www.taobao.com)), the world's largest online business-to-business trading platform for small businesses, and the German sites [kleinanzeigen.ebay.de](http://kleinanzeigen.ebay.de) (a subsidiary of eBay), [markt.de](http://markt.de) and [hood.de](http://hood.de) all implementing a ban on all ivory products. [Kleinanzeigen.ebay.de](http://kleinanzeigen.ebay.de) has also agreed to implement a ban on living specimens listed on CITES Appendix I.

IFAW continues to work with online market providers to raise awareness of the specific problems of online trade in endangered products. This includes encouraging providers to offer more information on their sites to consumers on wildlife and the law, to improve filters and monitoring activities and to institute bans on the sale of wildlife products including ivory. IFAW is also working with some providers who have instituted strict policies to ensure that they have effective and regular enforcement of those policies – a critical factor in preventing unscrupulous buyers from continuing to ply their trade.



## Internet Trade in Wildlife in Europe

The European Union is often noted as one of the largest and most diverse markets for wildlife and wildlife products in the world.<sup>1</sup> Although *Killing with Keystrokes* in 2008 identified the United States as being responsible for more than two-thirds of the online trade in the investigation, three European countries – the UK, France and Germany – when combined, accounted for 15.2% of the total trade in CITES Appendix I species, of which 65% of items were elephant/ivory products.

This report follows on from *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* to revisit the three European countries and two new ones – Portugal and Spain – to monitor Internet trade in ivory in these regions and the effectiveness of any current marketplace restrictions on ivory sales and their enforcement.

Each country investigation set out to assess the volume and value of ivory trade on sites from *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* which were still active, as well as any new sites on which ivory trade was occurring. These investigations aimed to gather useful data for governments, enforcement officials and Internet platforms in each country to provide further understanding of the nature of Internet ivory trade there and suggest methods to help counter wildlife trade and aid further enforcement.



<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/effectiveness.pdf>

## The Threat to Elephant Populations from Ivory Trade:

International commercial trade in ivory is governed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which has 175 signatory Parties worldwide, including the five countries studied in this report.

CITES has three levels of protection for threatened species. The highest level of protection is afforded to the more than 800 species listed on Appendix I, which means they are threatened with extinction and impacted by international commercial trade. With very few exceptions, international commercial trade in Appendix I species is prohibited. Species listed on CITES Appendix II are recognised as needing protection from unsustainable trade, which is strictly monitored and regulated.

After decades of unrelenting slaughter of elephants for their tusks, all elephant populations were listed on Appendix I of CITES in 1989, which effectively banned the international commercial trade in elephant products including all parts such as ivory, skin, leather, meat and hair.

However, in 1997 and again in 2007, CITES allowed the sale of ivory stockpiles from several African countries whose elephants had been downlisted to Appendix II. The stockpiles,

which had been built up from the tusks of elephants that had died naturally in those countries, were purchased by Japan and China, both of which were designated as ivory trading partners by the CITES Standing Committee.

It can be extremely difficult to distinguish between legal and illegal ivory, and unscrupulous traders can take advantage of legal stockpile sales to launder ivory from poached elephants into the marketplace. A persistent strong global demand and rising prices for ivory provide enormous incentives for those seeking to profit from poaching, resulting in some elephant populations in Central and West Africa and Asia being pushed to the brink of extinction.

The year 2011 was one of the worst on record for large ivory seizures, according to the wildlife trade-monitoring organisation TRAFFIC, which noticed a sharp rise in illegal ivory trade since its ivory seizure data collection began 23 years ago. A conservative estimate of the weight of ivory seized in the 13 largest seizures in 2011 puts the figure at more than 23 tonnes, which probably represents some 2,500 elephants.<sup>2</sup> This is a fraction of the ivory sold illegally around the world as it is believed only a fraction of smuggled ivory is intercepted and confiscated.

## METHODOLOGY

The starting point for each country investigation was to identify specific search words (for example 'ivory', 'tusks', 'elephant tooth', etc.) to search online for ivory advertisements, as well as priority marketplaces where ivory was being traded, to be used during the subsequent two-week surveys. For countries already studied in *Killing with Keystrokes* (2008), investigators revisited sites from that investigation to assess if they were still active for ivory sales and carried out additional searches for new sites to add to the survey.

The actual investigations were conducted via two one-week snapshots in 2011, during which country investigators identified and tracked advertisements for ivory on a total of 43 websites in five European countries. Only websites readily accessible to the public and written in the language of that country were considered.

Whilst the surveys were carried out over a defined two-week period, they incorporated adverts that may have been posted for some time on some websites (particularly classified advertisements, which tend to be posted over longer periods) as well as published sales data from earlier auctions on Portuguese antique auction websites (although the investigator did not then include any advertisements for sales which took place after the

investigation was concluded). The German websites in particular revealed many ivory offers which had already been posted for weeks and sometimes months.

