

AN OVERVIEW OF SEIZURES OF  
**CITES-LISTED  
WILDLIFE IN THE  
EUROPEAN UNION**

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019



**TRAFFIC**  
the wildlife trade monitoring network

Compiled by TRAFFIC for the European Commission  
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# OVERVIEW

## SEIZURE RECORDS AND TOP COMMODITIES SEIZED

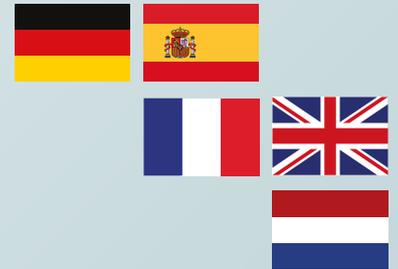


**6441**

seizure records reported by EU Member States in 2019 compared to 6012 in 2018

**73%**

of these were reported by Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Spain



The main commodity types seized in the EU based on no. of records in 2019 were:



## REPORTED SEIZURE AND TRADE VALUES

The reported value of illegal wildlife trade in the EU was a minimum of

**€4.7 MILLION**



**€2.4 MILLION**  
in 2018

**17%**

(1104 seizure records) reported an estimated value of commodities seized in 2019

## DESTINATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF SEIZURES



**4691**

seizure records had countries / territories of destination reported



**4347**

(67%) were en route to EU Member States

**344**

seizure records (ca. 5%) were destined for non-EU countries/territories, with mainland China the leading destination

In 2019, the point of seizure breakdown was reported as:

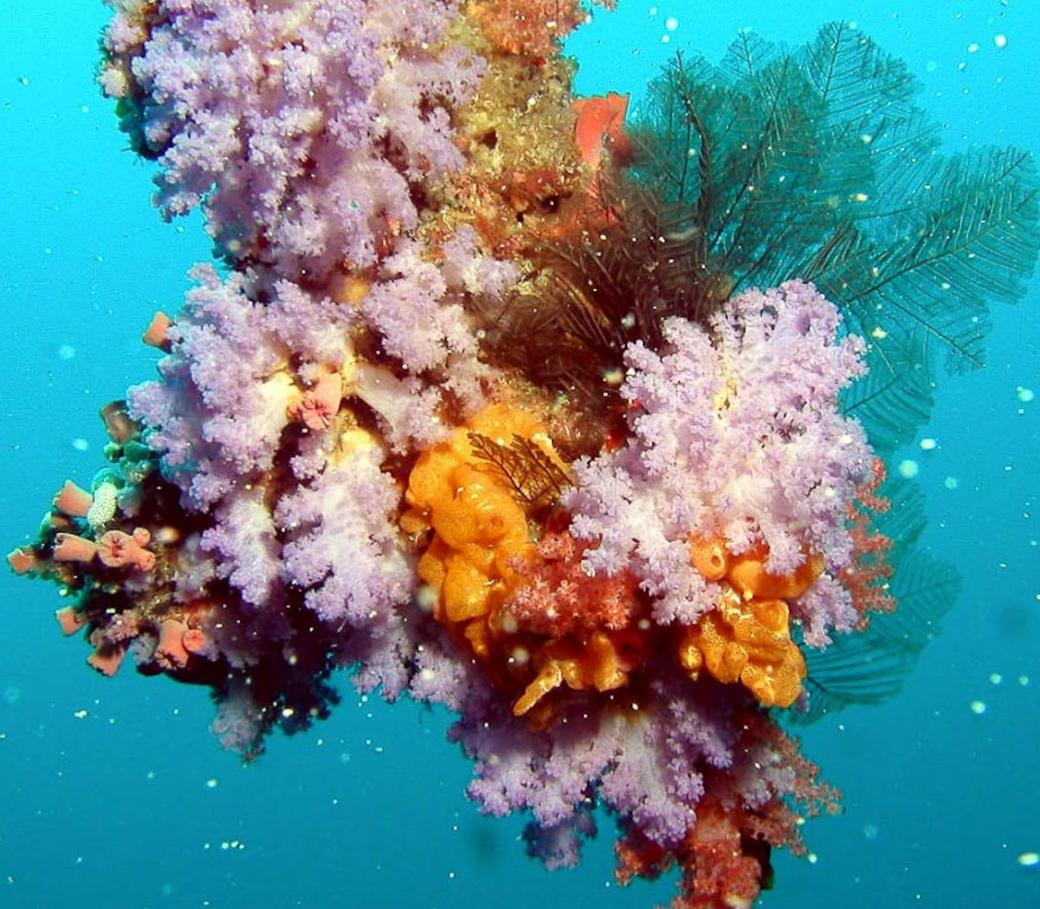
| IMPORT               | INTERNAL            | TRANSIT            | EXPORT             |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>3682</b><br>(57%) | <b>669</b><br>(10%) | <b>387</b><br>(6%) | <b>251</b><br>(4%) |



**42%** of seizure records were made at airports

Thailand, mainland China, the USA and Indonesia were the leading exporters/countries/territories of departure of illegal wildlife to the EU.





# INTRODUCTION

This briefing aims to provide an overview of all CITES-related seizures reported by Member States of the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU) for the twelve-month period January to December 2019 inclusive, so that these can be shared with key trade partners of the EU and selected third countries, as deemed necessary by EU Member States.

This briefing is based on all seizures reported by EU Member States having taken place both at EU external borders (airports, maritime ports, land boundaries and postal centres) and inside the EU (i.e. not at the external borders). The quantitative analysis of these seizures (in Sections 2 and 4) and examples of seizures (in Section 3) are based on seizure records

submitted in the 2019 Annual Illegal Trade Reports (including information on prosecutions) submitted to the EU-TWIX<sup>2</sup> database by EU Member States. In 2019, a total of 28 EU Member States provided data on seizures which occurred in 2019, with the quantitative analysis based on data provided by 25 EU Member States<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to note that any change in the number of seizures reported over the years and any patterns in illegal wildlife trade observed from the seizure data may be due to a number of different reasons, and these changes do not necessarily indicate shifts in demand or variations in illegal wildlife trade dynamic.

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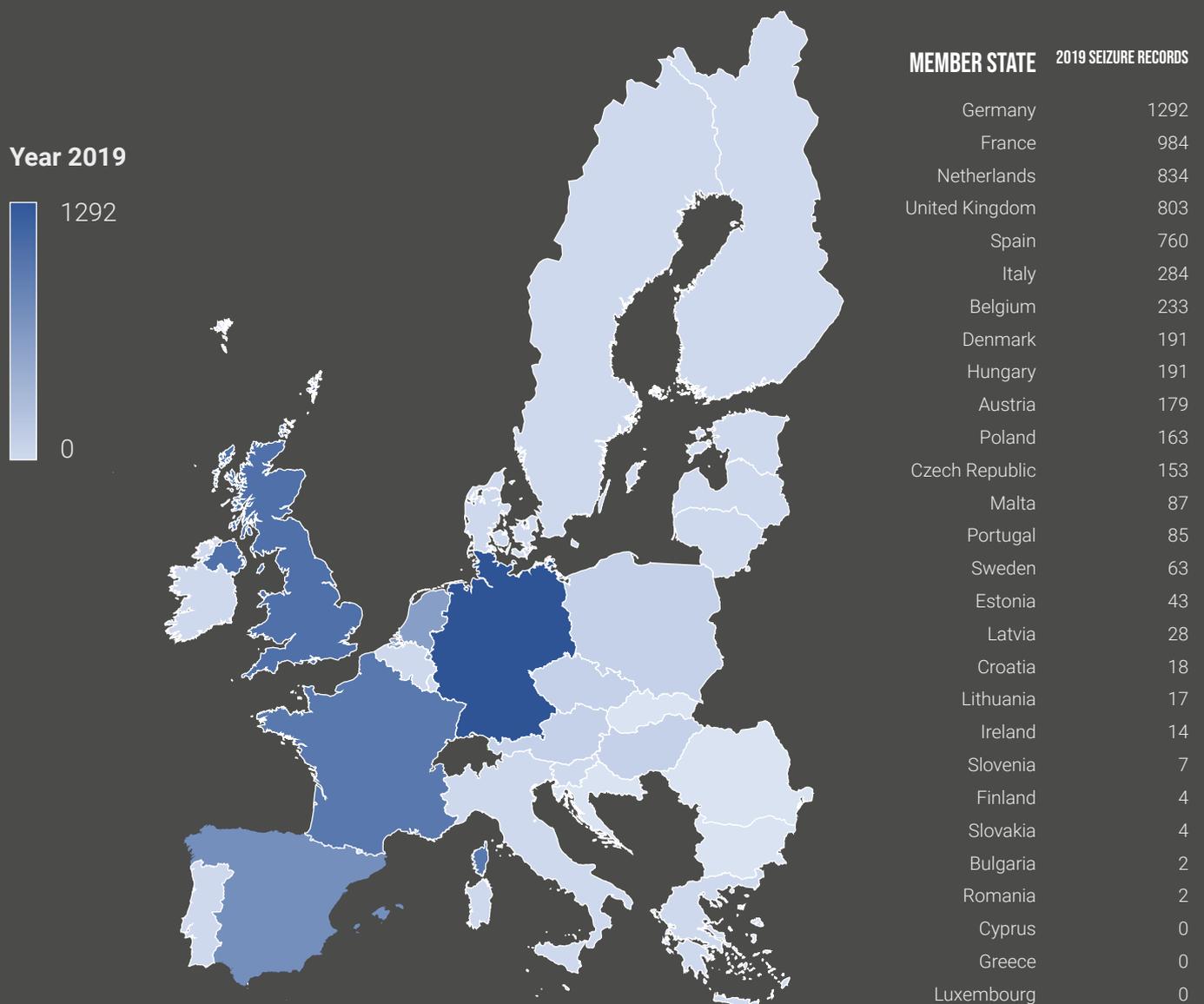
<sup>1</sup> The Member States of the EU in 2019: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The UK withdrew from the EU on 31st January 2020. During the period covered by this briefing the UK was an EU Member State and as a result is included in this analysis.

