

AN OVERVIEW OF SEIZURES OF
CITES-LISTED
WILDLIFE

IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2022

TRAFFIC



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CONTENTS

page 4

OVERVIEW

2022 EU CITES-related seizures at a glance

page 6

INTRODUCTION

page 8

REPORTED CITES-RELATED SEIZURES INVOLVING THE EU

Case Study: mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives	10
Countries/Territories of Departure of Illegal Wildlife Trade/Exporters	12
Countries/Territories of Destination of Illegal Wildlife Trade/Importers	13
Internal CITES-related seizures in the EU	14

page 15

METHODS OF TRANSPORT

page 16

DETAILS OF KEY CITES-RELATED SEIZURES REPORTED BY THE EU MEMBER STATES IN 2022

page 23

BRIEF COMPARISON TO 2021

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine on trends in illegal wildlife trade in the EU	23
Changes to the seizures of different wildlife commodity groups over time	24
Emerging and continuing trends in illegal wildlife trade involving the EU in 2022	26

page 35

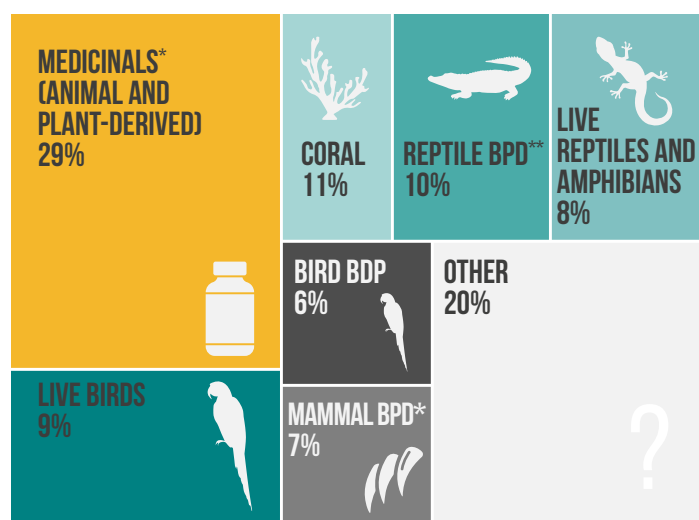
Endnotes

OVERVIEW: 2022 EU CITES-RELATED SEIZURES AT A GLANCE

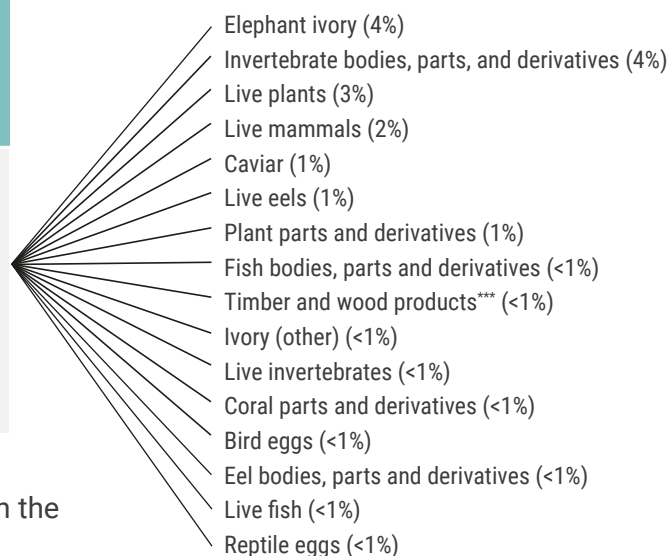
The number of seizure
RECORDS REPORTED BY EU MEMBER STATES



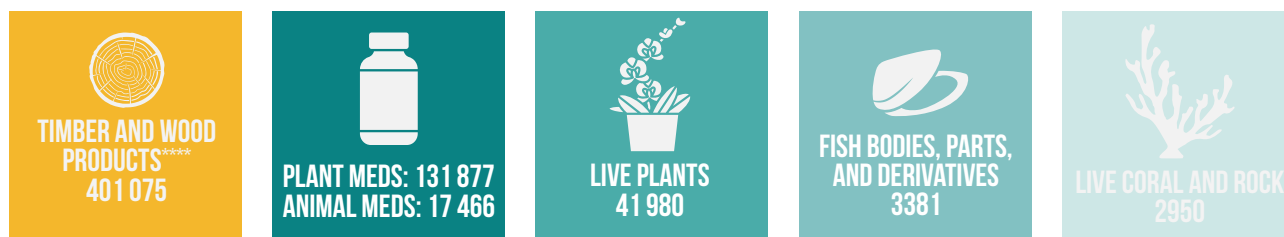
TOP COMMODITIES FOR 2022



The main commodity groups seized in the EU in 2022 based on the
NUMBER OF RECORDS



The main commodity groups seized in 2022 based on the
NUMBER OF SPECIMENS

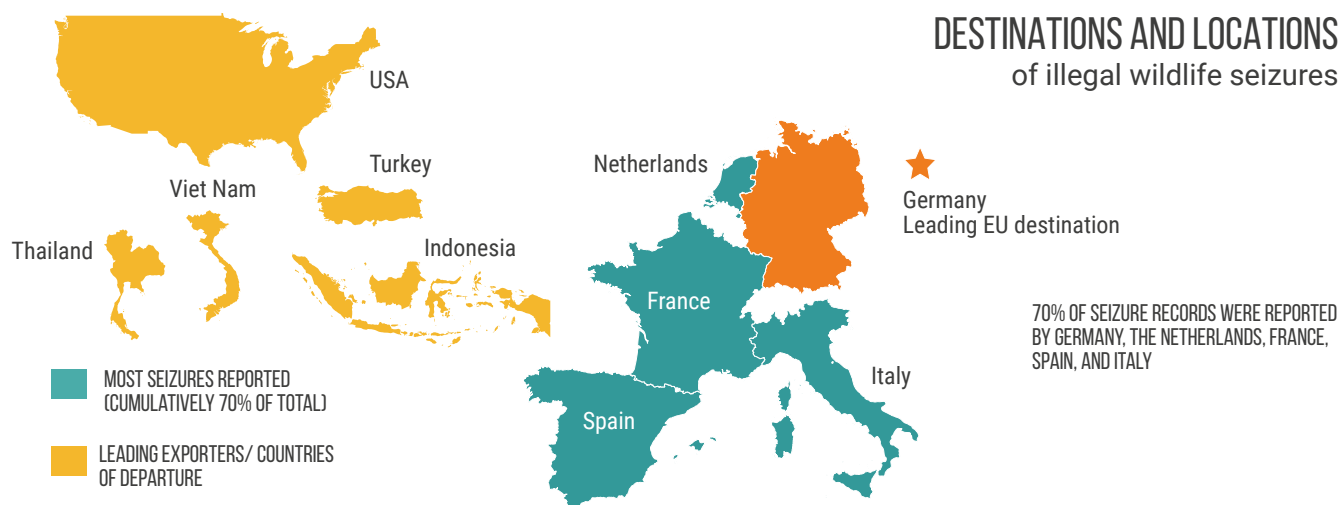


* Medicinal products are understood to include medicines, food supplements, and cosmetic products

**BPD = bodies, parts and derivatives

*** Timber and wood products include the following product types: wood products, wood carvings, logs, veneers, and sawn wood

**** Note: one Spanish shipment of logs significantly contributed to timber and wood products as the top EU commodity group, based on reported specimens and mass



COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES OF DESTINATION REPORTED: 76% (2778 seizure records).

DESTINED FOR EU: 91% (2523 seizure records).

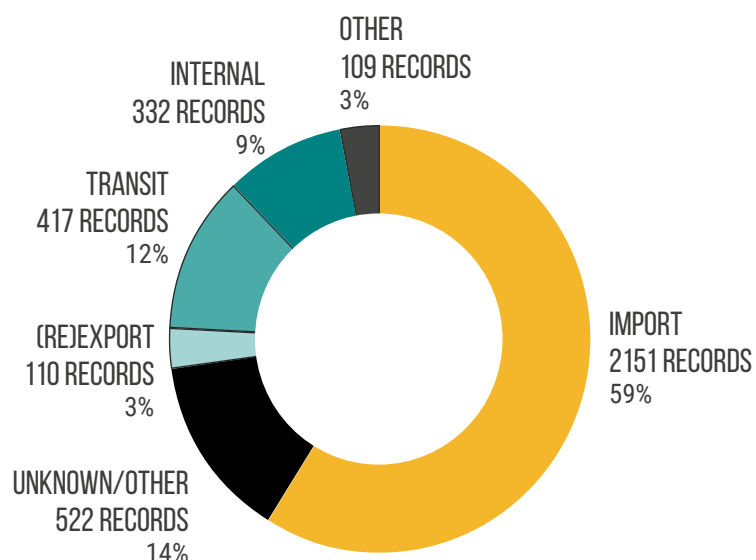
GERMANY: Leading EU destination

DESTINED FOR NON-EU COUNTRIES: 9% (255 seizure records).

