



# COVID-19 ONE YEAR LATER

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PANDEMICS AND THEIR LINKS TO NATURE  
CHINA, MYANMAR, THAILAND, US AND VIETNAM

FINDINGS FROM 2021 SURVEY

## COVID-19 ONE YEAR LATER

### PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PANDEMICS AND THEIR LINKS TO NATURE

China, Myanmar, Thailand, US and Vietnam  
Summary report from GlobeScan Incorporated

May 2021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report was produced by GlobeScan, commissioned by WWF-US.

## WWF

WWF is an independent conservation organization, with over 30 million followers and a global network active in nearly 100 countries. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. Find out more at [panda.org](http://panda.org)

## GLOBESCAN

GlobeScan is an insights and strategy consultancy, focused on helping our clients build long-term trusting relationships with their stakeholders. Offering a suite of specialist research and advisory services, we partner with business, NGOs and governmental organizations to meet strategic objectives across reputation, sustainability and purpose. Established in 1987, GlobeScan has offices in Cape Town, Hong Kong, London, Paris, San Francisco, São Paulo and Toronto, and is a signatory to the UN Global Compact and a Certified B Corporation.

Any reproduction in full or in part must mention the title and credit the above-mentioned publishers as the copyright owners.

© TEXT 2021 WWF

All rights reserved

Design: Ender Ergün

### WWF International

Avenue du Mont-Blanc  
1196 Gland, Switzerland  
[www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

### GLOBESCAN

145 Front Street East Suite 208  
Toronto, ON Canada M5A 1E3  
[www.globescan.com](http://www.globescan.com)

# INTRODUCTION

This survey comes as a larger, more indepth followup to one conducted at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Asia. In March 2020, WWF commissioned GlobeScan to conduct a survey among the general public in 5 Asian markets (Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Hong Kong SAR and Japan) to measure and better understand opinions around the closure of high-risk wildlife markets within the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Since that study, the impact of COVID-19 has become deeper, longer-lasting, and more widespread than could have been predicted at the beginning of 2020. The pervasive effects of this virus and the resultant pandemic have irreparably altered people's perceptions, attitudes, and lives all over the world. Given COVID-19's origin as a zoonotic disease –one that spreads from animals to humans– people's perceptions and behavior around the purchase of wild animals as food, pets and luxury items, are of particular interest to monitor during this time.

In early 2021, we conducted a more in-depth follow-up study to assess whether the immediate concerns and opinions about COVID-19 have persisted, or whether economic concerns and other factors have detracted from the focus on wildlife consumption as the root cause of the pandemic. We also delved into perceptions regarding what needs to be done to prevent future pandemics, and we looked at the public's understanding of other root causes, beyond high-risk wildlife trade. We wanted to understand whether consumers in deeply affected countries are supportive of government action to prevent zoonotic outbreaks at the source.

This study looks at five countries – China, Myanmar, Thailand, the United States, and Vietnam. We compare results in Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam with those from 2020 when relevant as the three countries surveyed in both years.

# METHODOLOGY

This study uses quantitative data collection to answer the research questions. Quantitative data collection provides robust, comparable results that allow for analysis of trends and preferences across a large geographic area. These data can be used to understand beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes toward public health, the economy, and wildlife consumption during the COVID-19 outbreak across the five countries surveyed.

This survey was conducted in five countries between February 4th and March 18th, 2021. This timing was chosen to coincide with the 2020 survey, which was conducted between March 6th and 11th, 2020.

Participants from an online panel were invited to participate in the online survey via email. The survey had a questionnaire length of 19 minutes on average, with a median length of 13 minutes.

Participants could answer the survey either on their smartphones or on their computers, at their convenience.

Any participants under 18 years of age were screened out and were not permitted to participate in the survey.

Note: data comparisons are made with 2020 for Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam because they were surveyed last year. China and US were only surveyed in 2021; therefore data comparisons are not available.