Investigators recorded a number of data points for each individual advertisement including the price listed, shipping range, website policy and the final sale status. It was not possible to carry out an assessment of the legality of each product. In order to do so, the item would have had to have been purchased, documents verified and the item inspected by an expert. IFAW investigators therefore employed a three-tiered system categorising listings as Likely Compliant, Possible Violation or Likely Violation. This system was first employed in *Killing with Keystrokes* (2008).

Investigators used a conservative approach in assigning a violation category to a listing: in cases of uncertainty, items were given the benefit of the doubt. If a cursory attempt was made by a seller to provide documentation (Likely Compliant), investigators accepted the permit or other documentation as valid. Where sellers were not sure of the material of their items (for example whether they were bone or ivory), these items were not included in the surveys.

## CATEGORIES OF POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS:

**Likely Compliant:** advertisements claiming legality (either under national or international law) and offering some form of supporting proof or documentation were classified as Likely Compliant so long as they were also in compliance with website policy. There was no further investigation into these claims, despite the ease with which documentation can be altered or counterfeited.

**Possible Violation:** advertisements that made a claim of legality (either under national or international law), but failed to provide any supporting proof or documentation and therefore had a greater potential for being in violation of law and/or website policy.

**Likely Violation:** advertisements containing no reference at all to legality (either under national or international law) and/or clearly contravening website policy were classified as the most serious Likely Violations.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.traffic.org/home/2011/12/29/2011-annus-horribilis-for-african-elephants-says-traffic.html>

### FINDINGS

During the two-week investigation, IFAW investigators tracked 669 online auctions and advertisements offering ivory for sale domestically and internationally in the five countries.

Products were most likely to be found in antiques, collectables, art and fashion (such as jewellery) sections of websites. Little information was provided about the provenance of items for sale, although where specified most were identified as originating in Africa or Asia.

This investigation sought to determine the volume and value of the trade in ivory products in five specific

countries. Overall these results show a high volume of trade with hundreds of potentially illegal items offered for sale on websites – predominantly in France, Portugal and Spain – over the survey period. France had the highest number of items for sale with 39% of trade, followed by Portugal with 28% and Spain with 18% of the trade. The large number of items found in the investigation of Portugal is significant because it is comparatively smaller in size and population than the two other largest ivory marketplaces studied. Germany had the least active online market, with only 6% of findings.

### VALUE of the TRADE

Spain had the highest value of offered advertised prices of items of the five countries at €231,234.00, with Portugal close behind at €211,666. The total advertised monetary value of all listings was €649,689, although investigators recorded additional advertisements that were lacking any information on prices.

Calculating an accurate value of the trade in ivory in these countries is a challenge as very few sites confirm sales and publish the final sale price of an item. The few sites that did produce reliable information about final sales included <http://cml.pt> and <http://www.pcv.pt> in Portugal and eBay sites in the UK, France and Germany.

Given minimal information on final sale prices, IFAW’s calculation of the total value of online trade in ivory in these countries is, therefore, extremely conservative. In reality, the overall value may be significantly more. The investigations recorded a total of €167,356.90 final sales on the identified sites, out of a total €649,688.90 ‘advertised’ price of items. Portugal’s results were unusual in that a final sales figure totalling €163,815.00 was reached for 129 out of the 144 sales as these details were provided by five antique auction websites surveyed, representing 98% of all final sale prices recorded in the surveys.

### Involvement in Internet Trade

Country	Rank	No. of ads	% of Findings
France	1	262	39%
Portugal	2	189	28%
Spain	3	118	18%
UK	4	61	9%
Germany	5	39	6%

### Advertised Monetary Value of all Listings

Spain	€231,234.00
Portugal	€211,666.10
France	€173,374.00
Germany	€21,875.00
UK	€11,539.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€649,688.90</b>

### Monetary Value of Final Sales Recorded

Portugal	€163,815.00
UK	€3,511.40
France	€30,50
Spain	n/a
Germany	n/a
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€167,356.90</b>

### Summary of Findings

	Number of websites tracked	Number of ivory ads	Percentage of total ads tracked	Advertised monetary value of all ads	Value of final sales recorded	Percentage of ads ‘Likely Compliant’	Percentage of ads ‘Possible Violation’	Percentage of ads ‘Likely Violation’
UK	5	61	9%	€ 11,539.80	€ 3,511.40	0	41%	59%
Portugal	13	189	28%	€ 211,666.10	€ 163,815.00	0	82%	18%
Spain	4	118	18%	€ 231,234.00	Not shown on website	0.90%	30.50%	68.60%
France	14	262	39%	€ 173,374.00	Not shown on websites except eBay: € 30,50	7.25%	5.34%	87.40%
Germany	7	39	6%	€ 21,875.00	Not shown	0	38.50%	61.50%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>€ 649,688.90</b>	<b>€ 167,356.90</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
PERCENTAGES						2%	39%	59%



## LEVELS of POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS

All countries studied in these surveys, with the exception of Portugal, had a high percentage of advertisements recorded as Likely Violations – i.e., they either had no reference to legality at all (generally, a statement of legality meant a claim by the seller that their item was an antique or had the necessary CITES permits); or were against website policy, for example, ivory items for sale on sites that have banned the sale of ivory such as eBay and hood.de. Likely Violation recordings made up 59% of the results.

