



WORLD
PARROT
TRUST

ABOUT WPT

As an international leader in parrot conservation and welfare efforts, the World Parrot Trust has aided more than 80 species in 43 countries, returning thousands of parrots to the wild and protecting millions more from the threat of extinction.

MAIN OFFICE

World Parrot Trust
Glanmor House
Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 4HB
UNITED KINGDOM
+44 (0) 1736 751026
uk@parrots.org
www.parrots.org

MEDIA CONTACTS

World Parrot Trust
Dr. Rowan O. Martin
Director, Africa Programme
rmartin@parrots.org
+44 (0) 1736 751026
Twitter: @ro_martin

Alliance to Counter Crime Online
Gretchen Peters
Founder ACCO and
Executive Director of CINTOC
gretchen.peters@cintoc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

Conservationists call on G7 leaders to take coordinated action on the online wildlife trade

10th June 2021 – (CORNWALL, UK): Ahead of the G7 Summit in Cornwall, taking place on the 11th-13th June, conservationists from the World Parrot Trust (WPT) met with UK Secretary of State for the Environment George Eustice MP, to encourage G7 leaders to take action on the online wildlife trade.

Visiting Paradise Park (home of the World Parrot Trust) located a few miles from Carbis bay, Eustice heard how the global wildlife trade is devastating populations of some of the world's rarest parrots and is a ticking time bomb for the emergence of new zoonotic diseases. In a communiqué on *Climate and Environment* released ahead of the summit, the G7 pledged to collaborate to prevent and combat existing and emerging zoonotic threats and commit to strengthening international cooperation to tackle illegal wildlife trade. WPT's trade experts explained how online platforms have "turbo-charged" the global wildlife trade and why coordinated action to regulate online environment is critical to these efforts.

Alisa Davies, Wildlife Trade Specialist of the World Parrot Trust, said "social media has provided unparalleled opportunities for wildlife traders. Platforms such as Facebook offer the perfect toolbox for traffickers, with a mix of public and private communication channels providing means to evade law enforcement while reaching millions of potential customers around the world. What's most concerning is that algorithms designed to connect people are amplifying the trade, recommending connections to illegal and harmful content".

Dr. Rowan Martin, Director of the World Parrot Trust's Africa Conservation Programme, explained why regulation is necessary. "Despite enormous efforts from conservation groups, tech companies like Facebook are still not treating wildlife trade as an urgent matter. Anyone can go online today and find endangered species being openly offered for sale within minutes. What is needed is legislation requiring platforms to have a 'duty of care' to their users to do all they can to rid their platforms of illicit content and activity."

The problem of illicit sales is not just limited to wildlife. The Alliance to Combat Crime Online ACCO, which represents a range of experts and organisations working to address online harms, highlighted this in a letter to G7 Digital and Technology ministers delivered during the visit. The ACCO implored G7 countries to work towards harmonizing laws governing illicit activity in cyberspace in order to respond to the rising tide of illicit activity on surface, deep and dark web platforms. The letter called for regulation on tech firms to legislate that algorithms and other products they develop work to limit illicit activity - rather than amplify it. It further asked G7 ministers to take into account the impacts cybercrime is having on endangered flora and fauna.

The G7 summit provides an enormous opportunity to highlight this issue to world leaders and to showcase the UK's leadership role in addressing illegal wildlife trade from the 2018 London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, DEFRA's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund to the United for Wildlife Transport and Financial Taskforces spearheaded by the Duke of Cambridge and the Royal Foundation.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- Photos to accompany this release are available [here](#).
- The letter from the ACCO to Digital and Technology ministers is available [here](#).
- A technical briefing delivered to the Secretary of State for the Environment is available [here](#).
- A 2020 study by ACCO “Two clicks away: wildlife sales on facebook”, found almost a third of wildlife pages discovered by researchers were suggested to them through Facebook’s “Related Pages” feature. Many of these pages remained active after 6 months. Those that were removed were predominantly in English with very few pages removed in other languages such as Arabic and Vietnamese. The study can be downloaded [here](#).
- Additional materials and articles on the wildlife trade and social media are available [here](#).
- The World Parrot Trust, founded at Paradise Park in Hayle, Cornwall, a few miles from Carbis bay, is an international conservation organisation that has been protecting parrots around the world for more than 30 years. Parrots are among the most threatened of all groups of birds in no small part due to their popularity as pets.
- The World Parrot Trust works closely with partner organisations working on online wildlife trade around the world through the Alliance to Counter Crime Online and the Global Initiative on Transnational Organised Crime.