<sup>2</sup> European Union–Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange—the system includes a database of CITES seizures in the EU (<https://eu-twix.org/>).

<sup>3</sup> Greece, Cyprus, and Luxembourg reported no seizures in 2019.

# AN OVERVIEW OF REPORTED SEIZURES INVOLVING THE EU

A total of 6441 seizure records<sup>4</sup> were reported by EU Member States in 2019. Germany, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Spain reported 73% of all seizure records for 2019.



**Figure 1**  
Distribution of seizure records across EU Member States, based on number of seizure records, 2019 (excluding Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg who reported no seizures in 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Seizures involving several species are separated and treated as distinct "seizure records", therefore the number of seizures reported is lower than the number of "seizure records" analysed.

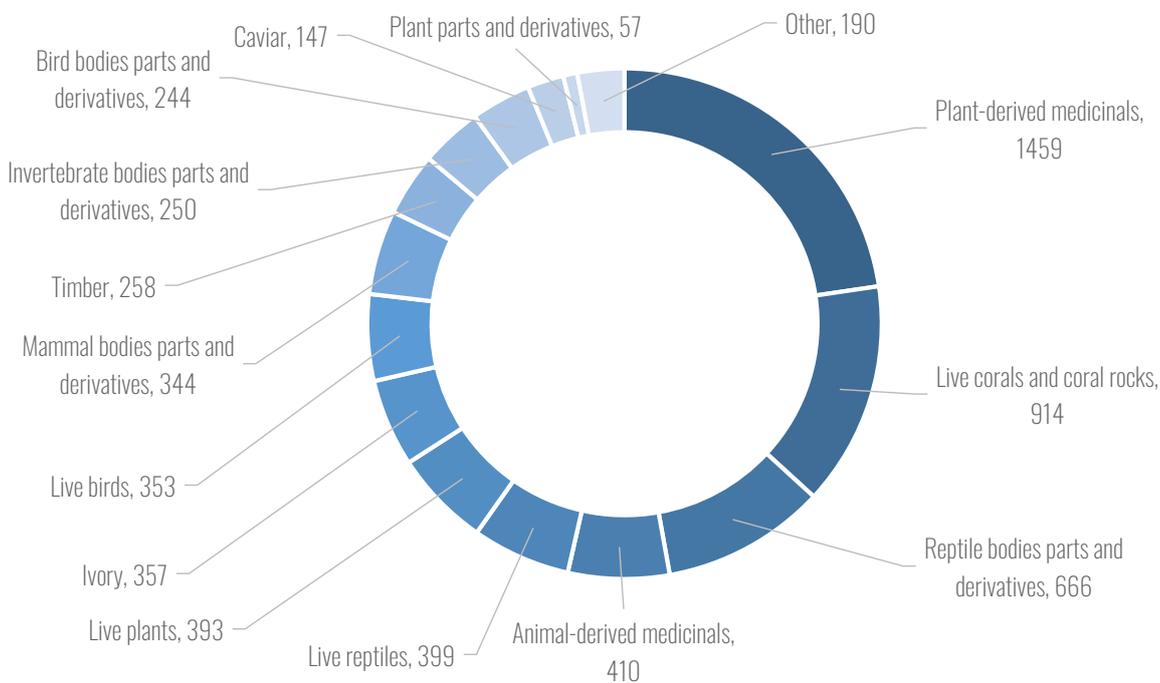
The main types of commodities seized in the EU in 2019 were, in order of number of reported seizure records (**see Figure 2**):

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | <b>MEDICINALS<sup>5,6</sup></b><br>including both medicinal products (medicinal products are also understood to include health/food supplements) and parts/derivatives for medicinal use <sup>7</sup> (158 455 items (e.g. pieces, packets, pills, etc.) and an additional ca. 1852 kg and ca. 474 l). This included 130 706 plant-derived medicinal items (and an additional ca. 1786 kg and ca. 463 l) and 27 749 animal-derived medicinal items (and an additional ca. 66 kg and ca. 12 l); |
|    | <b>LIVE CORAL AND CORAL ROCK</b><br>6819 specimens and an additional ca. 431 kg;   |
|   | <b>REPTILE BODIES, PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b><br>3758 specimens and an additional ca. 3099 kg;  |
|  | <b>LIVE REPTILES</b><br>2250 specimens;  |
|  | <b>LIVE PLANTS</b><br>3826 specimens and an additional ca. 5 kg;   |
|  | <b>ELEPHANT IVORY</b><br>2268 specimens and an additional ca. 206 kg;  |
|  | <b>LIVE BIRDS</b><br>839 specimens   |

<sup>5</sup> Units used to report medicinals are not consistent across EU Member States: some reported units as packs of tablets others as individual tablets; sometimes no unit was specified, or kg or l was used.

<sup>6</sup> Under EU law, medicinal products which are labelled as containing Annex listed species under the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations are taken as containing that particular species and may be seized without any verification of the species content in the product or DNA testing beforehand. This briefing can therefore not distinguish between those verified as containing Annex listed species from those simply claiming this on the packaging.

<sup>7</sup> Including animal parts/derivatives, e.g. bear, seahorse, big cats, and crocodile.



**Figure 2**

Distribution of all seizure records reported by EU Member States across commodity groups, 2019 (based on number of seizure records). *Source: EU-TWIX database.*

*Note: \* "Other" includes the following commodity groups: Live eels, Live mammals, Fish bodies parts and derivatives, Live invertebrates, Bird eggs, Live amphibians, Coral parts and derivatives, Unknown, Eel bodies parts and derivatives, Live fish. Source: EU-TWIX database.*

**Important individual seizures reported by Member States across key commodity groups are set out in Section 3.**

According to the EU-TWIX database, in 2019, over 57% (3682 seizure records) were reportedly seized

on import, which was followed by internal seizures (669 seizure records, 10%), seizures on export (251 seizure records, 4%) and seizures in transit (387 seizure records, 6%). For the rest (1452 seizure records, 23%) the direction of trade was reported as unknown/other or no information was provided.

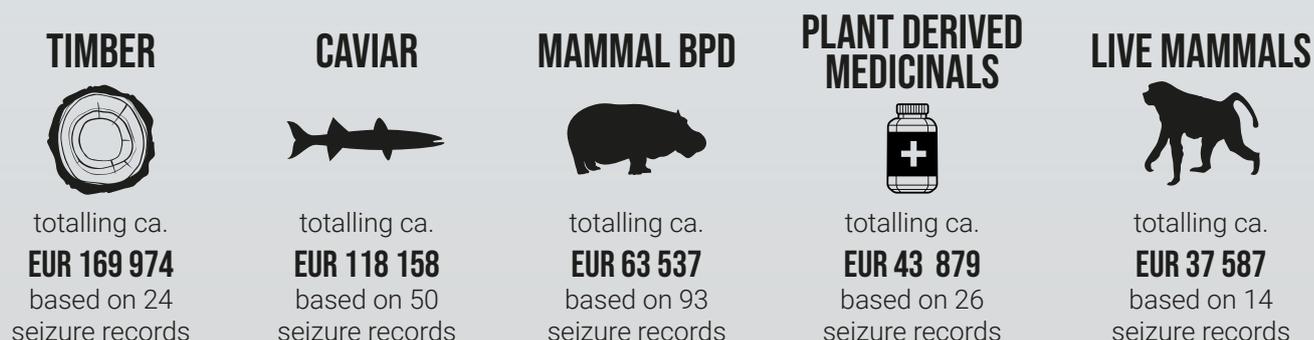
Of the total seizure records in 2019, ca. 17% (1104 seizure records) reported an estimated value of commodities seized, which was estimated at a minimum of EUR 4.7 million. A total of 14 Member States reported information on the estimated value of commodities seized in these 1104 seizure records, with France and Spain reporting ca. 78%. It is important to note that this report does not attempt to extrapolate the available value information to the whole 2019 seizures dataset, nor does the figure represent the actual illegal wildlife trade market in the EU as the available data are very limited. There may also be differences as to what value information

was provided by the Member States, for example, whether the value provided was the value of the commodities on the legal or the illegal market, and at what point along the trade chain the reported value was representing. This reported value increased from EUR 2.3 million in 2018. The increase in trade value between 2018 and 2019 could be due to increased reporting of commodity values. In comparison to the 1104 seizure records which reported value in 2019, in 2018 only 522 records reported an estimated value of seized commodities (ca. 9% of the total seizure records, 6012).