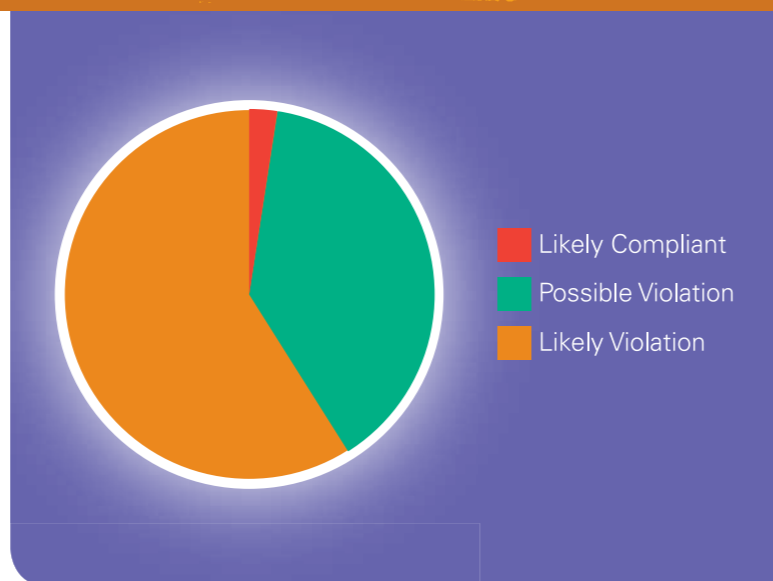
The majority of the remaining advertisements surveyed were categorised as Possible Violation (advertisements that claimed compliance but failed to provide any supporting documentation) at 39%. Portugal had the highest number of these advertisements with 82% stating that their items were antiques without any supporting proof. A mere 2% of advertisements in these surveys were considered Likely Compliant with legislation or website policies.

The UK and Germany did not record any of their items as Likely Compliant in this investigation compared to 35.1% of items in *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* for Germany and 36.48% for the UK. This is likely due to the fact that at the time of *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)*, eBay was the only company to insist on providing documentary proof of age with ivory postings, resulting in many ivory items being recorded as Likely Compliant with eBay's website policy. Now that the sale of ivory items is banned by eBay, there is obviously no requirement for documentary proof if sellers were to post an ivory item.

Portugal also did not record any items as Likely Compliant and in Spain only one seller had the correct legal documents for an item for sale at 10,000 Euros. France had the largest number of sales recorded as Likely Compliant: 7% of postings detailed necessary documentation.

## WEBSITE PROVIDERS

Many of the sites identified in these surveys had no terms and conditions that restricted sellers from posting protected wildlife specimens online or which required sellers to prove the legality of their items. Even when sites did have relevant policies, many did not appear to be



proactive in monitoring items posted on their sites.

Unlike IFAW's *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* investigation, where eBay sites were responsible for almost two-thirds of listings, in these surveys no single website was found to be responsible for a large proportion of trade.

France's [www.naturabuy.fr](http://www.naturabuy.fr) had the most items for sale, with 59 ivory postings over the two-week survey, followed by another French site [www.marche.fr](http://www.marche.fr) with 52 items for sale. Although the latter site has no published policy on the sale of wildlife products, naturabuy.fr clearly does not enforce its policy of prohibiting sales of animals 'which are prohibited or regulated on French territory'.

Three out of the four Spanish websites offered a significant number of items for sale. The largest marketplace ([www.segundamano.es](http://www.segundamano.es)), at 45 postings, revealed a shocking lack of enforcement of company policy. Though the site bans the sale of protected species and any species that require sales permits unless the seller states clearly the ownership of such documents within the advertisement, only one seller managed to comply. A large number of postings were also found on two Spanish sites with no policy on the sale of wild animal products, with 41 advertisements found on [www.milanuncios.com](http://www.milanuncios.com) and 28 on [www.mundoanuncio.com](http://www.mundoanuncio.com).