Due to political unrest in Myanmar, research in this country was cut short and the final sample size was 631. This was weighted to 1,000 in the report for easy comparison with other countries. With the lower sample size for Myanmar, the margin of error is higher, and this must be considered when interpreting results on incidence rates. Results on opinions and attitudes are less likely to be affected.

## OVERVIEW OF ALL 5 SURVEYED COUNTRIES PERCEIVED PRIMARY SOURCES OF COVID-19

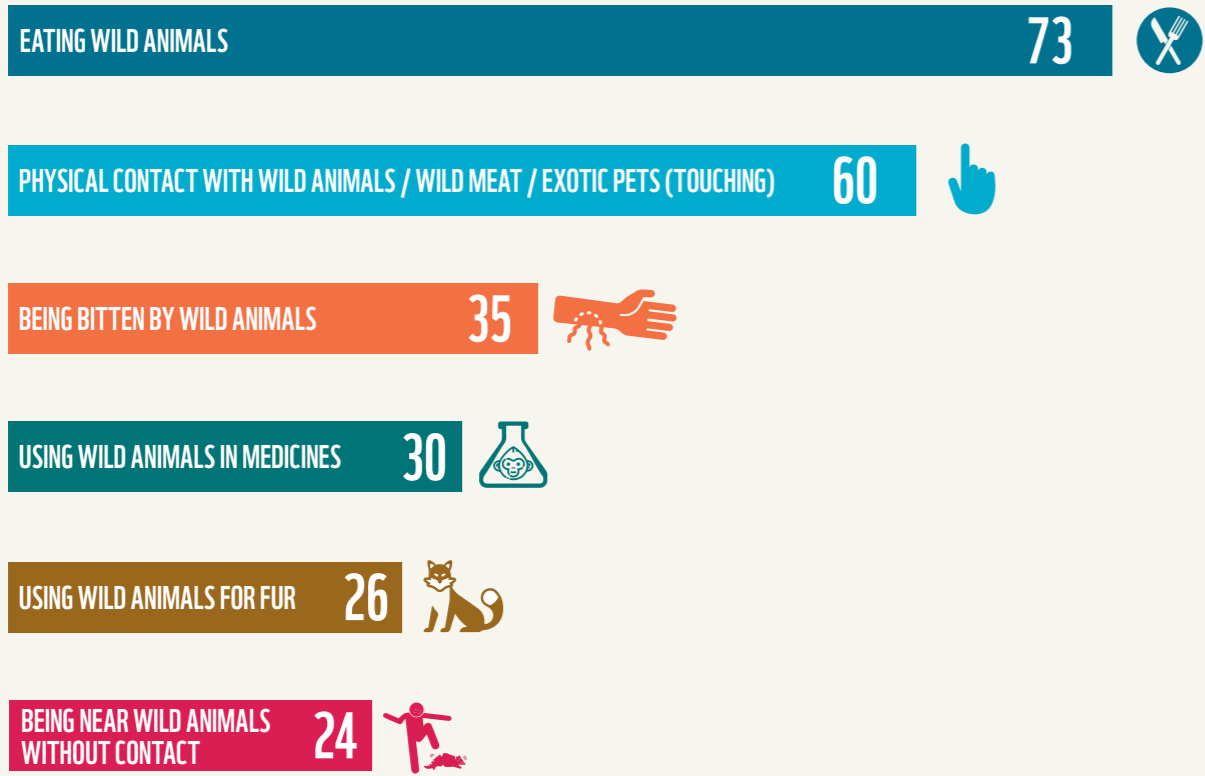
Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %

**58%**  
WILDLIFE/  
WILD ANIMALS



### PERCEIVED WAYS OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION FROM WILD ANIMALS TO HUMANS

(Among Those Who Believe Wild Animals Are the Source of COVID-19) (%)