THAILAND: Leading non-EU destination

UNKNOWN/NO INFORMATION PROVIDED/OTHER: 14% (522 seizure records).

THE POINT OF SEIZURE (direction of trade)



36%
SEIZURE RECORDS MADE AT
MAIL CENTRES



26%
SEIZURE RECORDS MADE AT
AIRPORTS



Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos*



INTRODUCTION

THIS BRIEFING AIMS TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF ALL CITES-RELATED SEIZURES REPORTED BY THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION¹ (EU) FOR THE 12-MONTH PERIOD FROM JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2022.

This briefing is based on seizures reported by the EU Member States which have taken place both at EU external borders (postal centres, airports, maritime ports, and land boundaries) and at internal locations within an EU Member State (e.g. private premises, market/shops, fair/exhibition/show/auction houses).

The quantitative analysis of these seizures ('Reported CITES-related Seizures involving the EU' and 'Brief Comparison to 2021') and examples of seizures ('Details of Key CITES-related Seizures Reported by the EU Member States in 2022') are based on seizure records submitted in the 2022 CITES Annual Illegal Trade Reports (including information on prosecutions) submitted to the EU-TWIX²

database by the EU Member States. All EU Member States provided data on seizures that occurred in 2022. Some data still required clarification from EU Member States and hence could not be included in this analysis.

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 varying levels of enforcement effort, which could differ over time in many EU Member States. These do not necessarily indicate shifts in demand or changes in illegal wildlife trade dynamics. Conclusions should be drawn with this in mind.

REPORTED CITES-RELATED SEIZURES INVOLVING THE EU

3642 SEIZURE* RECORDS REPORTED BY THE EU MEMBER STATES WERE ANALYSED FOR 2022 WITH GERMANY³ (CA. 25%), THE NETHERLANDS (18%), FRANCE (9%), SPAIN (8%), AND ITALY (7%) ACCOUNTING FOR 70% OF THE TOTAL (FIGURE 1).

MEMBER STATE	2022 SEIZURE RECORDS	MEMBER STATE	2022 SEIZURE RECORDS	MEMBER STATE	2022 SEIZURE RECORDS
Germany	1021	Czech Republic	123	Lithuania	11
Netherlands	663	Poland	107	Ireland	5
France	346	Austria	77	Bulgaria	4
Spain	293	Sweden	37	Luxembourg	3
Italy	243	Malta	24	Greece	2
Belgium	170	Estonia	19	Slovenia	2
Denmark	162	Slovakia	12	Romania	1
Portugal	152	Latvia	12	Finland	1
Hungary	140	Croatia	11	Cyprus	1
				TOTAL	3641

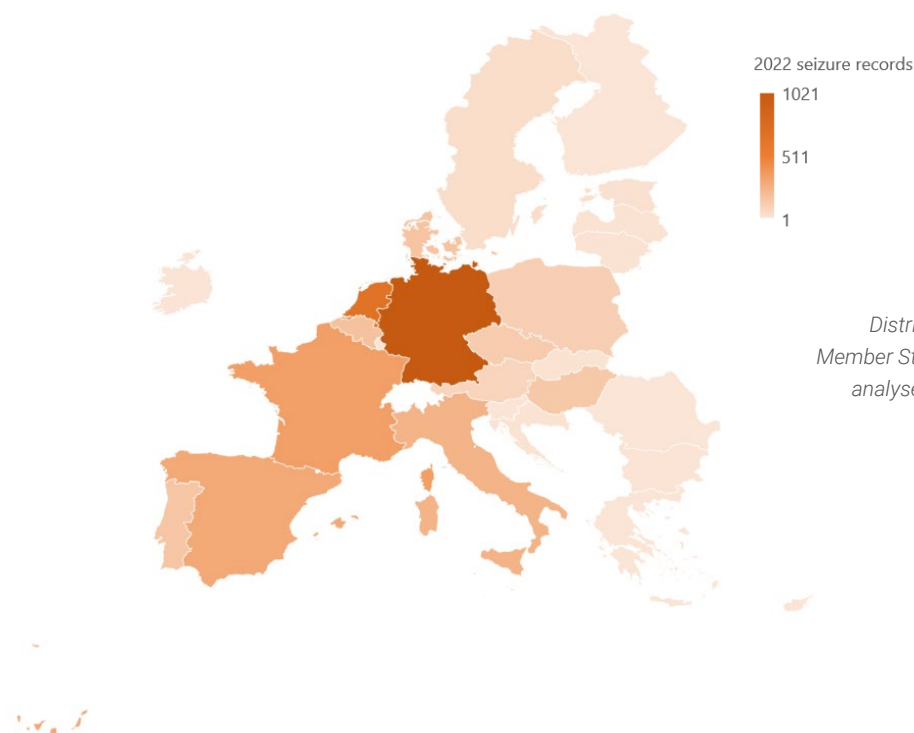


FIGURE 1
Distribution of seizure records across the EU Member States, based on the total seizure records analysed for 2022. Source: EU-TWIX database.

The designations of geographical entities in this map and publication, and the presentation of the material, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of TRAFFIC or its supporting organisations or the European Commission concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

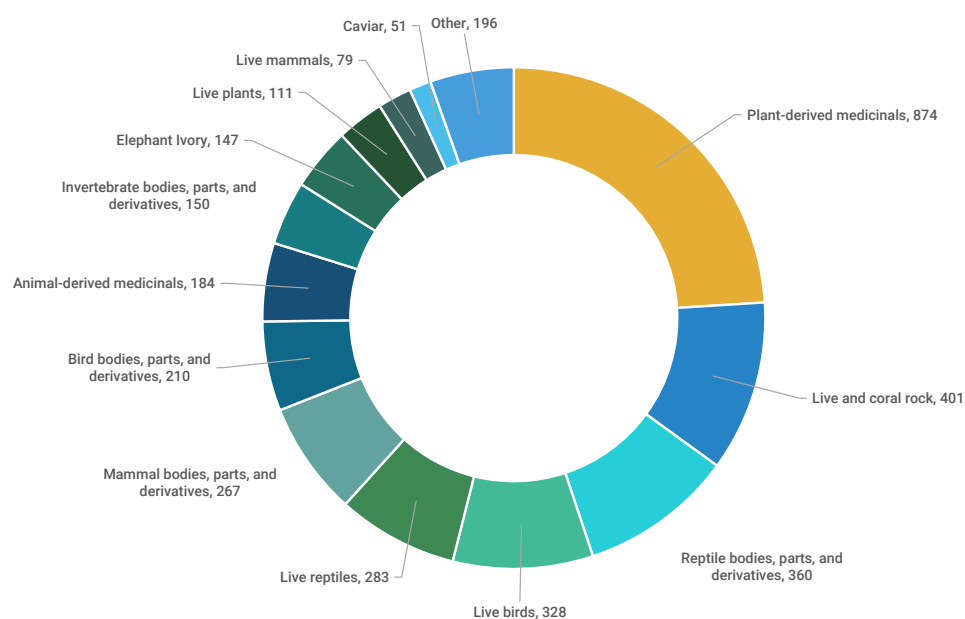
* A total of 3642 seizure records involving EU Member States corresponds to the data available at the time of conducting the seizure analysis

The main types of commodities seized in the EU in 2022 were, in order of the number of reported seizure records (see Figure 2):

- i. **Medicinals**^{4,5}, derived from plants and animals, including both medicinal products (medicinal products are also understood to include health/food supplements, cosmetics, and aromatic plants not necessarily used as medicine) and parts/derivatives for medicinal use (**1058 seizure records involving 149 343 specimens** and an additional ca. 1160 kg and 18 l); 83% of total seizures analysed involving medicinals were derived from plants (**874 seizure records**, involving **131 877 specimens**, and an additional ca. 1156 kg and 13 l). A total of 17 466 animal-derived medicinal items and an additional ca. 5 kg and ca. 6 l were reportedly seized across 184 seizure records; medicinals accounted for 29% of total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 28% of records in 2021 and 30% in 2020).
- ii. **Live coral and coral rock** (401 seizure records, 2950 specimens, and an additional ca. 19 kg); 11% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022, compared to 7% in 2021 and 2020.
- iii. **Reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives** (360 seizure records; 1235 specimens and an additional ca. 143 kg); 10% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 11% in 2021 and 2020).
- iv. **Live birds** (328 seizure records; 900 specimens); 9% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 12% in 2021 and 8% in 2020).
- v. **Live reptiles and amphibians** (288 seizure records, 881 specimens); 8% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 10% in 2021, and 9% in 2020).
- vi. **Mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives** (267 seizure records; 653 specimens and an additional ca. 7776 kg); 6% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 6% in 2021 and 2020).
- vii. **Bird bodies, parts, and derivatives** (210 seizure records, 918 specimens); 6% of the total seizure records analysed for 2022 (compared to 4% in 2021, and 7% in 2020).

