



## Illegal Trade of Wild Animals

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**Context:** Despite Covid-19 restrictions and the risk of animal to human disease transmission, illegal wildlife trade on social media networks has continued, with wild animals sometimes sold as “lockdown pets”.



**Evidence:** Examining advertisements on Facebook in Brazil and Indonesia, the researchers found thousands of posts advertising wild animals, with a potential audience of over 200,000 people.

### Research Study

Researchers from Oxford Brookes University and the University of Western Australia analysed around 20,000 Facebook posts about wild pet trade, and found no clear evidence that the online wildlife trade was discouraged or decreased amidst the pandemic, Oxford Brookes University said in a media release.



The university release

quoted study of a co-author saying that We anticipated that we would see many posts mentioning Covid-19 regarding the potential dangers of wildlife trade or using it as a reason for a temporary cessation of sales. Instead, advertisements mentioning Covid-19 often stimulated wildlife trade, suggesting the pandemic was a great time to buy an exotic pet for companionship, for example.

The researchers also found that no traders or consumers discussed the role of wildlife trade in spreading diseases, the release said. Instead, discounts were given, and home delivery services were provided.

The release quoted another co-author said that Clandestine markets often expand to supply the demand that still exists and, in that case, not only does wildlife trade continue, monitoring it becomes nearly impossible.

The paper, which focuses on Brazil and Indonesia, is titled 'Online trade in wildlife and the lack of response to COVID-19'. It has been published in the Journal of Environmental Research.

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### Connecting the Article

**Question for Prelims :** Which one of the following best describes the term “**lockdown pets**” sometimes seen in news?

- (a) Pets during the lockdown
- (b) Wildlife in the COVID19 pandemic
- (c) Orphaned household animals
- (d) None of the Above

**Question for Mains :** Despite Covid-19 restrictions and the risk of animal to human disease transmission, illegal wildlife trade on social media networks has continued. Suggest the measures to control this menace.

Covid19