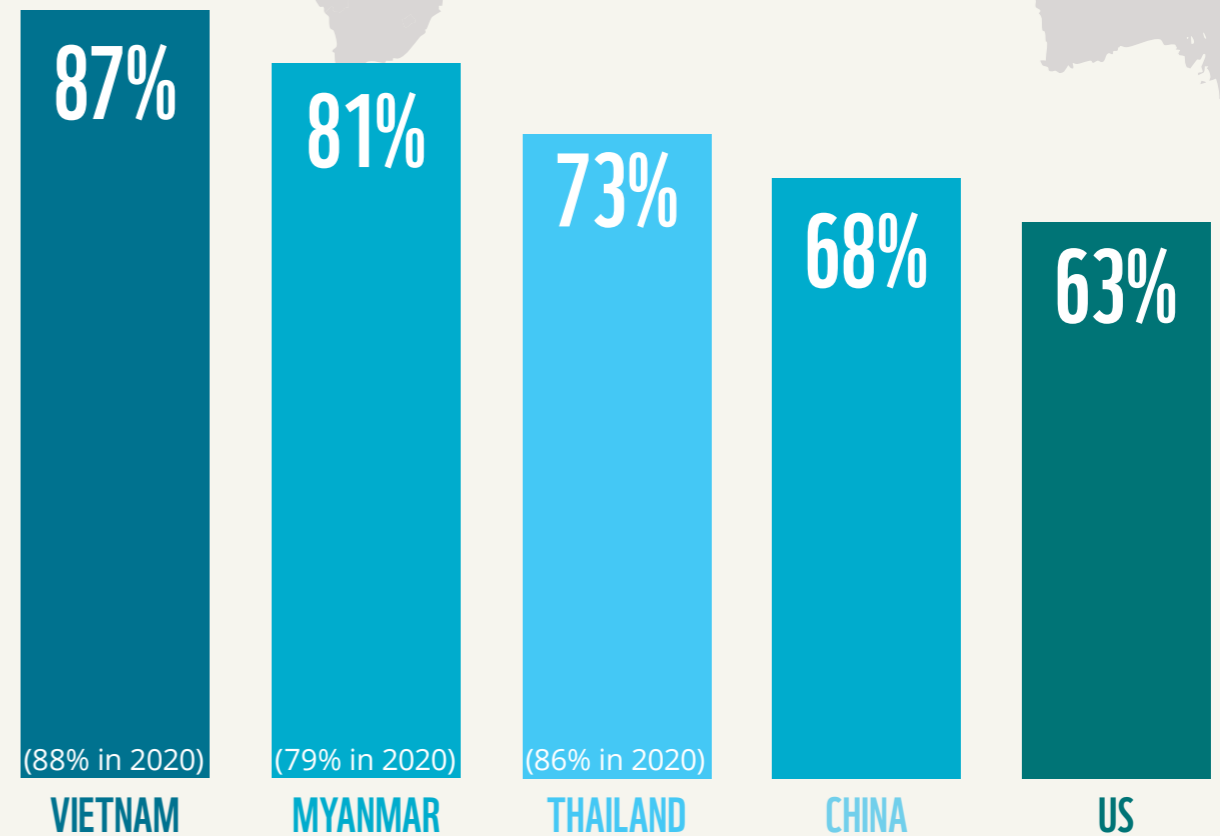


## OVERALL LEVEL OF WORRY ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %

**74%**

EXTREMELY OR  
VERY WORRIED  
ABOUT THE OUTBREAK



# CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ACTIONS



81%

BELIEVE CLOSURE OF HIGH-RISK WILDLIFE MARKETS WHERE THEY SELL ANIMALS COMING FROM THE WILD IS **VERY** OR **SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE** TO PREVENT SIMILAR PANDEMIC DISEASES FROM HAPPENING IN THE FUTURE



85%

ARE **VERY LIKELY** OR **LIKELY TO SUPPORT** THE EFFORTS BY GOVERNMENTS AND HEALTH MINISTRIES TO CLOSE ALL HIGH-RISK MARKETS SELLING ANIMALS COMING FROM THE WILD