**Figure 3**

Top commodities seized by value (EUR), based on 1104 seizure records (ca. 17% of total seizure records) where the value of the commodity seized was reported by EU Member States in 2019.



**Figure 4**

Other high value commodities (EUR), based on 1104 seizure records (ca. 17% of total seizure records) where the value of the commodity seized was reported by EU Member States in 2019.

In addition to the limited number of seizure records with a reported value in 2019, the number of seizure records with a reported value also varied significantly across the commodity groups. For example, in 2019, EU Member States reported 172 seizure records

with a reported value of specimens of live coral and coral rock seized, while only 14 seizure records reported the value of live mammals seized in 2019. As a result, the reported values of the different types of commodities in the 1104 seizure records (e.g.

Figures 3 and 4) only represent those with available information and do not reflect the actual market value of those commodities in the EU illegal wildlife trade in 2019. With the available value (EUR) information submitted in the 1104 seizure records in 2019, live eels were the commodity with the highest reported value totalling EUR 2.9 million (Figures 3 and 4). These data are based on information provided in 32 seizure records. Other commodities with a high reported value were ivory, invertebrate bodies parts and derivatives, reptile bodies parts and derivatives, and animal-derived medicinals (Figure 3). Seizures involving timber, live mammals and caviar were

reported as high value commodities (based on the ratio of number of seizures to value reported, Figure 4). In 2019, 6095 (95%) of seizure records reported the type of location where they took place. Most seizures were made at airports (2678 seizure records, 42%), followed by mail centres (1445 seizure records, 22%), private houses (651 seizure records, 10%) and markets and shops (338 seizure records, 5%). The remaining seizures were intercepted in other locations including maritime ports, roads or highways, fairs/exhibitions and zoological gardens. In 346 seizure records (5%) the type of location was left blank or was unknown.



# CASE STUDY: TRADE IN MEDICINAL PRODUCTS<sup>8</sup>

**1869**

seizure records  
concerned medicinals

**SEAHORSES**

were the most reported species  
of animal-derived medicinals

**THAILAND**

was the primary  
exporter of medicinals

**In 2019, the most frequently seized commodity type were medicinals (plant- and animal-derived medicinals), accounting for 1869 seizure records.**

In cases where the CITES Appendix listing of the seized species was reported (54% of medicinal seizure records), most seizures were of CITES Appendix II listed species (40%), followed by fewer seizure records involving CITES Appendix I listed species (14%).

The largest exporting countries of medicinals, based on number of seizure records, were Thailand (23%), mainland China (22%), and the USA (10%), with the Netherlands (29%), Germany (25%) and the UK (21%) the most frequent destinations. Medicines, extracts and cosmetics were the most commonly reported types of animal and plant derived medicinals seized in 2019. For plant-derived medicinals, Costus Root *Saussurea costus* (App. I/ Annex A) and Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* (App. II/ Annex B) were the most commonly reported species. For animal derived medicinals sea horses *Hippocampus japonicus* (13%) (App. II/Annex B) and King Cobra *Ophiophagus hannah* (App. II/Annex B) (8%).

The largest seizure of CITES Appendix I listed (Annex A) medicinals in 2019 was a single seizure

of 2160 specimens of extract from the Costus Root *Saussurea costus*. These extracts were being exported from Switzerland to Austria by car when they were seized on import for having no CITES permits. The largest seizure, in terms of number of specimens, for a CITES Appendix II listed species (Annex B) involved 25 240 specimens of extract from the Candelabra Aloe *Aloe arborescens*. These medicinals were being exported from South Korea to Germany by airfreight when they were seized on import as there were no CITES permits. These were detected during a customs documentary check.

Of the 1869 seizure records involving medicinals, a total of 93% reported the reason for the seizure was due to a lack of CITES documents accompanying the goods. Illegal origin, acquisition and possession was also reported as reasons for these seizures in 565 records. It is clear based on the reasons for seizures, for both CITES Appendix I and Appendix II listed species that a lack of adherence to CITES permitting is a significant cause of goods being seized.

<sup>8</sup> This case study was selected as trade in medicinals was the top commodity in trade as reported by number of seizure records

## 2A 'COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES OF DEPARTURE OF ILLEGAL TRADE'/EXPORTERS

**4677**

seizure records had countries/  
territories of export

**431**

seizure records were exported  
from EU Member States

**4246**

were exported from non-EU  
countries/territories

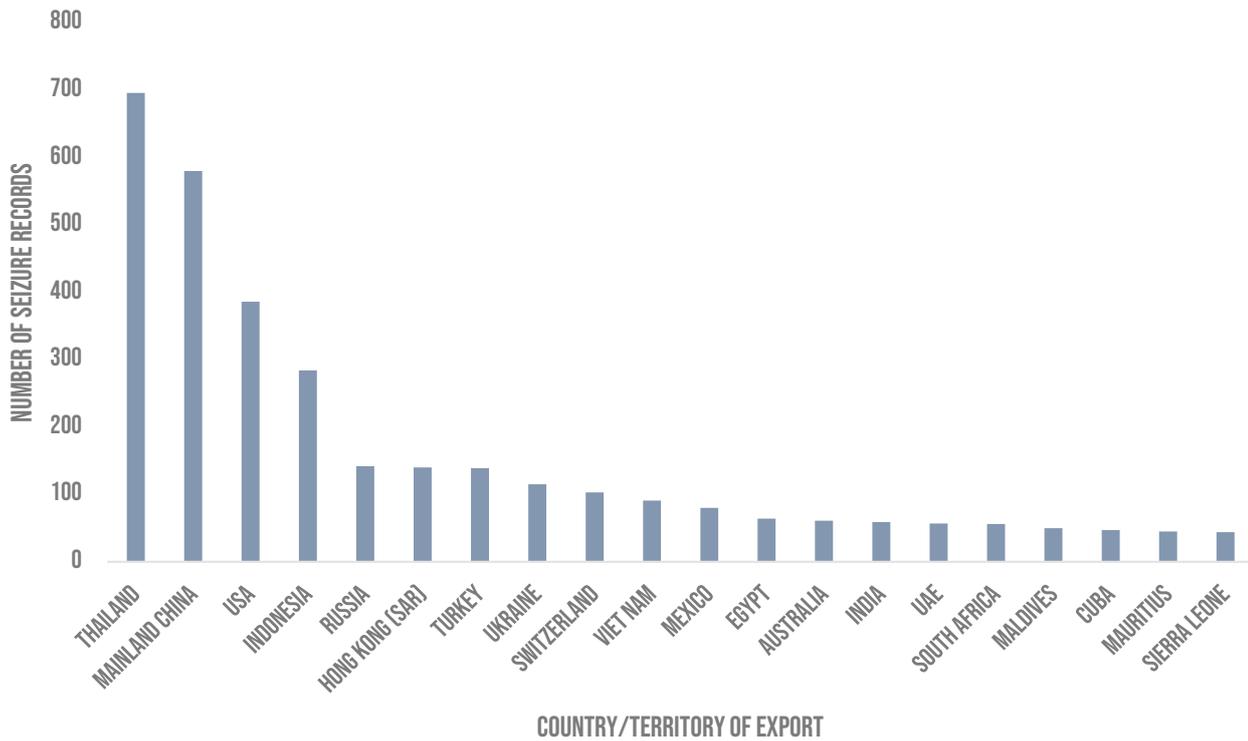
**A total of 4677 seizure records (ca. 73%) had their overseas territories) and 4246 seizure records countries/territories of export (or 'departure of (66 %) were exported from non-EU countries/ illegal trade') reported; 431 seizure records (7%) territories. were exported from EU Member States (excluding**

 **Thailand** was the reported exporter for 696 seizure records: a total of 63% of these records involved plant- and animal-derived medicinals (439 records comprising 31 531 specimens and an additional ca. 99 kg and <1 l) mainly containing cacti *Cactaceae* spp. (App. I,II / Annex A,B) (335 records, 20 289 specimens and an additional ca. 98 kg and <1 l). A significant number of seizure records of live and coral rock (100 seizure records comprising 646 specimens and ca. 3 kg) and live plants (88 seizure records comprising 1364 specimens and ca. 3 kg) were also reported.