The investigation in Portugal also identified several websites with a large number of items for sale. In particular, these were antique auction websites which promote offline auctions to take place at that provider's retail outlet and where buyers can bid for online ivory items by email, phone or completing an 'Absentee bid form'. The auction site with the highest volume of items

was [www.sdomingos.com.pt](http://www.sdomingos.com.pt) with 44 items for sale followed by [www.pcv.pt](http://www.pcv.pt) with 35 items and [www.cml.pt](http://www.cml.pt) with 24 items. None of these sites have a published policy on the sale of wildlife products or ivory specifically but all are registered with a Portuguese National CITES register. IFAW investigators in Portugal corresponded in 2010 with the owners of [www.cml.pt](http://www.cml.pt). They stated that they held CITES permits for all the items they sell and that they would adopt a more transparent policy regarding CITES and legalisation for buyers in the future. However, although the site has a note at the end of each PDF auction catalogue that buyers can download, stating that they possess the required permits for listing items containing CITES specimens, no further action has been taken to highlight this issue to buyers on the website itself.

Other prominent sites for ivory sales in Portugal included the classifieds site [www.custojusto.pt](http://www.custojusto.pt) in Portugal with 22 items for sale and an online marketplace similar to eBay in Portugal, [www.leiloes.net](http://www.leiloes.net) which had 25 items for sale. After IFAW shared the results of this survey, leiloes.net stated that it would introduce an ivory ban but has not done so to date; ivory is still sold openly on the site.

eBay.co.uk offered the highest number of items for sale in the UK with 39, although in a significant proportion of advertisements, sellers used misleading language to evade enforcement of the site's ivory sales ban (see opposite).

The largest number of postings found in Germany were on the online marketplace [www.quoka.de](http://www.quoka.de) with 21 items for sale, a site IFAW had not surveyed or previously contacted. At the time of the survey, quoka.de had no policy on the sale of wildlife products but has since instituted a ban on ivory sales. Germany, as also documented in *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)*, is amongst the most highly regulated marketplaces surveyed, thanks to IFAW encouraging these sites to adopt ivory and wildlife product bans. Five of the seven sites surveyed have strict policies banning ivory sales or permitting them only if they have the correct documentation. These kinds of policies explain why German sites hosted the lowest number of sales. Two of the five sites studied in the UK also prohibited the sale of ivory products (eBay and [www.gumtree.com](http://www.gumtree.com)).

Only five of the 14 French websites made any reference to wildlife legislation. eBay.fr and [www.priceminister.com](http://www.priceminister.com) specifically prohibited ivory sales (although four items were still found on each site). In Spain, only one

site's policy referenced wildlife products and in Portugal only three of the eight online marketplaces on which the public can sell items directly to buyers had any reference to wildlife legislation.

IFAW's findings demonstrate that where websites do have a policy on protected species in place and these are enforced, ivory postings are much reduced. However, high numbers of ivory items can still be found on sites which have published policies on wildlife products but which do not put in place strict implementation and enforcement of those policies, deferring responsibility instead to the buyers and sellers, or which rely on voluntary user reports of suspicious listings. These sites, as well as those that make no restrictions on the sale of wild animal specimens continue to facilitate potential illegal trade in ivory, either for sellers ignorant about the laws restricting ivory sales or for traders deliberately flouting the law with little chance of detection.

## The Success of eBay's Ivory Ban

eBay Inc's 2009 ban on ivory sales on its sites followed IFAW's largest investigation into illegal wildlife trade on its platforms. The current surveys reveal that the company's ban has had a significant impact on the level of ivory sales found on eBay sites. Across the five countries, eBay advertisements represent just 6.41% of postings as opposed to 83% in the *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* investigation.

Most striking of all was Germany's eBay.de site, on which investigators found no ivory items for sale, compared to 39 adverts recorded in the earlier investigation. Only four ivory adverts were found on eBay.fr, down from 192 listings in *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)*.

In comparison, the UK eBay site still offered a significant number of ivory postings – 39 listings in total, but down to 20 from an average of 60 items a week during the *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* investigation. However, many of these new postings were from sellers using similar techniques to evade eBay enforcement whilst posting ivory items online. Examples included adverts for 'ox bone' or 'faux ivory' that indicated their items were elephant ivory by selecting ivory as the item's primary material; by using phrases such as 'ivory (real)' in the body of the advertisement; or by drawing extra attention to the words 'faux' and 'ivory' through the

use of italics, asterisks, colour, capital letters, etc. Often this was coupled with phrases to imply that the material was ivory, e.g., 'being cold to the touch' and 'having clear shreger lines'.

Apart from the attempts of certain traders to circumvent eBay's strict policy, the ban on ivory postings in the UK has eliminated the large multiple sellers of ivory from *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* (one seller, for example, had 87 items for sale over a six-week period) who either no longer have a presence on the site or are selling items other than ivory.

IFAW raised the above findings with eBay on completion of the survey. eBay agreed that items were in violation of its policy and has used these results to develop and improve mechanisms to ensure effective enforcement of its ivory ban and to continue training agents on the latest methods employed by sellers to circumvent the site's filters.