FIGURE 2

Distribution of seizure records reported by the EU Member States analysed for 2022 across commodity groups. Source: EU-TWIX database.



Note: "Other" includes the following commodity groups: Live eels (42), Plant parts and derivatives (39), Fish bodies, parts and derivatives (34), Timber and wood products (29), Ivory (other) (14), Live invertebrates (14), Coral parts and derivatives (9), Live amphibians (5), Bird eggs (4), Eel bodies, parts and derivatives (2), Live fish (2), Reptile eggs (1). Source: EU-TWIX database.

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

Point of seizure (direction of trade):

According to the EU-TWIX database, in 2022, 59% (2151 seizure records) of data analysed were reportedly seized on import, followed by seizures in transit (12%; 417 seizure records), internal seizures (9%; 332 seizure records), and seizures on (re-)export (3%, 110 seizure records). For the rest (14%; 522 seizure records), the direction of trade was reported as unknown/ no information was provided, or other (3%; 109 seizure records).

Type of locations where seizures took place:

In 2022, the EU Member States reported the type of location where a seizure took place for 3550 seizure records; 97% (compared to 85% of records in 2021).

Most seizures were made at mail centres (1293 seizure records, 36%), followed by airports (931 seizure records, 26%), and private houses (608 seizure records, 17%). The remaining seizures were intercepted in other locations, including markets/shops (4%), maritime ports (3%), fair/exhibitions (2%), land boundaries (2%), other locations (2%), inland (2%), zoological gardens and animal parks (2%), road and highways (1%). In 92 seizure records (3%) the type of location was unreported or unknown.

59% of seizures were reportedly made on import into the EU

CASE STUDY

MAMMAL BODIES, PARTS, AND DERIVATIVES

In 2022, the sixth most frequently seized commodity type was mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives; accounting for 267 seizure records, involving 653 specimens and an additional 7776 kg (7% of total seizure records analysed for 2022, representing a slight increase from 6% of records in 2020 and 2021).

Mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives were predominantly seized on import (55%), in transit (9%) and internally within an EU Member State (8%) and were mostly reported by Spain, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands and Belgium. The main product types were meat (28%), bodies (23%), trophies (10%), skins (7%), and skulls (6%), derived from over 28 different mammal families.

Main taxa/product combinations in trade:

- **Carnivores** (40% of total mammal BPD records):
 - ca. 55% Cats (Felidae spp.) mostly Panthera spp. bodies and claws and Lynx spp. [App. I,II/Annex A,B]) bodies and fur products;
 - 23% bears (Ursidae spp.), mostly bodies and skulls;
- **Cetaceans** (18%): including Dwarf minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* (App. I,II/Annex A), and largely meat originating from Greenland and Norway, seized in Denmark;
- **Even-toed ungulates**, Artiodactyla (18%): involving 53% Bovidae spp. including

trophies, horns, and bodies from Oryx (App. I/Annex A) and Capra (App. I/II/III, Annex A, B, C) genera;

- **Primates** (10%): 33% meat (only reported to order-level), and 18% reported for purposes including Macaques (Macaca spp.; App. II/Annex A,B), and Savannah Monkey *Chlorocebus aethiops* (App. II/Annex B).

One significant seizure involved 152 kg of trophies of various CITES-protected species, including American Black Bear *Ursus americanus* (App. II/Annex B), Grizzly Bear *Ursus arctos* (App. I, II/Annex A), and Pronghorn *Antilocapra americana* (App. I/Annex A). The container was exported from Montreal (Canada) to Lisbon port (Portugal) by ship.

Another significant seizure was reported by Denmark CITES Management Authority. The seizure involved ca. 22 kg of cetacean meat detected at a maritime port. The goods were exported from Greenland by ship and were seized following a routine inspection. The specimens had no CITES permit. France reported an illegal flow (importation) of bush meat also intended for consumption (pangolins, antelopes, monkeys, crocodiles). Consequently, checks are frequent at airports, particularly for the application of health regulations.





FIGURE 3

The composition of mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives seized in 2022, based on the number of total records reported by Member States.
Source: EU-TWIX database.

Other (remaining 12%):

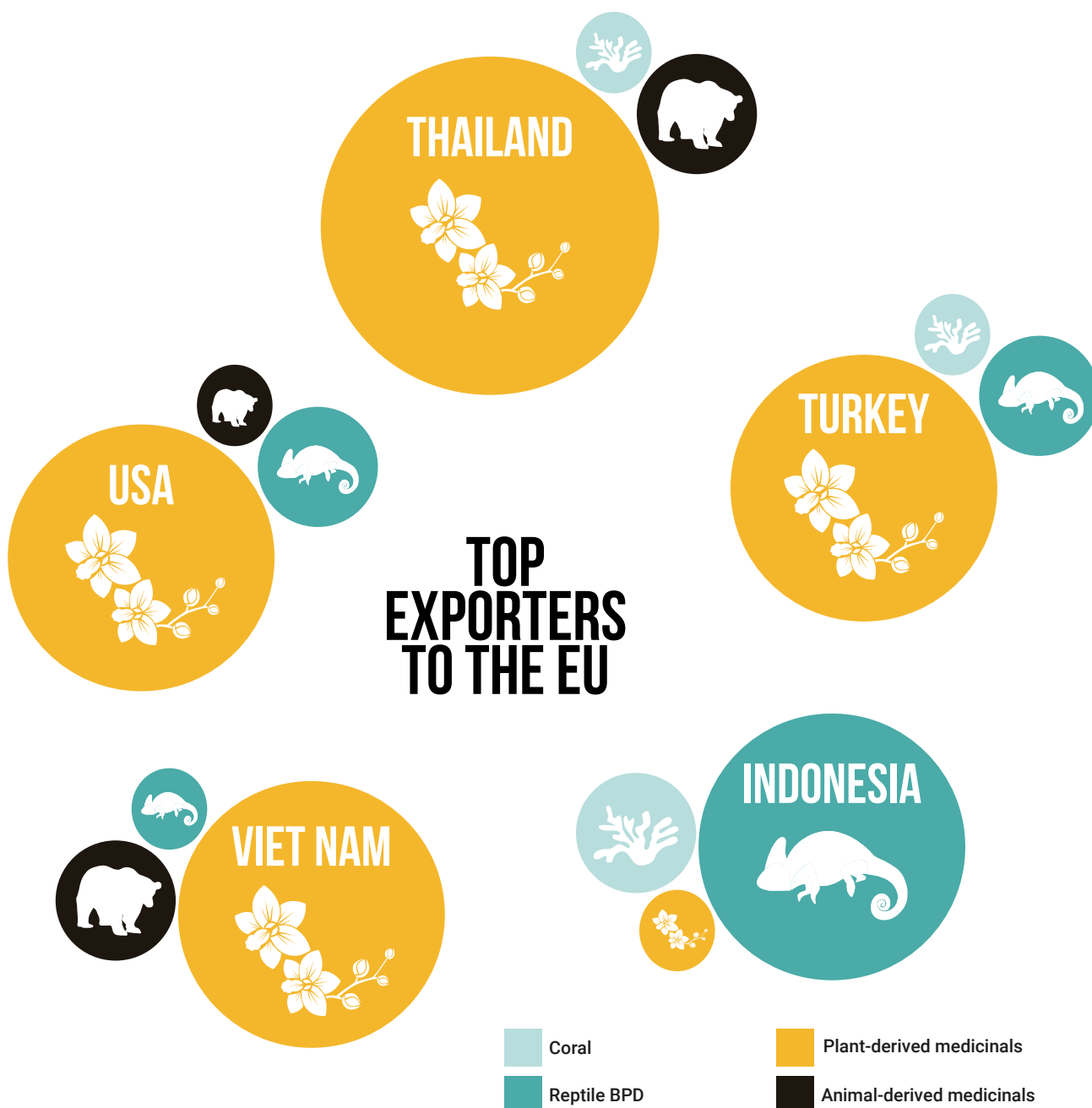
Pangolins (*Manidae*), Elephants (*Elephantidae*), Lutra lutra (Eurasian Otter), Crested Porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), Walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*), Anteaters (*myrmecophagidae*), Mountain Zebra (*Equus zebra hartmannae*), Cape Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*), African Civet (*Civettictis civetta*), Chinchilla



COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES OF DEPARTURE OF ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE/EXPORTERS

A total of **2500 seizure records (69%)** had countries/territories of export (or 'departure of illegal wildlife trade') reported; **EU Member States** (excluding their overseas territories) were the **country of export for 216 seizure records (9% of total records analysed for 2022)**

with a known country of export; involving 20 EU Member States), while non-EU countries/territories were reported as the country of export for **2284 seizure records (91% of records with a known country of export)**.