 **Mainland China** was the reported exporter for 580 seizure records: the majority of these records involved plant- and animal-derived medicinals (415 records involving 8616 specimens (pieces, packets etc) and an additional ca. 50 kg and ca. <1 l) mainly containing parts and derivatives of taxa such as *Costus Root Saussurea costus* (App. I/Annex A) or Orchids *Orchidaceae* spp. (App. I/II, Annex A/B).

 **The United States of America (USA)** was the reported exporter for 386 seizure records: ca. 44% of these records involved plant-derived medicinals (171 records involving 25 665 specimens and an additional ca. 7 kg and ca. <1 l) mainly containing parts and derivatives of African Cherry *Prunus africana*, *Hoodia* spp., American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius* and *Aloe* spp. (all in App. II/Annex B). A significant number of records also involved reptile bodies, parts and derivatives (78 seizure records comprising 177 specimens and an additional ca. 1 kg), and timber (56 seizure records comprising of 82 specimens and an additional ca. 23 kg) as the other main commodity types seized.

 **Indonesia** was the reported exporter of 284 seizure records: 46% of records involved live corals and coral rock comprising of 130 seizure records involving 1106 specimens and an additional ca. 11 kg mainly consisting of raw corals particularly of Stony coral *Scleractinia* spp. Additionally, a significant number of seizure records involving reptile bodies, parts and derivatives were reported (75 seizure records comprising of 400 specimens), as well as plant-derived medicinals (61 seizure records comprising of 9565 specimens and <1 kg).



**Figure 5**

Top 20 (non-EU) countries/territories of export or departure of illegal trade as reported by EU Member States, according to number of seizure records, 2019.

Source: EU-TWIX database. Abbreviations: Hong Kong SAR – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, Russia – Russian Federation, UAE – United Arab Emirates

## 2B DESTINATIONS



A total of 4691 (73%) seizure records had countries/territories of destination reported; the destination of 4347 seizure records (67%) was reported to be an EU Member State<sup>9</sup> and 344 seizure records (ca. 5%) of seizures with known destinations were destined for non-EU countries (or overseas territories). Of the 4347 seizure records destined for EU Member

States, Germany was the most commonly reported destination country (1108 seizure records), followed by the Netherlands (799 seizure records), the United Kingdom (728 seizure records), France (295 seizure records) and Denmark (196 seizure records). These five countries were reported as the destination for 73% of the seizure records destined for EU.

<sup>9</sup> Excluding their overseas territories.

Of the 344 seizure records destined for non-EU countries or territories, mainland China was the leading destination for commodities seized upon export/(re-)export from the EU or while in transit in the EU, accounting for 97 seizure records (Figure 6). Together, mainland China and Hong Kong SAR were the destination for 105 seizure records.

A total of 46% of the 105 seizure records destined for mainland China and Hong Kong SAR were animal-derived medicinals. Examples of the types of animals reported in these seizures of animal derived medicinals include 420 specimens and an additional <1 kg of bodies or powder of seahorses *Hippocampus* spp. (App. II/Annex B), as well as 228 specimens and ca. 5 l of extracts and cosmetics made from sturgeon/paddlefish (order *Acipenseriformes*) (App. II/Annex, B).

Mainland China and Hong Kong SAR were also important destination countries/territories for reptile bodies, parts and derivatives (18 seizure records comprising of 79 specimens mainly exported from Sierra Leone)], elephant ivory (12 seizure records comprising of 116 specimens and an additional ca. <1 kg) and plant-derived medicinals (6 seizure records comprising 1 specimen and an additional ca. 1 kg and ca. 1 l).

In addition, the USA (32 seizure records, mainly involving reptile bodies, parts and derivatives and plant-derived medicinals), South Africa (27 seizure records, mainly involving live plants), Ukraine (14 seizure records, mainly involving reptile bodies, parts and derivatives), and Viet Nam (13 seizure records, mainly live eels) were important destinations. Viet Nam was an important destination for shipments of live European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* (App. II/Annex B). A total of 70 276 specimens and ca. 173 kg of live European Eels was seized which were destined for Viet Nam (reported in 10 seizure records). Most of these seizures (6) occurred at an airport in Portugal as the eels were being exported.



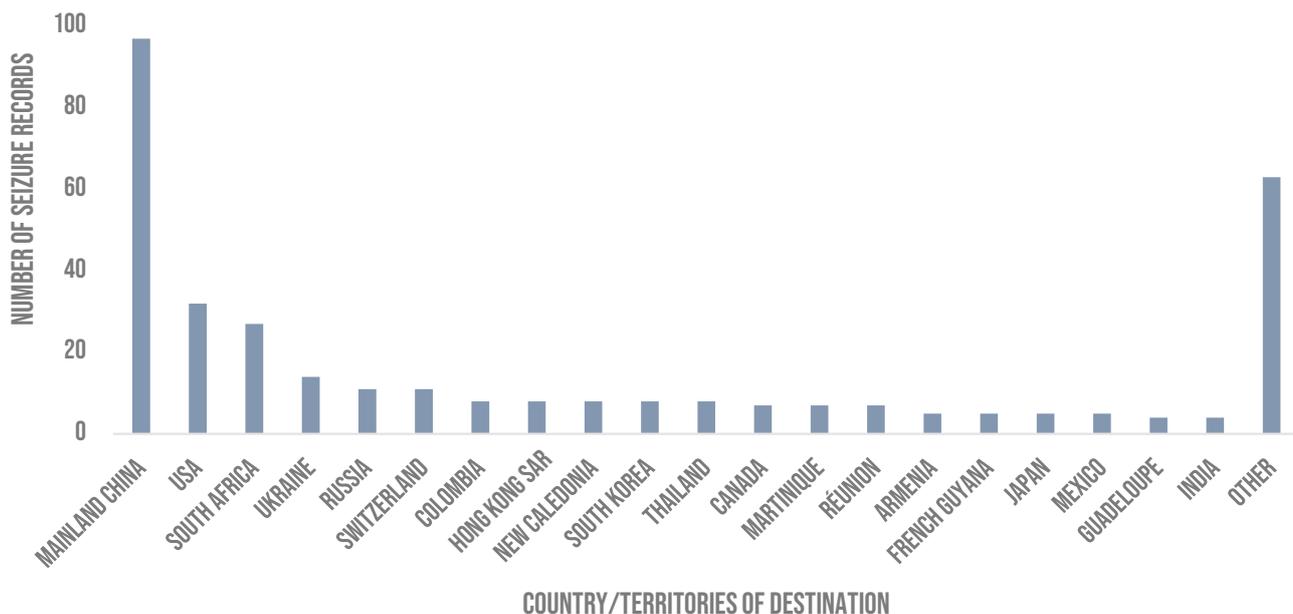
Sturgeon *Acipenseriformes*



Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*



European Eels *Anguilla anguilla*



**Figure 6**

Third countries/territories (non-EU) of destination as reported by EU Member States, according to number of seizure records, 2019.

Source: EU-TWIX database.

## 2C INTERNAL SEIZURES

**669**

internal seizures were reported by 11 EU Member States

**ELEPHANT IVORY**

was the main commodity type seized within the EU

A total of 669 internal seizure records were reported by 11 EU Member States (Spain, Belgium, Malta, Italy, France, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Latvia, Lithuania and Croatia<sup>10</sup>). The main commodity types seized within the EU in 2019 (in order of importance based on number of reported seizure records) were elephant ivory, followed by bird bodies parts and derivatives, live birds, live reptiles and mammal bodies part and derivatives.

In 2019, there were 134 reported internal seizure reports of elephant ivory, involving 753 specimens and an additional ca. 1 kg of elephant ivory. While most seizure records did not identify the elephant ivory



African Elephant *Loxodonta africana*



Seized elephant tusks

<sup>10</sup> Member States listed here in order of importance based on number of seizure records in 2019.

to species level, ivory from both African Elephants *Loxodonta africana* and Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus* were seized (both App. I, II/Annex A, B). Spain reported the majority (103) of these internal ivory seizures. Spain reported seizures involving a total of 459 specimens of ivory. These items were mainly found in markets/shops following physical inspections, intelligence/ investigations and internet monitoring and were typically seized due to illegal sale and possession. These ivory items were also seized from private houses following intelligence/ investigations and internet monitoring and were seized due to illegal sale and possession.