IFAW continues to maintain regular contact with eBay staff to highlight ongoing issues so that eBay can update internal policies and guidelines. IFAW is also encouraging members of the public to directly report any suspicious items to eBay.

The success of the eBay ban may be pushing sellers to other national websites with less strict policies or inadequate enforcement. In the UK, reduction in the number of ivory sales on eBay has taken place alongside a corresponding rise in the sale of items on the second biggest site for findings in this survey – <http://uk.eBid.com> – which had 13 listings as opposed to only one in *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)*. Uk.eBid.com does not appear to enforce its site policy that prohibits items including 'Live or stuffed animals, pets, livestock or animal body parts, skins, pelts'. In Germany, investigators identified a new site [www.quoka.de](http://www.quoka.de) for ivory postings and found 21 advertisements for ivory – the largest marketplace in their survey. Since sharing the results of this survey with the company, quoka.de has implemented a ban on ivory products and is working to improve filters to prevent any further sales.

## IVORY SELLERS

Many of the sellers in this investigation were based in the particular country being surveyed. As far as investigators could determine from information provided, all German, Spanish and Portuguese sellers were based in the countries of investigation. In France, all but six were located in the country, with the remainder in China, Belgium and other European countries. The UK had the most overseas sellers with 10 out of 46 in total, mainly based in the USA.

Many of the sellers were individuals selling single ivory items who may have been unaware of the law governing ivory sales. France had 29 out of 262 vendors with multiple items for sale (11%) and the UK had eight out of 46 (17%). These are notable differences from the *Killing with Keystrokes (2008)* findings, which recorded a significant number of sellers with multiple ivory items for sale on eBay at any given time. On the non-auction sites, Portugal had eight sellers with multiple items for sale out of 51 vendors (16%). On the antique auction websites, which represented 60% of Portuguese sales, it was impossible to identify the traders of each item in a particular auction.<sup>3</sup>

Details provided by sellers to identify themselves in their advertisements varied from seemingly genuine personal or business names to nicknames or, on many sites, simply a contact email with no name or seller ID. The relative anonymity offered by some sites in Spain, France and Germany – and the impossibility of verifying any of the identification details provided by sellers on these sites – provides further opportunities for 'behind the scenes' transactions of a potential illegal nature.

## SHIPPING

Where identified, a fifth (142 out of 669) of postings offered international shipping. Although European Commission Regulations allow trade in worked ivory antiques in the European Union, as long as sellers are able to provide evidence of antiquity if asked, the relevant import and export permits are required for trade outside the region. Without strict monitoring of online ivory sales by platform owners or authorities, ivory products can be traded around the world. IFAW's Portugal investigator, for example, found items on one site being shipped to Brazil. Many of the antique auction websites identified in Portugal offered international shipping to buyers who could bid remotely from anywhere in the world in any auction.

<sup>3</sup> Where it was possible to identify sellers with more than one posting the UK had one seller with six items for sale; the only seller with multiple items for sale in Germany had eight items; France had three sellers with five or more items for sale and Portugal had two individuals with five items for sale.