Top three commodity types for the top five countries/territories of export or departure of illegal wildlife trade as reported by the EU Member States, according to the number of seizure records, 2022.

Source: EU-TWIX databases



THAILAND was the reported exporter for **466 seized shipments** (19% of records

with a known country of export in 2022, compared to 14% in 2021); a total of 66% of these records in 2022 involved **plant-derived medicinals** (296 records comprising 6953 specimens and an additional 205 kg and 1 l), mainly containing Cacti *Cactaceae* spp. (App. II/Annex B) (82% of plant-derived medicinals exported from Thailand; 253 records, 6115 specimens, and an additional 175 kg). **Animal-derived medicinals** (52 records involving 512 specimens and an additional 21 kg and 21 l; 11% of total shipments exported from Thailand) and **live and coral rock** (32 records comprising 223 specimens; 7% of the total exported shipments/records from Thailand) were the other main commodity types seized from Thailand.



THE USA was the reported exporter in **273 seizure records** (11% of records with

a known country of export in 2022): Over half (57%) of these records involved **plant-derived medicinals** (156 records involving 11 367 specimens and an additional ca. 13 kg and 10 l), mainly containing parts and derivatives



of **African Cherry *Prunus africana*** (App. II/Annex B). **VIET NAM** was the reported

exporter in **132 seizure records** (5% of records with a known country of export in 2022): Over half (52%) of these records involved **plant-derived medicinals** (68 records involving 481 specimens), mainly containing Costus Root *Saussurea costus* (App. I/Annex A).



INDONESIA was the reported exporter in **90 seizure records**: 54% of records

involved **reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives**, comprising **49 seizure records** involving 320 specimens derived from python *Python* spp. (App. II/ Annex B). Additionally, 28 seizure records involved **coral** (31%, 650 specimens), mainly consisting of live and coral rock, as well as 7 seizure records that involved **plant-derived medicinals** (423 specimens and an additional 1 kg).

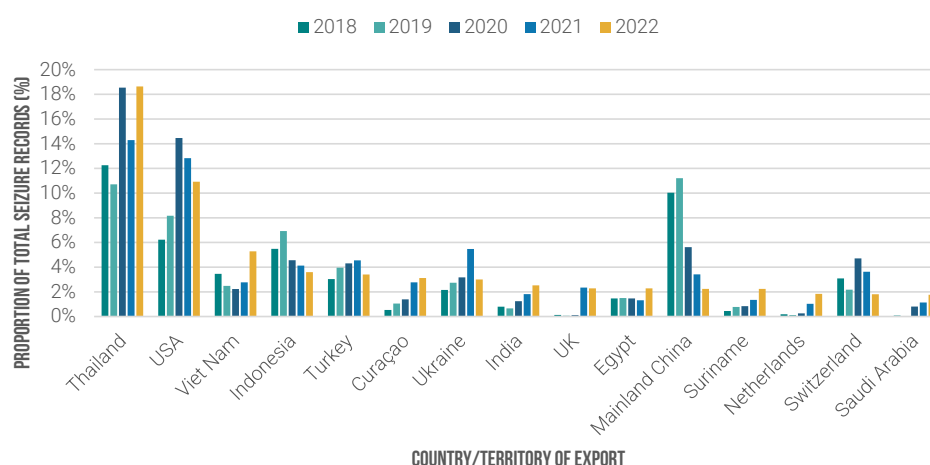


TURKEY was the reported exporter in **85 seizure records**: 67% of these records

involved **plant-derived medicinals** (57 records involving 81 specimens) mainly consisting of orchids *Orchidaceae* spp. (App. I,II/ Annex A,B).

FIGURE 4

Top 15 countries/territories of export or departure of illegal wildlife trade as reported by the EU Member States, according to the number of seizure records, analysed for 2022. Data from 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 are included for comparison. Source: EU-TWIX database. 14



COUNTRIES/TERRITORIES OF DESTINATION OF ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE/IMPORTERS

A total of **2778 seizure records** (ca. 76% of total seizure records analysed for 2022) had countries/territories of destination reported. The **EU Member States were the destination of 2523 seizure records** (91% of total records with a known destination)⁷, and the remaining 255 seizure records (ca. 9% of total records with a known destination) were destined for non-EU countries (or the EU overseas territories).

Of the 2502 seizure records destined for the EU Member States, **Germany was the most reported destination country** (804 seizure records), followed by the Netherlands (451 seizure records), France (293 seizure records), Denmark (166 seizure records), and Belgium (130 seizure records). These five countries were reported as the destination for 73% of the total seizures of wildlife destined for the EU.

Of the 373 seizure records **destined for non-EU countries or territories, the USA was the leading destination for commodities seized upon (re-) export from the EU or while in transit in the EU**, accounting for 57 seizure records (ca. 2% of total seizure records; Figure 5).

A total of 32% (18 seizure records) of the 57 shipments **destined for the USA were plant-**

derived medicinals. These seizures mostly involved woodchips of specimens from the *Aquilaria* genus (App. II/Annex B) and extract from **Costus Root *Saussurea costus*** (App. I/Annex A). Approximately 39% of seized plant-derived medicinals destined for the USA were exported from India, followed by Saudi Arabia (33%), Uganda (11%), United Arab Emirates (5%), Bahrain (5%), and Italy (5%).

In addition, the **UK, Morocco, Canada, and mainland China** were frequent destinations for commodities seized upon export/(re-)export from the EU or while in transit in the EU:

UK – 30 seizure records, mainly involving **reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives** (47%) and plant-derived medicinals (23%).

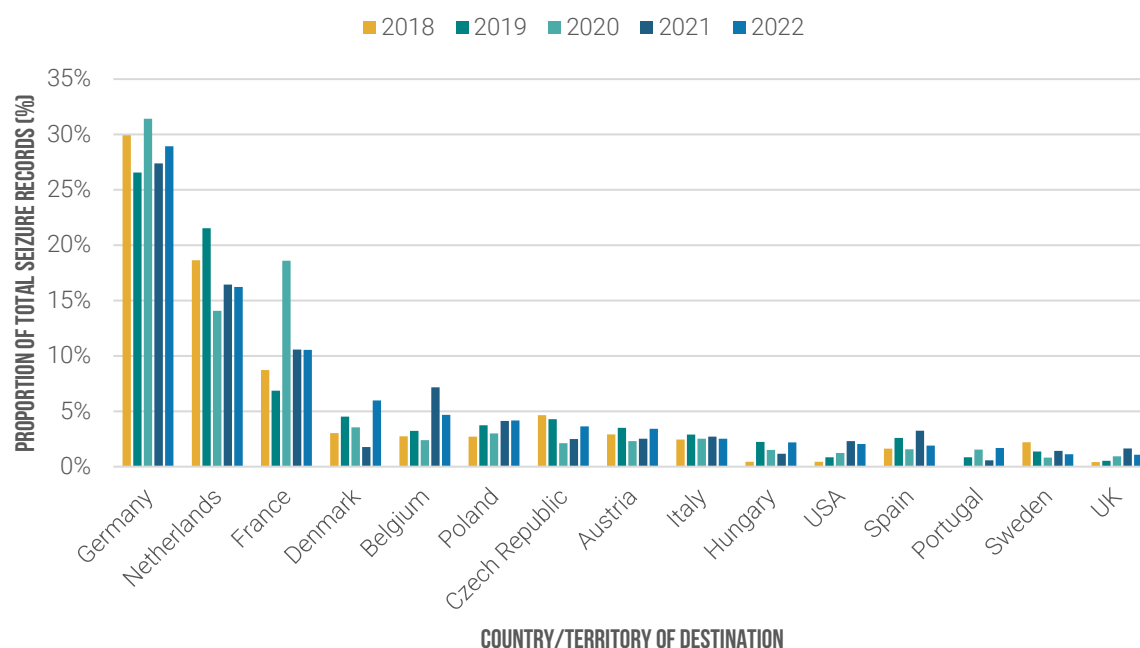
Morocco – 20 seizure records, mainly involving **plant-derived medicinals** (95%) and live eels (5%).