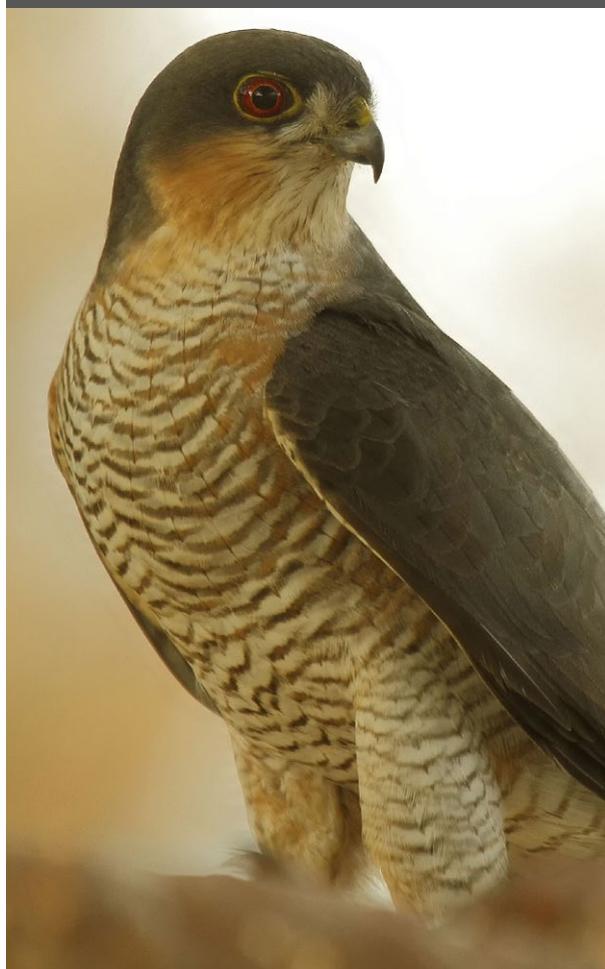
A total of 307 bird bodies parts and derivatives were reported as being seized internally in 2019, comprising a total of 124 seizure records. These seizures were mainly of bird bodies, skins and skulls. A total of 55% (170 specimens) were from the order Falconiformes (birds of prey). Malta reported a high proportion of these seizure records (75 records involving 250 specimens) most of which were intercepted inland.

In 2019, eight EU Member States reported 104 internal seizure records involving a total of 195 live birds, 73% of which were parrots (Psittaciformes). African Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* were the most commonly seized species (App. I/Annex A) with 44 individuals seized in 2019. Spain and Italy were the main reporting countries of live bird seizures. For example, Spain reported one seizure record involving a total of 15 live Goshawks *Accipiter gentilis* (App. II/Annex A) seized in Malaga.

A total of 338 live reptiles were seized internally within the EU in 2019. 51% of seizure records of live reptiles involved tortoises, followed by snakes and lizards. Hermann's Tortoise *Testudo hermanni* (App. II/Annex A) was the most commonly seized species, both in terms of number of seizure records (17) and number of individuals seized (104 individuals). Internal seizures of live reptiles were mainly reported by Spain and Hungary.



Caracara *Caracara plancus*



Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*

## 2D CITES APP./EU ANNEX LISTINGS

**5287**

seizure records concerned CITES-related offences

**75%**

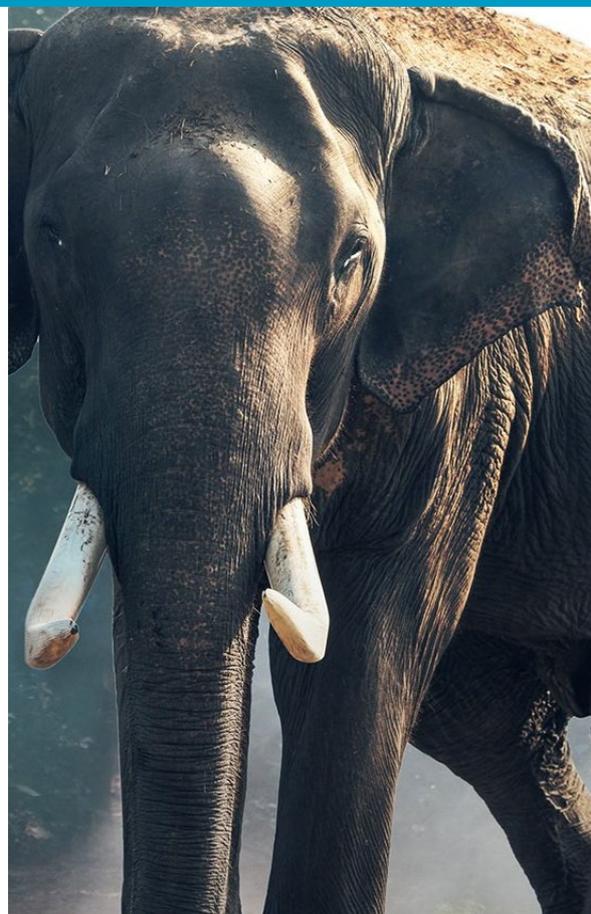
of seizure records were due to a lack of CITES documents

A total of 5287 seizure records reported information on the CITES document related offence which resulted in the specimens being seized by officials in the EU. Approximately 75% (4807) of seizure records reported the reason was due to a lack of CITES documents accompanying the specimens. Invalid CITES documents accounted for 5% of seizures records, with fewer seizures reporting that specimens were seized due to counterfeit/false or falsified CITES documents (both were represented in less than 1% of seizure records).

Overall, a total of 3135 seizure records reported the CITES/EU Annex listing of the commodities seized. Most seizures involved specimens of CITES Appendix II listed species (ca. 2122 seizure records, ca. 68%), of which 1869 seizure records involved Annex B listed species and 253 seizure records involved Annex A listed species. Approximately 32% (999) of seizure records reported seizures of specimens of CITES Appendix I listed species (all Annex A listed species), with a further 14 seizure records (<1%) involved CITES Appendix III listed species (all Annex C listed species). Furthermore, 3296 seizure records did not identify the specimen to species level resulting in no CITES/EU Annex listing being provided for the commodities seized and therefore these data not being analysed.

## CITES APPENDIX I SPECIES

In 2019, 999 seizure records (ca. 32% of 3135 seizure records) were reported to involve CITES Appendix I listed species (all Annex A listed species). Of a total of 105 different species reportedly seized, Costus Root *Saussurea costus*, African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* and African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* were the most commonly reported species (based on number of seizure records). Wood products, medicinals, and live plants and animals were the most common commodities listed as CITES Appendix I.



Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*



Hermann's Tortoise *Testudo hermanni*

Mainland China, the USA and Switzerland were the most commonly reported exporting countries of CITES Appendix I listed species, while Germany, the Netherlands and the UK were the most commonly reported destination countries (based on number of seizure records). Most seizures of CITES Appendix I listed commodities (84%) were made due to goods having no CITES document, followed by an invalid CITES document (7%), or “other” CITES document offences (1%). These commodities were mostly transported by air and detected due to physical inspection or risk assessment.

## CITES APPENDIX II LISTED SPECIES

In 2019, 2122 seizure records (ca. 68% of the 3135 seizure records) were reported to involve CITES Appendix II listed species (253 seizure records involved Annex A listed species, and 1869 seizure records involved Annex B listed species). A total of 378 different species were reportedly seized, with American Ginseng *Panax quinquefolius*, Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* and Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* the most commonly reported CITES Appendix II listed species (based on number of seizure records). However, European Eel *Anguilla anguilla*, the Candelabra Aloe *Aloe arborescens* and African Cherry *Prunus africana* were the most commonly reported CITES Appendix II listed species seized based on number of specimens. Live animals, extracts and medicinals (mainly pieces or pills) were the most common commodities seized that involved CITES Appendix II listed species.