## Ivory in Spain & Portugal: a High Value Trade

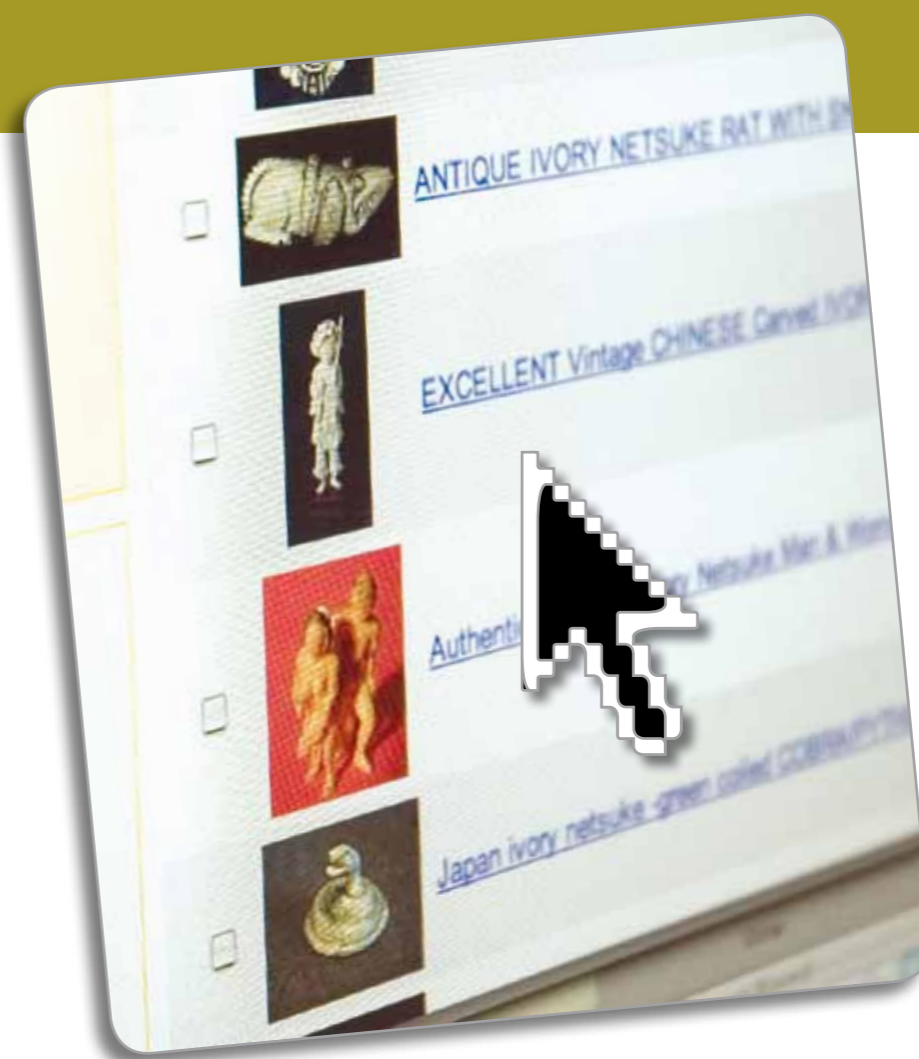
A 17th Century religious artefact priced at €50,000 in Portugal was the most expensive item found for sale in the survey. Portuguese investigators also found a Chinese pagoda sculpture for sale at €30,000, with no claim of antiquity and no relevant documentation offered. Where it was possible to record final sale prices, of 59 sales in Portugal, 17 items (30%) had a final sale price equal to or over 2,000 Euros.

Spain had the second highest priced item at €27,000 - a large, intricately carved ivory piece - as well as several other high-value items ranging from 8,000 to 12,000 Euros. With the highest overall monetary value of advertisements at €231,234, Spain was the most lucrative country for trade, particularly as the average asking price for ivory in the advertisements found was just shy of €2,000 each.

Both Spanish and Portuguese investigators found whole tusks for sale on websites without any reference to sales

certificates. Whole uncarved ivory tusks are classified as 'raw' or 'unworked' and therefore would require an internal trade certificate from the relevant CITES Management Authority for commercial use. The UK Management Authority no longer issues trade certificates for whole unworked tusks as this 'would be inconsistent with the aim of preventing international trade'.<sup>4</sup>

Portuguese investigators also noted a new trend: sellers placing advertisements seeking to buy antique ivory items, with eight adverts found at the classifieds site [www.custojusto.pt](http://www.custojusto.pt). One advertiser on the site was looking to buy hunt trophies and ivory, and made no reference to the legality of the items being sought.



<sup>4</sup> <http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/cites/cites-species/strictermeasures.html>

## The Challenges of Internet Wildlife Trade for Enforcement Bodies

National and international laws and regulations governing trade in endangered species are often complex, differ from country to country and can be difficult to interpret. Many of these laws were created before the existence of the World Wide Web, therefore, when applied to the Internet, they are often insufficient to deal with a vast, borderless, global electronic traffic in wild animal specimens. This new reality poses new challenges to enforcement bodies and legislators.

Trade in ivory within the European Union is governed through the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations that implement CITES and which are the basis for national legislation in each member state. Trade in endangered species covered by the Regulations is controlled through sale certificates, but the Regulations also allow for trade without permits in antique ivory, defined essentially as worked specimens that were acquired more than 50 years before the Regulations came into effect (June 1947), as long as the vendor is able to provide evidence of the age of the item upon request.

However, there is no standardised documentation or definitive list of what is acceptable for sellers to use to prove that a piece is pre-1947, opening up potential abuse for a trader to forge his or her own proof, particularly if the sale is being made online.

An additional challenge for enforcers attempting to assess whether an item is a genuine antique is the lack of any legal requirements for traders or website providers to prove an item for sale online is legal when it is posted. With ivory, for example, in the majority of cases IFAW witnessed in this survey, paperwork documenting the age of an ivory item was not posted alongside the advertisements; and even when paperwork was provided, it was not easy to assess whether that documentation was valid. Further challenges arise for sites that have

prohibited ivory sales when traders seek to evade enforcement by disguising their ivory products under other names or deliberately misspelling the word ivory.

A lack of effective legal controls, combined with the relative anonymity of transactions, the range of trading opportunities offered via the Internet, and hundreds of ivory items sold each week in Europe, make online policing extremely difficult. The result is that traders are able to sell illegal items with a low chance of detection and prosecution.