Canada – 14 seizure records, mainly involving **reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives** (43%) and plant-derived medicinals (36%).

Mainland China – 11 seizure records, mainly **reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives** (55%) and elephant ivory (27%).

FIGURE 5

Countries/territories of destination of illegal wildlife trade (including their overseas territories) as reported by the EU Member States, according to the number of seizure records analysed for 2022. Data from 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 are included for comparison. Source: EU-TWIX database.



INTERNAL CITES-RELATED SEIZURES IN THE EU

In 2022, a total of 332 internal seizure records were reported by 16 EU Member States (Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Czech Republic, Malta, France, Denmark, Croatia, Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, and Romania) compared to 428 internal records reported by 15 EU Member States in 2021. The main commodity types seized internally within the EU in 2022 (in order of importance based on the number of reported seizure records) were **live birds (31%), live reptiles and amphibians (8%), reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives (14%), and elephant ivory (10%)⁸**.

A total of **244 live birds** were reported as seized internally by EU MS (102 seizure records), 70% of records were parrots (Psittaciformes), and 11% were passerine birds (Passeriformes). The Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* (15%; App. I/Annex A) and the Green-cheeked Parakeet *Pyrhura molinae* (6%; App. II/Annex B) were the most seized species. Portugal and the Netherlands were the primary reporting countries of the internal trade of live bird seizures, reporting 30% and 23% of internal seizures of live birds in 2022, respectively.

A total of **143 live reptiles and amphibians** were reported as seized internally, across **53 seizure records in 2022**. In terms of the number of seizure records, these seizures

mainly involved live turtles/tortoises *Testudinidae* spp. (50% of seizure records and 73 specimens; App. I,II,III/Annex A,B,C) and Geckos Gekkonidae family (25% of seizure records and 36 specimens). Spain reported a high proportion of these seizures (20 records involving 49 specimens), mostly detected at private houses.

A total of **74 specimens of reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives** were reported as seized internally, across 46 seizure records in 2022. In terms of the number of seizure records, these seizures mainly involved turtles/tortoises *Testudinidae* spp. (41% of seizure records and 31 specimens; App. I,II,III/Annex A,B,C) and snakes *Serpentes* order (28% of seizure records and 23 specimens). Belgium reported a high proportion of these seizures (19 records involving 24 specimens), mostly detected at private houses.

A total of **269 specimens of elephant ivory** were reported as seized internally, across 33 seizure records in 2022. **Spain reported most of the seizures** (46%), followed by Italy (30%), Belgium (12%), Czech Republic (3%), Slovakia (3%), Poland (3%), and Netherlands (3%). Most of the specimens were seized in fairs/exhibitions/show/auction houses (39%) and market/shops (33%). The seizures mostly involved ivory carvings (91%).





METHODS OF TRANSPORT

The most frequently reported location, where seizures occurred, was **mail centres** (36% of total records), with a total of 52 059 specimens and an additional ca. 591 kg and 17 l seized across **1293 records**. **Germany reported the highest number of seizures at mail centres with 718 seizure records** (65% of which occurred at mail centres in Frankfurt am Main Airport and 20% at Leipzig Airport). **The Netherlands** reported the second-highest number of seizures at mail centres (304 seizure records), with 72% of these seizures occurring at Schiphol International Airport and 26% at The Hague Mail Centre. **Belgium** followed with 93 seizure records at mail centres, 66% of which took place at Maelbeek Mail Centre and 30% at Zaventem Airport. **Plant-derived medicinals were the most frequently seized commodity group at mail centres** (54% of total records at mail centres), followed by reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives (16%), animal-derived medicinals (9%), live plants (4%) and bird bodies, parts and derivatives (4%). Detection methods included **routine inspection** (62%) and **Customs document checks** (28%).

Transport **via mail** (primarily airmail (22% of total records) and express carrier (8%)) were the most common modes of transport

of intercepted goods in the EU in 2022, accounting for 1077 seizure records (48% of the 2241 seizure records with details reported on transport mode). In addition to airmail, air transport also included transport by air passengers (21% of total records) and air freight (6%). However, there were gaps in reporting as in 1400 seizure records (38%), the transport details were reported as unknown or were unreported.

A total of 931 seizures took place at an **airport**, involving a total of 46 236 specimens and an additional 1206 kg and 1.5 l (26% of total records). The most commonly reported commodities seized at airports were **live coral and coral rock** (38%; 350 records). Germany reported the highest number of seizures at airports (278 seizure records), 27% of which were made at Frankfurt am Main Airport and 27% at Munich Airport. The Netherlands reported the second highest number of seizures at airports, with a total of 237 seizure records (nearly all of which were made at Schiphol International Airport).

mail centres

was the top location where seizures occurred



Cobra *Ophiophagus Spp.*

DETAILS OF KEY CITES-RELATED SEIZURES REPORTED BY THE EU MEMBER STATES IN 2022

Table 1 contains details of crucial seizure records reported by the EU Member States from January to December 2022. Seizures were selected based on the following criteria:

- i. seizures involving particularly large quantities of a commodity type; and
- ii. seizures highlighting important illegal wildlife trade trends involving the EU (e.g., in terms of countries or species involved).

TABLE 1
Details of selected seizures reported by the EU Member States for 2022 arranged by commodity type (the country which reported the seizure records is shown in bold, and the EU Member States involved in the trade route are shown in CAPITALS).

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
MEDICINALS				
Thailand	➡	BELGIUM	 2 COMMERCIAL SEIZURES OF 980 PILLS and 400 packages of medicine containing cacti.	These specimens were intercepted on export from Thailand detected during routine inspections at Liège Mail Centre and were found to have no CITES permit. (April 2022)
UAE	➡	NETHERLANDS	339 KG (6770 JARS) OF AQUILARIA CHIPS and 336 jars with powder derived from Costus root (<i>Saussurea costus</i> ; App I/ Annex A)	The chips were seized on import at Rotterdam maritime port. (April 2022)
ITALY	➡	USA Australia	 2 COMMERCIAL SEIZURES OF COSMETICS containing extract from <i>Phalaenopsis amabilis</i> (CITES App II/Annex B), which involved a total of 75 594 lipsticks and 2736 bottles of hair preparations.	The shipments were intercepted on export from Italy (La Spezia maritime port). The specimens were detected due to routine inspection. No CITES permits accompanied the shipment. (2022)

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
MEDICINALS				
Australia	→	POLAND	 POLISH CUSTOMS SEIZED 480 PILLS OF MEDICINE containing the genus <i>Dendrobium</i> (App. II/Annex B) (a total of eight packages).	These tourist seizures were detected due to routine inspection. (February 2022)
Mainland China	→ NETHERLANDS →	GERMANY FRANCE	 2 COMMERCIAL SEIZURES OF 6120 SPECIMENS (derivatives) of <i>Dendrobium</i> (App. II/Annex B) in jars and 25 kg of <i>Bletilla</i> (Urn orchid) roots in bags.	The shipments were intercepted in transit at Schiphol Airport. The goods were detected as a result of Customs document checks, resulting in confiscation. (June 2022)
UAE	→	NETHERLANDS	 SEIZURE OF 16 KG OF STURGEON CAVIAR POWDER (App. II/ Annex B).	The specimens were exported from United Arab Emirates by express carrier and were detected by customs documentary checks at Schiphol Airport. (December 2022)
Thailand	→ Russian Federation →	ESTONIA	 TOURIST SEIZURE OF 6 TUBES OF KING COBRA One tourist seizure of 6 tubes with a weight of 1.8 kg containing King Cobra <i>Ophiophagus hannah</i> (App. II/Annex B).	The goods were detected on import during a random check and were seized due to a lack of CITES permits. (December 2022)
Viet Nam, Mainland China, and South Korea	→	CZECH REPUBLIC	 20 TOURIST SEIZURES TOTALLING 316 SPECIMENS (comprised of 34 packages, 27 pieces, 225 pills, and 30 medicinal products) containing mainly <i>Moschus</i> spp. (App. I,II/Annex A,B).	All specimens were intercepted at Prague Airport following customs documentary checks. The maximum fine imposed was EUR255 and all goods were confiscated. (2022)
Viet Nam, Nigeria, Senegal and Angola	→	GERMANY	 5 IMPORT SEIZURES OF 1570 SEAHORSES <i>Hippocampus</i> spp. (App. II/ Annex B).	The goods were seized at Leipzig Airport (three seizures) and Frankfurt am Main Airport (two seizures) following routine inspections due to no CITES permits. (2022)
Ukraine	→	POLAND	 SHIPMENT OF 8500 LIVE SPECIMENS of Southern Medicinal Leech <i>Hirudo verbana</i> (App. II/Annex B)	The specimens were detected at a land boundary, and they were seized during routine inspection. (2022)
CORALS				
Maldives	→	PORTUGAL	 8.65 KG OF STONY CORALS from a passenger.	The specimens were exported from the Maldives to Portugal by air and were seized at Oporto Airport. The offender did not have CITES permits. (May 2022)
Maldives	→ UAE →	BELGIUM	 131 SPECIMENS OF STONY CORALS totalling ca. 6 kg	The specimens were seized at Zaventem Airport in the personal baggage of a passenger. The goods were detected following a routine X-ray inspection. (September 2022)
Unknown	→	GERMANY	 1 POSTAL PACKAGE CONTAINING STONY CORALS (species not identified)	The specimens were seized at the customs office in Bruchsal. The stony coral was sent to a private recipient in Germany together with various souvenirs and gift items. (September 2022)