The USA, mainland China and Thailand were the most frequently reported exporters (based on number of seizure records), while the most commonly reported destination countries were Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. Similar to those seizures involving CITES Appendix I listed species, specimens of CITES Appendix II listed species were most commonly transported by air, and most frequently detected by physical inspection. A total of 68% of these seizures were reportedly made due to the goods having no CITES documents, followed by invalid permits (4%). There were significant gaps in these data, as 26% of the seizure records involving CITES Appendix II listed species did not report the reason for seizure. Trade in specimens of CITES Appendix II/Annex B listed



Queen Conch *Strombus gigas*

species. is generally permitted<sup>11</sup> if the specimens are accompanied with the necessary import and export permits. **This raises questions as to why these shipments involving CITES Appendix II/EU**

**Annex B listing species, especially those declared as having no accompanying CITES documents, are non-compliant and therefore resulting in seizure.**



## METHODS OF TRANSPORT

In 2019, the most frequently reported location where seizures occurred were airports, where 126 069 specimens and an additional ca. 6355 kg and ca. 109 l were seized. The Netherlands reported the highest number of seizures at airports with a total of 714 seizure records (99.7% of which were made at Schiphol). The United Kingdom reported the second highest number of seizure records in airports, (482 seizure records) (40% of which were made at Heathrow Airport, London), followed by Germany (416 seizure records, 33% of which were made at Frankfurt Airport). The most commonly seized commodity group (by number of seizure records) at airports was live and rock coral (28%), this was followed by plant-derived medicinals (26%) and reptile bodies, parts and derivatives (10%). Detection aids were only reported in a small number of seizure records, the most common being X-rays in 1.6% of cases, other detection method aids included phone tapping, DNA analysis and sniffer dogs.

Transport via air (both via air passengers and air mail)

was the most commonly reported mode of transport of apprehended goods seized in airport in the EU in 2019, accounting for 2955 seizure records (out of 4768 seizure records with reported information on transport details). Air transport includes transport by air mail or mail freight as well as through general air cargo, or transport by a passenger. Transport by passengers was the most commonly reported mode of travel accounting for 61% of seizure records (1791 seizure records), followed by transport via air mail accounting for 36% of seizure records (1064 seizure records). However, there are gaps in reporting as in 1687 seizure records (26%) the transport mode is unknown or blank.

Furthermore, in 2019, 195 seizure records stated the seizure having taken place at maritime ports. Seizures at maritime ports involved 161 583 specimens and an additional 1476 kg, with timber and live reptiles the most commonly reported commodity seized (34 seizure records each).

<sup>11</sup> Trade in CITES Appendix II/Annex B listed species may not be permitted for some species with stricter domestic measures, such as the zero import/export policy set for the EU for in December 2010 for European Eels *Anguilla anguilla*.

# DETAILS OF KEY SEIZURES REPORTED BY EU MEMBER STATES IN 2019

Table 1 contains details of key seizure records reported by EU Member States for the period January to December 2019. Seizures were selected based on the following criteria: (i) seizures involving particularly large quantities of a commodity type; and (ii) seizures highlighting important illegal trade trends involving the EU (e.g. in terms of countries or species involved).

**Table 1**

Details of selected seizures reported by EU Member States for 2019 arranged by commodity type (the country which reported the seizure records is shown in bold)

| TRADE ROUTE                        |               |                        | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED  | DETAILS  |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--|--|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE | TRANSIT       | DESTINATION            |  |  |
| <b>MEDICINALS</b>                  |               |                        |  |  |
| Switzerland                        | →             | <b>Austria</b>         | 2160 specimens of Costus Root <i>Saussurea costus</i> (App. I/Annex A) roots. These specimens were seized after having been transported by road into Austria.  | Detected at a road/highway and seized due to lack of CITES permit (August 2019). |
| Turkey                             | →             | <b>The Netherlands</b> | 98 seizure records involving a total of 249 specimens of orchid. These were mainly made up of derivatives, medicines and powder from orchids.  | Detected at an airport due to random checks (2019)                               |
| Indonesia →                        | India →       | <b>UK</b>              | 120 pieces of medicine containing orchid which had been exported by mail.  | Detected at a mail centre as a result of a risk assessment (June 2019)           |
| India →                            | Switzerland → | <b>Germany</b>         | 1620 specimens of Costus Root <i>Saussurea costus</i> (App. I/Annex A) extract. These specimens were seized after having been transported by road into Germany by delivery van. The specimens were concealed in postal courier packages. | Detected at a road/highway following physical inspections (August 2019)          |
| Thailand                           | →             | <b>Germany</b>         | 379 specimens of extract from cactus cactaceae spp. (App. I,II / Annex A,B) transported by air mail and concealed in a courier parcel.   | Detected at a mail centre during physical inspection (May 2019)                  |

| TRADE ROUTE                        |         | TRANSIT               | DESTINATION           | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED  | DETAILS   |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE |         |                       |                       |  |   |
| South Korea                        | →       |                       | <b>Germany</b>        | 25 240 specimens of Aloe <i>Aloe arborescens</i> (App. II/Annex B) extract transported by air freight  | Detected at an airport due to a Customs documentary check (March 2019)                  |
| USA                                | →       |                       | <b>Germany</b>        | 2400 specimens of African Cherry <i>Prunus africana</i> (App. II/Annex B) extract exported by air mail.  | Detected at a mail centre due to physical inspection (December 2019)                    |
| China                              | →       |                       | <b>Ireland</b>        | 31 bodies of seahorses <i>Hippocampus</i> spp. (App. II/Annex B), transported by air freight.  | Detected at an airport as a result of a routine inspection (July 2019)                  |
| Thailand                           | →       |                       | <b>UK</b>             | 180 pieces of medicine containing seahorse <i>Hippocampus hippocampus</i> (App. II / Annex B) hidden in the personal luggage of an air passenger.  | Detected at an airport following risk assessment (January 2019)                         |
| Sierra Leon                        | Liberia | <b>Belgium</b>        | Mainland China        | In one seizure a total of ca. 1 kg of pangolin <i>Manis</i> spp. powder (App. II/ Annex B) was found concealed in jars of powdered milk. The goods were being transported by an air passenger. | Detected while in transit in Belgium due to a risk assessment (July 2019)               |
| Pakistan                           | →       |                       | <b>United Kingdom</b> | One seizure including 90 pieces of medicine made from Musk deer <i>Moschus</i> spp. (App. I,II/Annex A,B) concealed in the personal baggage of an air passenger.                               | Detected through a risk assessment (September 2019)                                     |
| China                              | →       | <b>United Kingdom</b> | → Germany             | One seizure of products containing bear bile (App. I,II/ Annex A,B) transported in a courier consignment.  | Found in 99 pots of "SegminiSmart Dental Clean and Care" pet tooth powder (August 2019) |
| Russia                             | →       |                       | <b>Germany</b>        | 1200 specimens of derivatives from Brown Bear <i>Ursus arctos</i> (App. II/ Annex A). transported via air mail.  | Detected at a mail centre through physical inspection (September 2019)                  |
| Serbia                             | →       |                       | <b>Slovenia</b>       | 6 packages of medicines containing African Cherry <i>Prunus africana</i> (App. II/Annex B) exported by air mail.   | Detected at a mail centre through a risk assessment (June 2019)                         |

| TRADE ROUTE                                 |                   |                       | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED   | DETAILS  |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE          | TRANSIT           | DESTINATION           |   |  |
| <b>LIVE AND CORAL ROCK</b>                  |                   |                       |   |  |
| USA   | →                 | <b>Germany</b>        | 121 specimens of <i>Fungia</i> spp. coral (App. II/ Annex B) transported by courier parcel.   | Detected while being transported by road in a delivery van due to physical inspection (January 2019) |
| Cuba  | → Spain →         | <b>Unknown</b>        | Ca. 3 kg of coral <i>Scleractinia</i> spp., <i>Faviidae</i> spp. coral. These were valued at EUR 57   | Detected at an airport (June 2019)   |
| Sudan                                       | →                 | <b>Italy</b>          | Ca. 1 kg of Cluster Coral <i>Stylophora pistillata</i> (App. II/ Annex B) transported in the personal baggage of a ship passenger.                                  | Detected at a maritime port due to routine checks (April 2019)                                       |
| <b>REPTILE BODIES PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b> |                   |                       |   |  |
| Hong Kong SAR                               | →                 | <b>United Kingdom</b> | 200 small leather products made from crocodile/alligator/caiman (species not specified), transported by air freight.  | Detected at an airport due to a risk assessment (August 2019)  |
| Indonesia                                   | → Hong Kong SAR → | <b>Netherlands</b>    | 236 wild sourced small leather products made from <i>Python</i> spp. (App. II/ Annex A) (species not specified), transported by postal or express - courier parcel. | Detected at mail centre due to Customs documentary checks (June 2019)                                |
| <b>LIVE REPTILES</b>                        |                   |                       |   |  |
| Algeria                                     | →                 | <b>France</b>         | 25 live Spur-thighed Tortoises <i>Testudo graeca</i> , (App. II/Annex A).   | Detected at a port (January 2019)  |
| Algeria                                     | →                 | <b>France</b>         | 150 <i>Testudo</i> spp. tortoises transported by a tourist travelling by air.   | Detected at an airport (May 2019)  |
| Togo  | → Germany →       | <b>Netherlands</b>    | 11 live African Pythons <i>Python sebae</i> , (App. II/Annex B) transported by air freight.   | Detected at an airport due to customs documentary checks (September 2019)                            |