As well as closing legal loopholes to prevent potentially illegal ivory from entering the market, IFAW believes each country studied in this report should review and revise its national legislation to address the specific problems of online trade in ivory. The Czech Republic is leading the way in Europe in tackling wildlife crime online by instituting improved legislation which recognises the unique nature of the Internet and Internet-based technologies. The revised law puts the onus on sellers to prove their wildlife product is legal. Sellers are required to provide access to copies of relevant documentation and inform buyers of their obligations under wildlife crime legislation. In addition, website owners or operators must ensure that this information is made public for each item and to remove postings which fail to comply with these rules.

The Czech Republic is working towards requiring online wildlife traders to provide links to e-permits for all CITES documents in order to avoid the fraudulent use of scanned paper documents in Internet sales – an activity IFAW investigators witnessed in the UK in the Killing with Keystrokes (2008) investigation. The need for e-permits is widely acknowledged at a global level and steps to develop this in order to prevent fraud are welcomed by IFAW.



## CONCLUSIONS

This new series of European surveys reinforces the findings of a long line of IFAW investigations into illegal wildlife trade on the Internet which confirm that a significant quantity of ivory items of questionable legality



is for sale on the Internet. The two additional countries studied, Portugal and Spain, represent new areas of concern because of high volumes and high values of trade in ivory, along with France, the largest marketplace in this study.

Over the two-week snapshots of five countries, this investigation revealed that a mere two percent of the 669 postings offering ivory (priced at €649,689) recorded by IFAW were Likely Compliant with legislation or website policy.

Progress has been made since IFAW first set out to investigate online wildlife trade: we now know much more about the nature and scale of the trade and can draw some conclusions about its value. Enforcers are much more aware of the problems of online trade in protected species and the issue is now being considered by CITES. Some governments are now providing

more guidelines for consumers on protecting wildlife. Some web providers such as eBay have implemented strict policies on wildlife trade and banned ivory sales, with positive results when these bans are followed up with rigorous enforcement.

Although websites such as eBay are to be applauded for these actions, other Internet providers identified in this report continue to act as conduits for unregulated and, in the main, undocumented trade in ivory items of dubious age and provenance. This state of affairs may be caused by a lack of understanding and knowledge about existing legislation and the negative impacts of trade on endangered wildlife or by not committing adequate resources required to enforce policies.

Over half the websites surveyed in this investigation had no policies on the sale of wild animal products or guidance on legislation for consumers – often resulting in a large number of ivory sales. However, IFAW's findings demonstrate that even when sites did have a policy restricting the sale of endangered wildlife specimens, these alone did not necessarily lead to the eradication of potential illegal trade. Whilst the eBay ivory ban has been effective in reducing the number of ivory items for sale (most specifically in Germany where no ivory items were found), other examples reveal a lack of enforcement of site policies. These results show that only a combination of a clear policy prohibiting ivory sales and efficient enforcement of that policy will have any serious impact on the number of suspect items for sale online.

The introduction and enforcement of strict policies on regulating ivory sales by website providers requires support from improved legislation within the EU to crack down on potential illegal online trade in ivory. IFAW welcomes the robust approach the Czech Republic is taking to tackle the illicit trade in wildlife products on the Internet and encourages the countries featured in this report to follow suit.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### IFAW urges all CITES parties to:

- Review current national legislation governing the online trade in wildlife products and, where necessary, adopt strengthened legislation which places a legal responsibility on those seeking to sell wildlife products online to provide access to relevant documentation for their products and to inform buyers of their obligations under wildlife crime legislation. Such legislation would also require website owners or operators to ensure that this information is made public for each item for sale on their sites.
- Provide funding and enforcement support to INTERPOL for investigations into the illegal online trade in wildlife and their products.
- Ensure the enforcement capacity necessary to guarantee the widest compliance with legislation and policies.

### IFAW urges all enforcement agencies to:

- Investigate the illegal online trade in ivory and other wildlife products and coordinate enforcement efforts with agencies around the globe through INTERPOL and other avenues.
- Give a higher priority to the trade in ivory and other CITES-listed species on the Internet and make available sufficient enforcement expertise and capacity (trained and equipped staff) to ensure compliance with legislation and policies at a national level.

### IFAW urges all website owners to:

- Institute a total ban on ivory sales on their sites to prevent illegal wildlife trade from occurring on them.
- Actively monitor listings of all wildlife items and develop new filters and enforcement guidelines to prevent sellers from evading policies and to enable effective enforcement of industry bans.
- Support legislation that requires sellers to provide evidence of legality when selling ivory items online and which applies to all online providers.

### IFAW urges all buyers and sellers to:

- Ensure that each advertisement for the sale of a wildlife specimen displays documented evidence proving the legality of that specific product.
- Report suspicious advertisements to the marketplace provider and to the enforcement authorities responsible for that site's jurisdiction.