88%

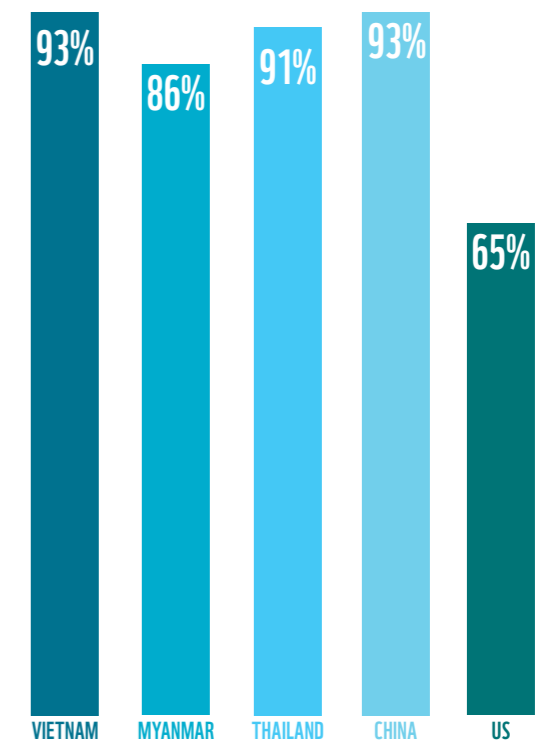
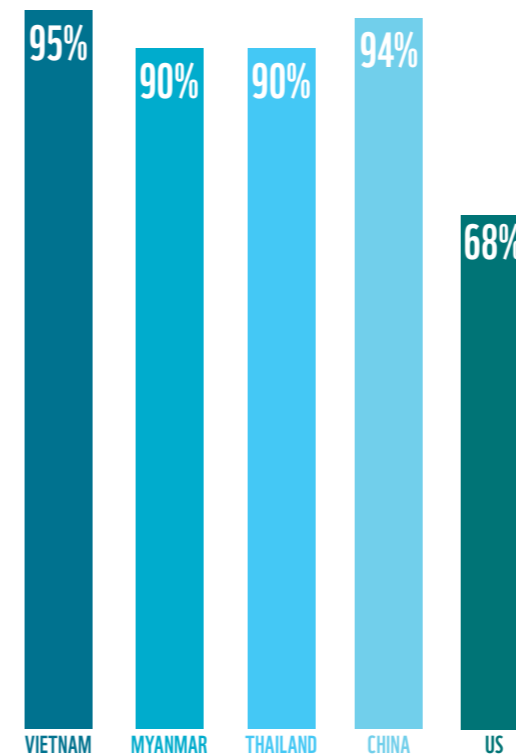
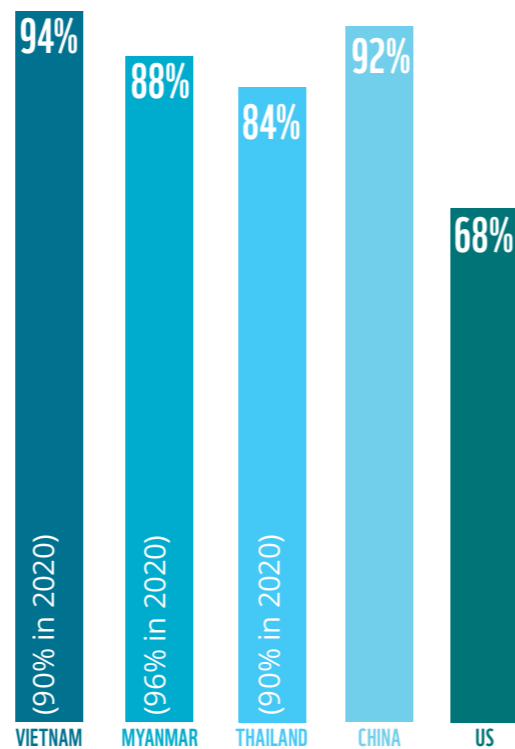
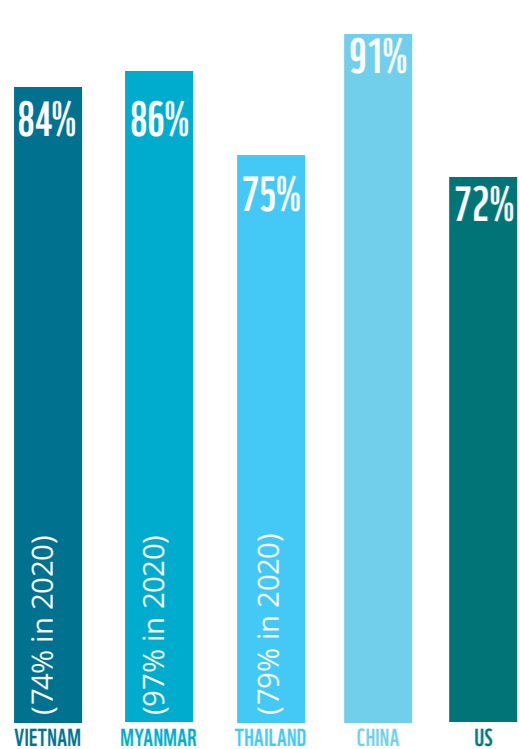
**STRONGLY SUPPORT** OR **SUPPORT** INCREASED EFFORTS TO PRESERVE FORESTS AND END DEFORESTATION IN THEIR COUNTRY OR OVERSEAS SPECIFICALLY TO PREVENT FUTURE PANDEMIC