| TRADE ROUTE                          |                  |                 | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED   | DETAILS  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE   | TRANSIT          | DESTINATION     |   |  |
| <b>LIVE PLANTS</b>                   |                  |                 |   |  |
| Mexico                               | →                | <b>Hungary</b>  | 98 live <i>Aztekium ritteri</i> cacti (App. I/ Annex A) detected in an airport.   | Intercepted due to intelligence/investigation (November 2019)  |
| Japan →                              | Thailand →       | <b>Germany</b>  | 30 live orchids Orchidaceae spp. transported in air freight.  | Intercepted due to Customs documentary checks (April 2019)   |
| Thailand                             | →                | <b>Germany</b>  | 32 live cacti (species not reported) these had been transported by air mail by courier package (App. I,II / Annex A,B).   | Detected by a physical inspection in air mail (November 2019)  |
| <b>IVORY</b>                         |                  |                 |   |  |
| USA                                  | →                | United Kingdom  | 104 ivory piano keys from African Elephants <i>Loxodonta africana</i> (App. I / Annex A). These were transported by sea freight.  | Detected due to a risk assessment (February 2019)  |
| Ivory Coast →                        | <b>Germany</b> → | China           | 25 pieces of elephant ivory (species not reported) jewellery transported in air mail.   | Detected at a mail centre through physical inspection (December 2019)                                |
| <b>LIVE BIRDS</b>                    |                  |                 |   |  |
| Czech Republic                       | →                | <b>Italy</b>    | 20 live Red-fronted Parakeet <i>Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae</i> (App. I/ Annex A) from a fair/exhibition/show/auction house. These were owned by an Italian national who traded animals.  | Detected through targeting (August 2019)   |
| Tenerife (Reported by <b>Spain</b> ) | →                | Colombia        | 6 live parrots: Splendid Grass-Parakeet <i>Neophema splendida</i> , Pale-headed Rosella <i>Platycercus adscitus</i> Fischer's Lovebird <i>Agapornis fischer</i> (All App. II/ Annex B, two of each). The specimens were detected in personal baggage of an air passenger. | Detected at an airport due to random check due to a tip off facilitated by phone tapping (July 2019) |
| Brazil                               | →                | <b>Portugal</b> | 22 live Seven-colored Tanager <i>Tangara fastuosa</i> (App. II/ Annex B). The birds were transported in the personal baggage of an air passenger  | Detected at an airport due to a physical inspection (March 2019)                                     |

| BRAZIL   |             |                       | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED   | DETAILS   |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE               | TRANSIT     | DESTINATION           |   |   |
| <b>MAMMAL BODIES, PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b>      |             |                       |   |   |
| Ukraine  | →           | <b>Poland</b>         | 3 skulls from Giant Panda <i>Ailuropoda melanoleuca</i> (App. I/ Annex A). No details on transport provided.  | (December 2019)   |
| Hong Kong SAR                                    | →           | <b>United Kingdom</b> | 198 specimens of derivatives reported as bile from Giant Panda <i>Ailuropoda melanoleuca</i> (App. I/ Annex A) transported as air freight.  | Detected at an airport due to a risk assessment (August 2019)                               |
| <b>TIMBER</b>                                    |             |                       |   |   |
| Indonesia  | →           | <b>Netherlands</b>    | 20 000 specimens of wood products made from rosewood <i>Dalbergia</i> spp. (App. I/ App. A) transported by container ship. These were valued at EUR 30 000.   | Detected due to physical inspections (February 2019)  |
| Indonesia  | →           | <b>France</b>         | 3421 kg of wood products made from rosewood <i>Dalbergia latifolia</i> (App. II/Annex B). transported by commercial general cargo and were valued at EUR 14 373.  | Detected on import (May 2019)   |
| <b>INVERTEBRATE BODIES PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b> |             |                       |   |   |
| Tanzania   | →           | <b>Germany</b>        | 197 specimens of Queen Conch <i>Strombus gigas</i> (App. II/Annex B) shell transported in the personal baggage of an air passenger.   | Detected at an airport due to physical inspection (August 2019)                             |
| Greece   | → Italy →   | <b>Netherlands</b>    | 146 700 specimens of Brown Sea Cucumber meat <i>Isostichopus fuscus</i> , (App. III/Annex C). The specimens were seized in transit as they were being moved through Italy by truck.                             | Detected in a transit (May 2019)  |
| China  | →           | <b>Italy</b>          | 98 Giant Clam shells Tridacnidae spp. (App. II/Annex B), these were transported in a container ship.  | Detected at a maritime port as a result routine checks (May 2019)                           |
| <b>BIRD BODIES, PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b>        |             |                       |   |   |
| Curaçao  | Netherlands | <b>Spain</b>          | 1019 feathers derived from parrots (Psittaciformes) detected in a postal or express courier parcel.   | Detected in a mail centre the Netherlands due to customs documentary checks (November 2019) |
| Sub-Saharan Africa                               | →           | <b>Malta</b>          | One internal seizure case involving 238 skins, skulls and bodies of 43 species of birds (App. I,II/Annex A,B). Species of the Orders Falconiformes (birds of prey) and Ciconiiformes (storks) were most common. | The specimens were detected inland due to intelligence/investigation (August 2019)          |

| TRADE ROUTE   |         |                  | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED   | DETAILS   |
|---|---------|------------------|---|---|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE                  | TRANSIT | DESTINATION      |   |   |
| China   | →       | <b>Germany</b>   | 120 parrot Psittaciformes feathers transported by air freight detected at an airport.   | Detected due to customs documentary checks (June 2019)                  |
| <b>STURGEON CAVIAR/PRODUCTS CONTAINING STURGEON</b> |         |                  |   |   |
| Ukraine   | →       | <b>Germany</b>   | Seizure of ca. 1 kg of Giant Sturgeon <i>Huso huso</i> (App. II/Annex B) caviar. The specimens were transported by air mail.  | Detected at a mail centre following physical inspection (December 2019) |
| Israel  | →       | <b>France</b>    | 1578 specimens of sturgeon caviar <i>Acipenseriformes</i> spp. (App. II/Annex B) valued at EUR 2097.  | Detected at a maritime port (November 2019)                             |
| Kazakhstan  | →       | <b>Italy</b>     | Ca. 2 kg (9 specimens) of sturgeon caviar <i>Acipenseriformes</i> spp. (App. I/II, Annex A/B). The specimens were transported by air in the personal luggage of an Italian national.  | Detected at an airport (April 2019)                                     |
| Russia  | →       | <b>Austria</b>   | 20 seizure records involving the seizure of a total of ca. 9 kg of caviar from Paddlefishes, Sturgeons (order <i>Acipenseriformes</i> ) (App. I/II, Annex A/B), in all cases these were transported by passenger travelling by air. | Detected at an airport (March-December 2019)                            |
| Belarus → Latvia →                                  |         | <b>Lithuania</b> | 405 specimens of cosmetics containing sturgeon <i>Acipenseriformes</i> spp. (App. II/Annex B) which were apprehended as they were transported by road.  | (March 2019)  |
| South Korea   | →       | <b>Estonia</b>   | 80 specimens of cosmetics containing sturgeon <i>Acipenseriformes</i> spp. (App. II/Annex B) which were apprehended as imported to Estonia by mail.   | Detected at a mail centre due to a risk assessment (July 2019)          |
| <b>PLANT PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b>                  |         |                  |   |   |
| Thailand  | Germany | <b>Italy</b>     | 288 flowers of cacti (including four species of <i>Cactacea</i> spp. as well as <i>Euphorbia lacteal</i> ) (App. I,II/Annex A,B).   | Detected in the personal baggage of an air passenger (March 2019)       |
| Hong Kong SAR                                       | →       | <b>France</b>    | 698 cacti <i>Cactaceae</i> spp. flowers.  | Detected in at a mail centre in Roissy (August 2019)                    |