## Appendix 1 Data From Each Country

### Portugal

Website	Sales	Percentage of Total
www.aqueduto.pt	6	3%
www.cml.pt	24	5.9%
www.coisas.com	12	5.9%
www.custojusto.pt	22	10.8%
www.grandmercado.pt	3	1.5%
www.leiloes.net	25	12.3%
www.mercadolivre.pt	0	0
www.miau.pt	11	5.4%
www.pcv.pt	35	17.2%
www.ocasio.pt	4	2%
www.olx.pt	4	2
www.sdomingos.com.pt	44	21.7%
www.soaresmendonca.pt	13	6.4%
Violations	Sales	Percentage of Total
Likely Compliant	0	0
Potential Violation	155	82%
Likely Violation	34	18%
Value		
Total Final Sales	211.666,10€	
Total Advertised Prices	163.815,00€	

### France

Website	Sales	Percentage of Total
Naturabuy.fr	59	22.52%
Marche.fr	52	19.84%
Mes-occasions.com	31	11.83%
Leboncoin.fr	23	8.78%
Toutypasse.com	22	8.40%
Olx.fr	21	8.01%
Vivastreet.fr	18	6.87%
Liveneq.com	11	4.2%
Topannonces.fr	8	3.05%
Paruvenu.fr	7	2.67%
Priceminister.com	4	1.53%
Ebay.fr	4	1.53%
Ebid.net	1	0.38%
Antique-objetsdart.com	1	0.38%
Violations	Sales	Percentage of Total
Likely Compliant	19	7.25%
Potential Violation	14	5.34%
Likely Violation	229	87.4%
Value		
Total Final Sales	\$28,719.45	
Total Advertised Prices	\$383,149.98	

NB: Discrepancies among total numbers found on each website detailed above and opposite and total numbers found overall are the result of postings found on multiple websites but only counted once in the overall totals.

### United Kingdom

Website	Sales	Percentage of Total
www.ebay.co.uk	39	63.93%
http://uk.ebid.net	13	21.31%
www.preloved.co.uk	4	6.56%
www.gumtree.com	3	4.92%
www.vivastreet.co.uk	2	3.28%
Violations	Sales	Percentage of Total
Likely Compliant	0	0%
Potential Violation	25	41%
Likely Violation	36	59%
Value		
Total Final Sales	\$28,719.45	
Total Advertised Prices	\$383,149.98	

### Germany

Website	Sales	Percentage of Total
http://kleinanzeigen.ebay.de	14	33.33%
www.Markt.de	4	9.52%
www.Hood.de	1	2.38%
www.Kalaydo.de	1	2.38%
www.quoka.de	21	50%
Violations	Sales	Percentage of Total
Likely Compliant	0	0
Potential Violation	15	38.5%
Likely Violation	24	61.5%
Value		
Total Final Sales	0	
Total Advertised Prices	€ 21.875	

### Spain

Website	Sales	Percentage of Total
www.mundoanuncio.com	28	23.73%
www.milanuncios.com	41	34.75
www.segundamano.es	45	38.14%
www.oxl.es	4	3.39%
Violations	Sales	Percentage of Total
Likely Compliant	1	1%
Potential Violation	36	30%
Likely Violation	81	69%
Value		
Total Final Sales	0	
Total Advertised Prices	231,234 Euros	

## Appendix II Recorded Data Description

Investigators collected the following data points on each wildlife advertisement throughout the survey:

- **Advertised Species:** Species of animal or product offered for sale.
- **Advertised/Buy it Now:** Asking price of the product offered for sale. On eBay pages, the "Buy it Now" price (if applicable).
- **Annotation/Advertisement Number:** If a unique advertisement number was provided (e.g., eBay auction number), it was recorded.
- **Country of Origin:** Country in which the wildlife product originated, if disclosed.
- **Current Bid:** On auction sites, the current level to which the product had been bid was recorded.
- **Date of Survey**
- **Final Sale Price:** When available, investigators recorded what the tracked item sold for. Only those items which actually reached final sale, having satisfied any reserve price requirements, were recorded.
- **Level of Potential Violation:** Investigators used a three-tier violation rating system. Likely Compliant rating was for listings that claimed the item for sale satisfied applicable laws or website policy and provided any form of documentation or proof to support that claim. In a Possible Violation, the seller claimed the product satisfied applicable laws and / or website policy but offered no supporting proof. A Likely Violation did not make a claim of legality or compliance with website policy.
- **Location of Seller:** The country in which the seller was located.
- **Quantity**
- **Seller ID:** Any form of identification attached to the seller, from an eBay user ID to a voluntarily disclosed name and contact information.
- **Shipping Range:** The offered shipping range, either domestic or worldwide.
- **Website Address**



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