85%

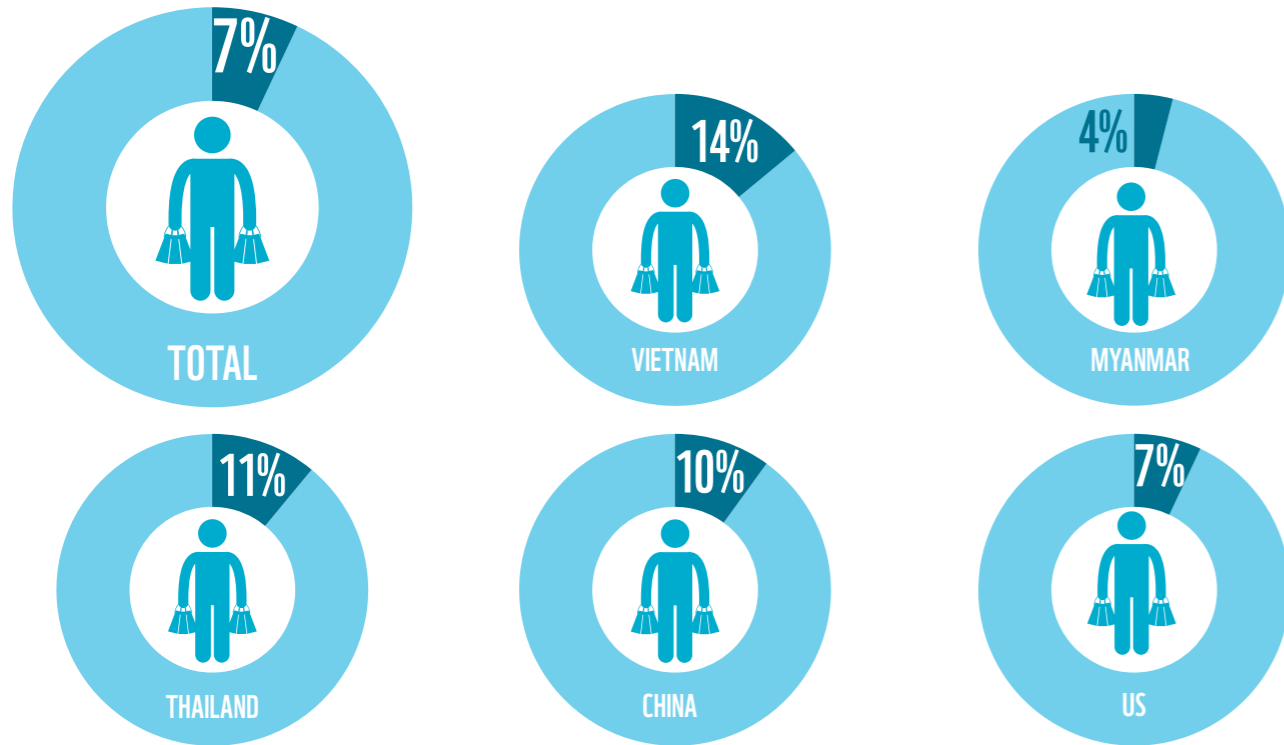
**STRONGLY SUPPORT** OR **SUPPORT** "ONE HEALTH"\* APPROACH TO DEALING WITH PANDEMIC