| TRADE ROUTE                              |                   |   | SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED  | DETAILS  |
|--|-------------------|---|--|--|
| EXPORT/<br>COUNTRY OF<br>DEPARTURE       | TRANSIT           | DESTINATION                               |  |  |
| India                                    | →                 | <b>Belgium</b>                            | 360 picture frames made with ca. 27 kg of rosewood <i>Dalbergia sissoo</i> (App. II/Annex B) transported by boat.  | Detected at maritime port (February 2019)  |
| <b>LIVE EELS</b>                         |                   |   |  |  |
| Spain →                                  | France →          | <b>Bulgaria</b>                           | 897 kg of live glass European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> (App. II/Annex B). The specimens were being transported through France by car when they were seized. The eels were valued at EUR 475 247. | Detected in transit (January 2019)   |
| France →                                 | <b>Bulgaria</b> → | Malaysia                                  | 200 kg of live glass European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> (App. II/Annex B).  | Detected at an airport (February 2019)   |
| <b>Czech Republic</b> →                  | France →          | Viet Nam                                  | 70 000 specimens of live glass European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> (App. II/Annex B), estimated to be worth EUR 81 000, detected in the personal baggage of an air passenger.                      | Detected at an airport through targeting (January 2019)                                    |
| Unknown                                  | Croatia   Russia  | <b>Viet Nam</b>                           | 25 200 specimens of live glass European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> (App. II/Annex B), detected in personal baggage of an air passenger.  | Detected at an airport due to a risk assessment (February 2019)                            |
| <b>LIVE MAMMALS</b>                      |                   |   |  |  |
| Russia →                                 | Austria →         | <b>Croatia</b>                            | One cougar <i>Puma concolor</i> (App. I,II/Annex B) purchased as pet was detected as it was being transported by car.  | Detected in Croatia during a veterinary check (January 2019)                               |
| French Guiana                            | →                 | Guadeloupe<br><b>(reported by France)</b> | 2 White-faced Capuchins <i>Cebus capucinus</i> (App. II/Annex B) transported by an air passenger.  | Detected at an airport (November 2019)   |
| <b>FISH BODIES PARTS AND DERIVATIVES</b> |                   |   |  |  |
| Liberia →                                | Belgium →         | <b>Hong Kong SAR</b>                      | 1200 kg of assorted fins from several species of sharks including Hammerhead Shark <i>Sphyrna lewini</i> (App. II/Annex B) transported by air freight.   | Detected at an airport through a risk assessment and identified by DNA analysis (May 2019) |
| Cuba →                                   | Netherlands →     | <b>China</b>                              | 214 kg of shark fin from Great Hammerhead <i>Sphyrna mokarran</i> (App. II/Annex B) and <i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i> (App. II/Annex B) transported by air mail.                                   | Detected at a mail centre due to customs documentary checks (November 2019)                |



## A BRIEF COMPARISON TO 2018

A comprehensive and quantitative comparison of seizures reported in 2018 and 2019 is not possible due to, among other things, a high number of seizure records lacking some information (e.g. direction of trade for 1452 seizure records (23%) was unknown/other or no information was provided in 2019). However, some observations can be made when comparing these two years.

A total of 6441 seizure records were reported by EU Member States in 2019, similar to the total of 6012 seizure records reported in 2018. The commodity groups involved in the seizures, and their order of importance (in terms of number of reported seizure records), were similar in 2018 and 2019, with the commodity groups medicinals, coral and reptile bodies parts and derivatives included in the top commodity groups in both years.

A significant number of seizures of elephant ivory continued in 2019, which involved a total of 2268

specimens and an additional ca. 206 kg. Ivory carvings accounted for 71% of ivory seizure records. Based on number of seizure records, 38% were internal seizures, 13% of seizure records report seizure on export; 9% on import; 5% in transit and the remainder (36%) were unknown, other or no information was provided. Spain reported most of the internal ivory seizure records (77%) in 2019: a total of 103 ivory seizure records involving 459 specimens. These ivory seizures reported by Spain occurred at a range of locations, the most common of which were shops/markets or private houses. In addition to the ivory seized internally, 199 specimens and an additional ca. 40 kg were seized on import in 2019, which was fewer than the 669 specimens and an additional 2.4 kg seized on import in 2018. For seizures of ivory in transit, the 2019 seizure records were similar to 2018 seizures in transit suggesting the EU in continuing to be utilised as a transit location for the smuggling of elephant ivory from Africa to Asia (mainland China).

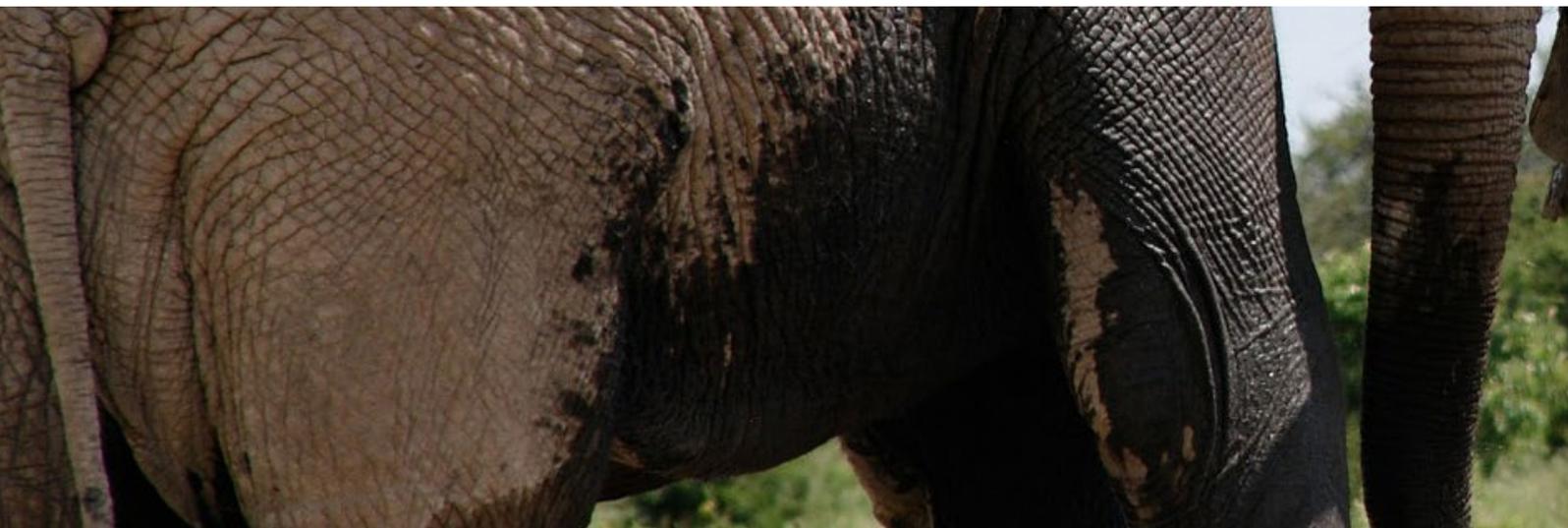
Seizures of live European Eel *Anguilla anguilla* (App. II/Annex B) continued in 2019. There were 46 seizure records involving ca. 3844 kg and an additional 70 376 specimens in 2019. The number of reported seizures in 2019 was lower than 2018, when 107 seizure records were reported involving 9841 kg and an additional 107 specimens of live European Eel. Based on number of seizure records in 2019, 28% were seized on export; 17% in transit; 7% on import; 2% internal; and the remainder (46%) were reported as unknown or no information was provided. Viet Nam (22%) and Malaysia (7%) were the most commonly reported destinations of live eel by number of seizure records in 2019. In 2019 Live eel seizures were mainly reported by Portugal (50%) and France (33%). For example, Portugal reported one seizure record involving 46 kg of live eels at a private house following physical inspection. One commodity which was reported to have been seized in greater quantities in 2019 than 2018 was

coral. In 2019 there were 914 seizure records of live and rock coral which involved 6819 specimens and an additional ca. 431 kg of coral. In 2018, a total of 659 seizure records involving 4343 specimens were reported. The majority of these were stony corals from the order Scleractinia. (App. II/Annex B). A total of 64% of seizure records were on import, 7% were on transit, 3% were internal, less than 1% were on export, and in the rest of the cases (26%) the direction of trade was unknown or not reported. Germany and Denmark were the most commonly reported destinations for coral, while Indonesia and Thailand were the most commonly reported exporters.

The main countries/territories of export reported for 2018 and 2019 (based on number of seizure records) were broadly similar, with Thailand, mainland China, the USA and Indonesia included in the top countries of export across both years, mainly involving medicinal products.

#### **Other important continuing/emerging trends in illegal trade in 2019 included:**

- ⦿ The increasing number of (mainly internal) seizures of bird bodies, parts and derivatives, particularly bodies, feathers and skulls.
- ⦿ The increasing number of reptile bodies, parts and derivatives, mainly in the form of large and small leather products.
- ⦿ The continued seizures of sturgeon caviar *Acipenseriformes* spp. (App. I/II, Annex A/B) mainly intercepted on import.
- ⦿ The continued shipment of specimens, derivatives and products of illegal wildlife through the postal system (detected in mail centres).



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