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
REPTILE BODIES, PARTS, AND DERIVATIVES				
Indonesia	→	ITALY	 15 SMALL LEATHER PRODUCTS FROM REGAL PYTHON <i>Malayopython reticulatus</i> (App II/Annex B)	The specimens were seized in a mail centre at Milano – Malpensa. The specimens were transported by air mail from Indonesia and were seized due to a lack of CITES permit. (December 2022)
Viet Nam	→	DENMARK	 15 SMALL LEATHER PRODUCTS FROM REGAL PYTHON 25 bodies of Tokay Gecko <i>Gekko gekko</i> (App II/Annex B) (App II/Annex B)	The bodies were seized in Copenhagen Airport. The specimens were exported from Viet Nam by air and were seized following a routine X-ray inspection. The offender did not have a CITES permit. (2022)
Australia	→	NETHERLANDS	 2 SALT-WATER CROCODILE LEATHER BELTS <i>Crocodylus porosus</i> (App I, II/Annex A, B).	The items were seized as the shipment was not accompanied by the required CITES import permit. Additionally, the CITES export permit was only issued for one belt. The CITES Management Authority of Australia has been informed about the seizure. (December 2022)
Gabon	→ FRANCE →	BELGIUM	 7 KG OF CROCODILE MEAT (species not specified)	The meat was seized at Brussels Midi train station. The specimens were found in the personal baggage of the offender following a routine inspection. The goods were transported together with other meat, in total ca. 13 kg of meat were found. (2022)
LIVE BIRDS				
BELGIUM	→	Israel	 35 LIVE RED-RUMPED PARROTS <i>Psephotus haematonotus</i> (App. II/Annex B)	The specimens were exported from Belgium to Israel by air and transported in very small cages in hold luggage. The birds were detected following a routine X-ray inspection. (December 2022)
	→ SPAIN		 20 LIVE GREY PARROTS <i>Psittacus erithacus</i> (App. I/Annex A)	The specimens were seized in a private house in Villanueva de la Serena following a physical inspection. (December 2022)
	→ FRANCE		 62 LIVE EUROPEAN SERIN <i>Serinus serinus</i> (App. III/Annex C)	The specimens were seized in a private house in Rivesaltes following an investigation. The offender did not have CITES permits. (February 2022)
	→ FRANCE		 9 LIVE SPECIMENS OF VARIOUS GALLINACEOUS bird species	The live birds were seized in a private house in Seynod following a physical inspection. The offender did not have CITES permits. (October 2022)

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
LIVE REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS				
Uzbekistan	➡	SPAIN	 116 LIVE STEPPE TORTOISES <i>Testudo horsfieldii</i> (App II/Annex B)	The specimens were seized in a market/shop in Barcelona following a physical inspection. The offender had no CITES permits. (October 2022)
GERMANY	➡	Kuwait	 41 BALL PYHTONS <i>Python regius</i> (App II/Annex B) and two White-lipped Python <i>Leiopython albertisi</i> (App II/Annex B).	German Customs officers at Frankfurt am Main Airport seized the specimens that were being exported from Germany to Kuwait by air. The specimens were detected in personal baggage, placed in 38 cloth bags. The offender had no CITES permits. (December 2022)
	SWEDEN		 8 LIVE AXOLOTLS <i>Ambystoma mexicanum</i> (App. II/Annex B)	Swedish National Criminal Police found the specimens in a market/shop following a physical inspection. The animal trader could not provide a valid CITES permit and a fine of EUR865 was imposed. (2022)
NETHERLANDS	➡	USA	 1 LIVE AXOLOTL <i>Ambystoma mexicanum</i> (App. II/Annex B)	Following a random check, Dutch Douane Informatie Centrum at Schiphol Airport detected a specimen that was being exported to USA. The traveller could not provide any valid CITES permit. (2022)
MAMMAL BODIES, PARTS, AND DERIVATIVES				
Turkey	➡	GREECE	 74 KG OF SKIN PIECES FROM BOBCATS <i>Lynx rufus</i> (App. II/B)	The goods were exported from Turkey to Greece by road and were seized following a physical inspection. The offender had no CITES permits. (March 2022)
Canada	➡ GERMANY ➡	LATVIA	 1 FUR AND 1 SKULL OF PUMA <i>Puma concolor</i> (App. I, II/ Annex A, B) and one fur and skull of Canada Lynx <i>Lynx Canadensis</i> (App. II/ Annex B)	The specimens were exported by air freight shipment and were seized at Frankfurt Airport. The shipment was not accompanied with the required CITES documents. (December 2022)
Norway	➡ SWEDEN ➡	FINLAND	 7488 KG OF MINKE WHALE <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (App. I,II/ Annex A)	The meat was seized at a land boundary in Hân when it was being transported by road. The goods had no CITES permits and were returned to the country of export. (October 2022)
Angola	➡ GERMANY ➡	Viet Nam	 9.18 KG OF RHINO HORN	The pieces of rhino horn were concealed in parcels that were in transit in Germany. The illegal shipments were selected, respectively identified for further controls, in two instances by sniffer dogs and in one instance by risk analysis. (May – July 2022)

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
BIRD BODIES, PARTS, AND DERIVATIVES				
	FRANCE		 73 TROPHIES OF VARIOUS BIRD SPECIES	The goods were seized from an antique dealer following intelligence/investigation. No CITES permits accompanied the specimens. The country of export of the specimens was unknown. (September 2022)
	MALTA		 29 BIRD BODIES OF DIFFERENT SPECIES	The bodies were seized in a private house in Mellieha following a physical inspection due to lack of CITES permits. (2022)
Suriname	→	NETHERLANDS	 69 FEATHERS OF OF THE HARPY EAGLE <i>Harpia harpyja</i> (App. I/Annex A)	The feathers were seized at a mail centre in Schiphol Airport following customs documentary checks, and they were seized due to lack of CITES permit. (2022)
Peru	→	NETHERLANDS	 6 PIPES WITH FEATHERS FROM PARROTS <i>Psittaciformes</i> order (App. I,II/Annex A, B)	The items were seized at the International Mail & E-commerce Center in The Hague. The items were not accompanied by the required CITES permits. The CITES Management Authority of Peru was informed. (November 2022)
INVERTEBRATE BODIES, PARTS, AND DERIVATIVES				
	MARTINIQUE		 53 KG OF QUEEN CONCH MEAT <i>Strombus gigas</i> (App. II/Annex B)	Gendarmerie France seized Queen Conch meat in a container in Martinique. The goods were being transported by boat and were seized following a routine inspection. (August 2022)
FRANCE	→	PORTUGAL	 11.75 KG OF GIANT CLAM <i>Tridacna gigas</i> shells (App. II/Annex B)	The specimens were seized at Oporto Airport. The passenger did not have CITES permits. (February 2022)
Canada	→	FRANCE	 27 CLAM PEARLS (species not identified)	The goods were seized in a private house in Beauzelle. The owner did not have CITES permits. (March 2022)
French Polynesia	→	FRANCE	 14 KG OF QUEEN CONCH SHELLS <i>Strombus gigas</i> (App. II/Annex B)	The specimens were seized in private house in Toulouse. The goods were detected due to internet monitoring. (March 2022)
ELEPHANT IVORY				
Guinea	→ SPAIN →	IRELAND	 2 TUSKS, 2 IVORY COMBS and 12 items of ivory jewellery	The ivory was discovered during a physical inspection made for drugs and cigarettes, found concealed under the captain's clothes. (December 2022)