\*"One Health" is an approach to designing programs, policies, and legislation where different sectors communicate and work together for better health outcomes across people, animals, plants, and their shared environment, especially for animal health, disease transfer between animals and humans, and combating antibiotic resistance.



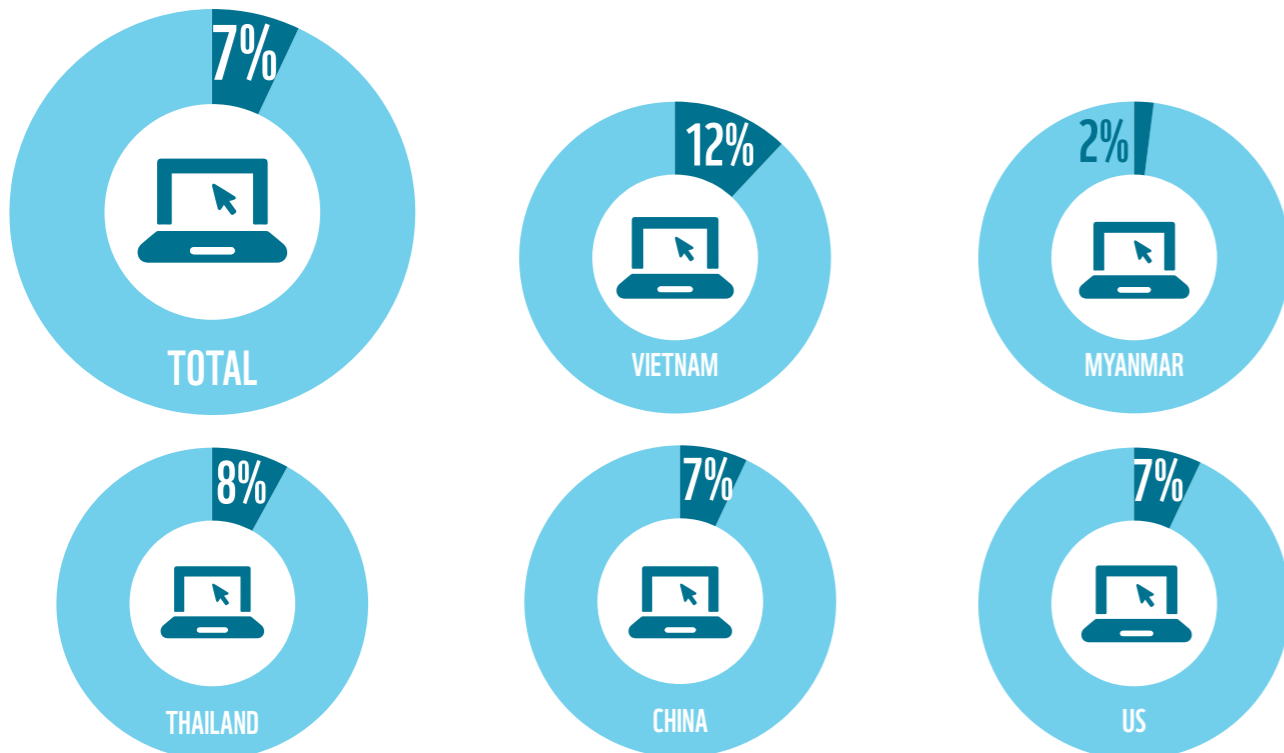
## PAST 12-MONTH PURCHASE OF WILDLIFE IN AN OPEN MARKET