TRADE ROUTE			SPECIES AND QUANTITY SEIZED	DETAILS
EXPORT/ COUNTRY OF DEPARTURE	TRANSIT	DESTINATION		
ELEPHANT IVORY				
	ITALY		 4 RAW IVORY TUSKS	The tusks were seized in a hotel located in Palermo, Sicily. The tusks were displayed in a part of the hotel for hosting events. The tusks were often photographed and posted on social media by guests. (April 2022)
	ITALY		 360 IVORY CARVINGS AND 27 TUSKS	35 seizure records at internal locations. The specimens were mostly detected through risk assessment, targeting, and tip-off, and typically involved antique dealers. (2022)
LIVE PLANTS				
Iran	➡	CZECH REPUBLIC	 116 LIVE STAR CACTI <i>Astrophytum asterias</i> (App. I/Annex A)	The live plants were intercepted at Prague mail centre due to customs documentary checks. The cacti belonged to a private collector. (2022)
Taiwan, Province of China	➡	NETHERLANDS	 4000 LIVE ORCHID PLANTS <i>Cattleya</i> genus	The specimens were seized at Schiphol Airport, and they were being transported in air freight. (February 2022)
Mainland China	➡	NETHERLANDS	20 000 LIVE NEPENTHES ALATA and 7000 live Trumpet pitchers of the <i>Sarracenia</i> genus (both App. II/Annex B)	The plants were seized at Schiphol Airport due to customs documentary checks. <i>Nepenthes alata</i> was a new species not previously seized between 2017 and 2021. (June 2022)
Switzerland, Ghana, Iraq, and Kazakhstan	➡	NETHERLANDS	245 LIVE STRIPY PONYTAIL PLANTS <i>Beaucarnea recurvata</i> (App. II/Annex B)	Four seizures in total. The plants were transported by air passenger and detected due to random checks. (2022)



African Grey Parrot Psittacus erithacus

BRIEF COMPARISON TO 2022

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE ON TRENDS IN ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN THE EU

Although most of the travel restrictions were lifted in 2022, according to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), there was still a **decline of 29% of the world's total passengers** (a reduction of 1280 million passengers) in 2022 compared to 2019. At the EU level, there were a total of 9.3 million flights, 83% of 2019 traffic. International extra-EU transport represented 47 % of all passengers, while intra-EU and national transport shares were 36.5 % and 16.5 % respectively¹¹.



In 2022, seaports continued to experience congestion due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fall in direct connections to the Black Sea because of the war in Ukraine. By July 2022 the port congestion had caused 37% of world containership fleet capacity to be held up at ports compared to 32% over the period 2016–2019¹².

INCOMPLETE SEIZURE INFORMATION

In addition, a high number of seizure records lacked some information, e.g. the direction of trade was not reported for 522 seizure records (14% of records analysed for 2022 compared to 26% of records for 2021). However, some observations can be made when comparing patterns between 2022 and 2021, by using a proportional approach to compare seizure data across the years.



CHANGES TO THE SEIZURES OF DIFFERENT WILDLIFE COMMODITY GROUPS OVER TIME

A total of 3642 seizure records reported by the EU Member States were analysed for 2022: this is 17% less than the total of 4404 seizure records analysed for 2021. The wildlife commodity groups involved and their order of importance (in terms of the number of reported seizure records) were similar in 2022 and 2021, with **medicinals; live and coral rock; reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives; live reptiles; and live birds** included in the top reported commodity groups across both years.

Seizures of **medicinals** remained the most frequently seized commodity type in 2022; accounting for 1058 seizure records (29% of total 2022 records, compared to 28% of records in 2021).

A total of 83% of seizures involving medicinals were derived from plants in 2022.

For plant-derived medicinals, trade was dominated by medicinal products containing **cacti** Cactaceae spp. (App. I, II/ Annex A,B), **Costus Root** *Saussurea costus* (App. I/ Annex A), **African Cherry** *Prunus africana* (App. II/ Annex B), **Orchids** Orchidaceae spp. (App. II/ Annex B), **Agarwood** *Aquilaria* spp. (App. II/Annex B), **American Ginseng** *Panax quinquefolius* (App. II/Annex B) and **Aloe** (e.g., *Aloe arborescens* [App. II/Annex B]). A total of 82% of seizures were made on import into the EU, with **Thailand, the USA, and Viet Nam** being the main exporters of plant-derived medicinals. A total of 80% of records were detected at **mail centres**. Main countries of

destination were Germany, the Netherlands, and Czech Republic (8%).

For **animal-derived medicinals**, in 2022, trade was dominated by **sturgeons** Acipensiformes (App. I,II/Annex A,B), **venomous snakes** *Elapidae* spp (App. II/Annex B), **musk deer** *Moschus* spp. (App. I,II/Annex A,B), **seahorses** *Hippocampus* spp. (App. II/ Annex B), **medicinal leeches** *Hirudinidae* spp. (App. II/ Annex B), and **bears** *Ursidae* spp. (App. I,II/ Annex A,B). Ca. 76% of seizures were made on import into the EU, with Thailand (28%), USA (16%), Viet Nam (15%), Ukraine (11%) and United Kingdom (5%) as the main countries of export. **Mail centres** (63%), airports (21%), and land boundaries (13%) were the main locations where seizures of animal-derived medicinals took place. The main countries of destination were Germany, Poland, Czech Republic, Estonia, and Netherlands.

One commodity group which was reported to have been seized in greater quantities in 2022 than in 2021 was **coral**. Seizures of coral increased from 7% in 2020 and 2021 to 11% in 2022. Approximately **94% of seizure records involved stony corals** of the order Scleractinia (App. II/Annex B) and were mostly seized on import (ca. 86%) or in transit (ca. 12%). Nearly half of seizures were reported by **Germany**, followed by Denmark, Poland, Belgium, and Italy. The main countries of export included **Egypt** (11%), Thailand (8%), Indonesia (7%), Maldives (6%), Mexico (6%) and Mauritius (6%). Exports originated from 60 different countries, and they mostly occurred at **airports** (86%) and mail centres (6%).

A notable number of seizures of reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives (BPD) took place in 2022 (360 seizure records), constituting 10% of total seizure records in 2022 (compared to 11% in 2021 and 2020). Main taxa in trade were **alligators/caimans/crocodiles** *Crocodylia* spp. (App. II/Annex B), snakes *Serpentes* spp. (App. I,II,III/Annex A,B,C); **turtles and tortoises** *Testudines* spp. (App. I, II,III/Annex A,B,C), and lizards *Sauria* spp. (App. I, II,III/Annex A,B,C). Most seizures were made on import (54%), and transit (24%), with Indonesia (14%), USA (9%) and Thailand (6%) as the main countries of export. The main countries of destination were Germany, Netherlands and France. Additionally,

most specimens were detected at **mail centres** (58%), airports (16%) and private houses (13%).

Seizures of **live birds** slightly decreased from 981 live birds seized in 2021 across 520 records (12% of total seizure records) to 900 live birds seized across 328 seizures in 2022 (9% of total seizure records). Main taxa in trade were **parrots** *Psittaciformes* (App. I,II/ Annex A,B, **passerine birds** *Passeriformes* (App. I,II,III/Annex A,B,C), **gallinaceous birds** *Galliformes* (App. II, III/Annex B, C), **birds of prey** *Falconiformes* (App. I,II,III/Annex A,B,C) and **owls** *Strigiformes* (App. I,II/Annex A,B). Specimens were mainly reported by **Portugal, Spain, France, Italy**, and the **Netherlands** in **private houses** (55%) and **market/shops** (12%). A total of 87% of countries of export were reported as **unknown**.

Seizures of live reptiles and amphibians decreased from 427 in 2021 (9% of total seizures) to 288 in 2022 (8% of total seizures). As for reptiles, in 2022, there were 283 seizure records, involving 866 live reptiles (less than half of the live specimens seized in 2021, where a total of 2182 live reptiles were seized across 418 seizure records). The majority of these seizures involved **turtles/tortoises** *Testudines* (74%, 300 seizure records involving 666 live specimens). The main taxa involved (by number of records) included **Hermann's Tortoise** *Testudo hermanni* (App. II/ Annex A), **Spur-thighed Tortoise** *Testudo graeca* (App. II/ Annex A), **Marginated Tortoise** *Testudo marginata* (App. II/ Annex A), and Steppe Tortoise *Testudo horsfieldii* (App. II/ Annex B). In 2022, 15 live amphibians were seized across five seizure records, which represents a decrease from nine seizure records involving 338 live amphibians in 2021. Most of these individuals were **Axolotls** *Ambystoma mexicanum* (App. II/Annex B). Seizures occurred at **market/shops, other locations, and airports**.



coral seized

quantities seized in 2022 was greater than in 2021 and 2020

MAIN COUNTRIES OF EXPORT:

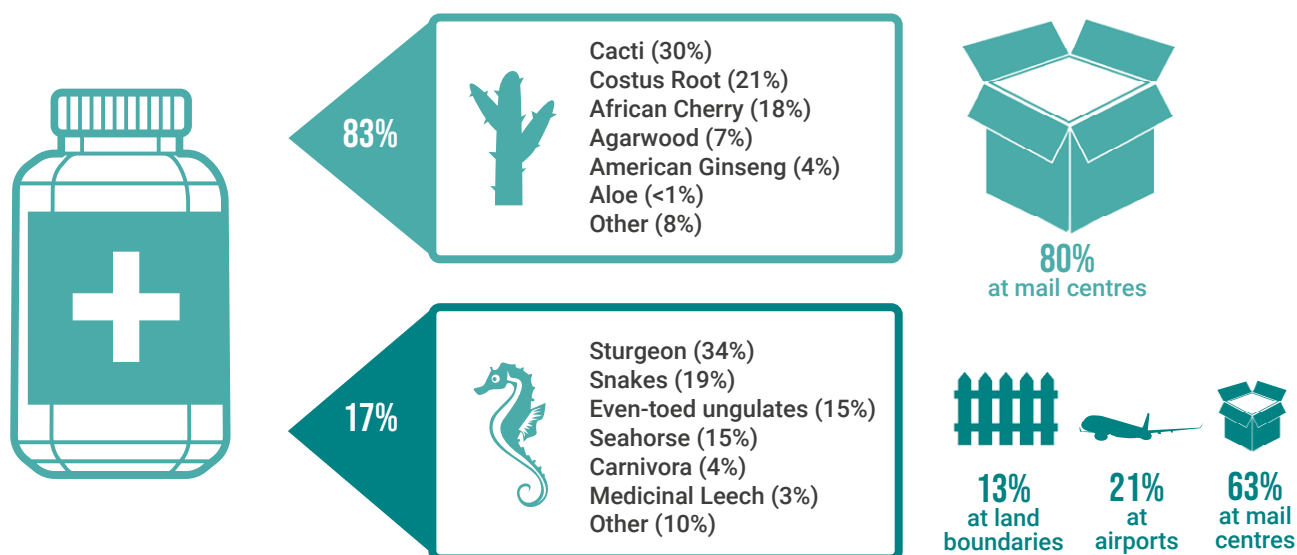
Thailand remained the top exporter to the EU in 2022, with exports from Thailand constituting 19% of the total number of EU seizure records with a known country of export (compared to 14% in 2021, and 19% in 2020). In 2022, Thai exports involving **plant-derived medicinals** decreased (from 78% in 2021 to 66% in 2022). Conversely, in 2022, there was an increase in exports from Thailand of **live coral and coral rock** (0.25% in 2021, to 7% in 2022) and **animal-derived medicinals** (4% in 2021, to 11% in 2022).

The USA was also a major exporter of illegally traded wildlife to the EU in 2022, making up 11% of total seizure records with a known country of export. There was a decrease in the proportion of US exports of **plant-derived medicinals**, constituting 70% of US exports in 2020, 75% in 2021, and 57% in 2022. However, US exports involving **animal-derived medicinals** increased from 2% of total US exported records in 2021 to 11% in 2022.

Viet Nam increased in prominence as an exporter to the EU in 2022, from 3% of records in 2021 to 5% of records with a known country of export in 2022. Seizures involving **plant-derived medicinals** increased from 36% of Vietnam's total seized exports in 2021 to 52% in 2022. Nevertheless, Viet Nam's exports involving reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives decreased from 37% in 2021 to 17% in 2022.

Ukraine decreased in prominence as an exporter to the EU in 2022, from 5% of records in 2021 to 3% of records with a known country of export in 2022. Seizures involving **caviar** decreased from 43% of Ukraine's total seized exports in 2021 to 27% in 2022, while seizures involving coral increased from 3% in 2021 to 9% in 2022.

Mainland China continued to significantly decrease as a country of export for illegal wildlife seized in the EU in 2022, from 6% of total records with a known country of export in 2020, 3% in 2021, to only 2% in 2022.



EMERGING AND CONTINUING TRENDS IN ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE INVOLVING THE EU IN 2022

CONTINUING TRENDS



The continuing/stable number of seizures involving **reptile bodies, parts, and derivatives**, particularly **small leather products and bodies from lizards** *Sauria* spp. (App. I, II, III/Annex A, B, C), **alligators/caiman/crocodiles** (Crocodylia; App. I, II /Annex A, B) and snakes (Serpentes; App. I, II, III/Annex A, B, C).



The increasing number of invertebrate bodies, parts, and derivatives, mainly Queen Conch *Strombus gigas* (App. II/Annex B) meat and shells, and giant clam *Tridacnidae* spp. (App II/Annex B) shells, with this illegal wildlife trade mostly concentrated in the Caribbean region (EU overseas territories – France and the Netherlands).



The continued seizures of **mammal bodies, parts, and derivatives**, in particular big cat claws and bodies; cetacean meat; and primate meat.



Shipments involving **CITES Appendix II/EU Annex B listing species**, especially those declared as having **no accompanying CITES documents**, continued to be seized, raising the question of why these shipments are non-compliant.



Medicinal products, lifestyle products, cosmetics or diet supplements in postal parcels. Medicinal products containing **Costus Root** *Saussurea costus* (App I/Annex A) were identified as a significant trend in 2021 and 2022.

EMERGING TRENDS



The **increasing seizures of corals**, imported into the EU from 60 different countries/territories.



A slight **increase in reported seizures of live glass/eels**.



A decrease in reported seizures of **sturgeon caviar** *Acipensiformes* spp. (App. I, II/Annex A, B).



Increase in seizures made at **mail centres, airports, private houses, inland locations, and at land boundaries**.

In 2022, a total of 648 records involving the illegal trade of 1886 live animals¹³ were assumed to be destined for the pet trade. This figure made up **17%** of total records for 2022, compared to 22% for 2021 (3645 live animals across 996 records).

Live mammals were the **only commodity group to increase as a proportion of total EU seizure records in 2022**, from constituting 1% of total records for 2021 (77 live mammals across 48 records) to 2% in 2022 (113 across 79 records). However, **62% were seized at zoological gardens in 2022**.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Member States of the EU in 2022: 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, and Sweden.

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

³ The seizure data reported by Germany are related to seizures carried out at border posts only. Internal seizures carried out by the regional or local authorities inside the country are not available in a central database, therefore, such data could not be provided and included in the analysis.

⁴ 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 were used.

⁵ Under the EU law, 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 project 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.

⁶ Including animal parts/derivatives, e.g. bear bile, seahorse bodies, big cats' bone, crocodile oil, rhino horn.

⁷ Excluding their overseas territories.

⁸ Based on seizure records where the point of seizure/direction of trade was reported as 'internal', (occurring at an internal location within an EU Member States rather than at an external border) as opposed to 'importation', '(re-)exportation', 'transit', 'other' or 'unknown/unreported'.

⁹ https://www.icao.int/sustainability/Documents/COVID-19/ICAO_Coronavirus_Econ_Impact.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.eurocontrol.int/publication/eurocontrol-analysis-paper-2022-year-european-aviation-bounced-back#:~:text=2022%20was%20the%20year%20European,1.8%20million%20fewer%20than%202019>.

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Air_passenger_transport_-_monthly_statistics

¹² https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/rmt2022overview_en.pdf

¹³ Criteria for calculating the proportion of EU seizures destined for the pet trade: CITES description code LIV; and belonging to one of the following commodity groups: live birds, live reptiles, live amphibians, live fish, live mammals (except those where the location of seizure was a zoological garden). For the purpose of this estimation, the commodity group live invertebrates were excluded, considering this group predominantly consisted of Queen Conch and Giant Clams taxa, used as food.

IMAGE CREDITS

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