Base: All Participants



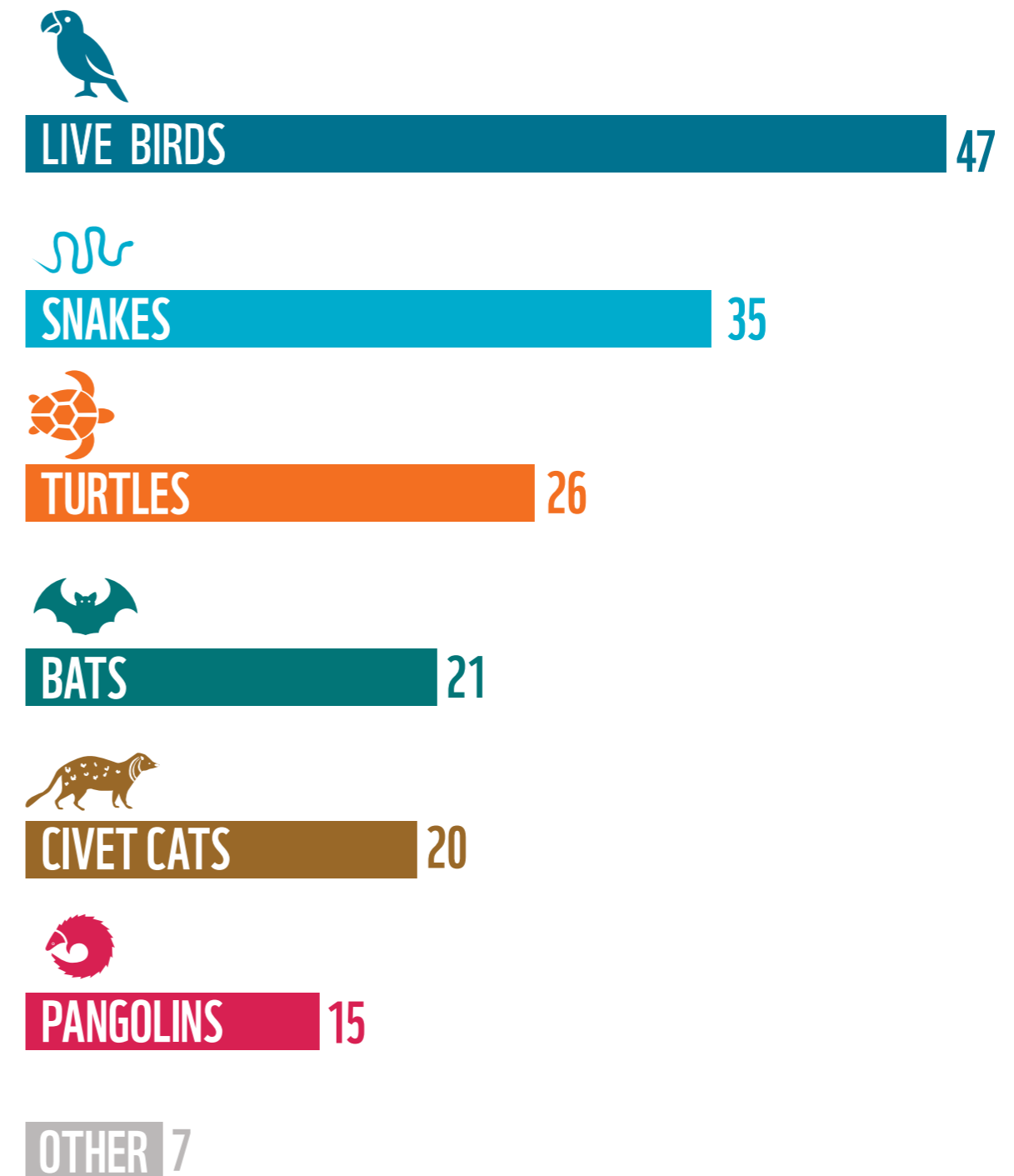
## PAST 12-MONTH PURCHASE OF WILDLIFE ONLINE

Base: All Participants



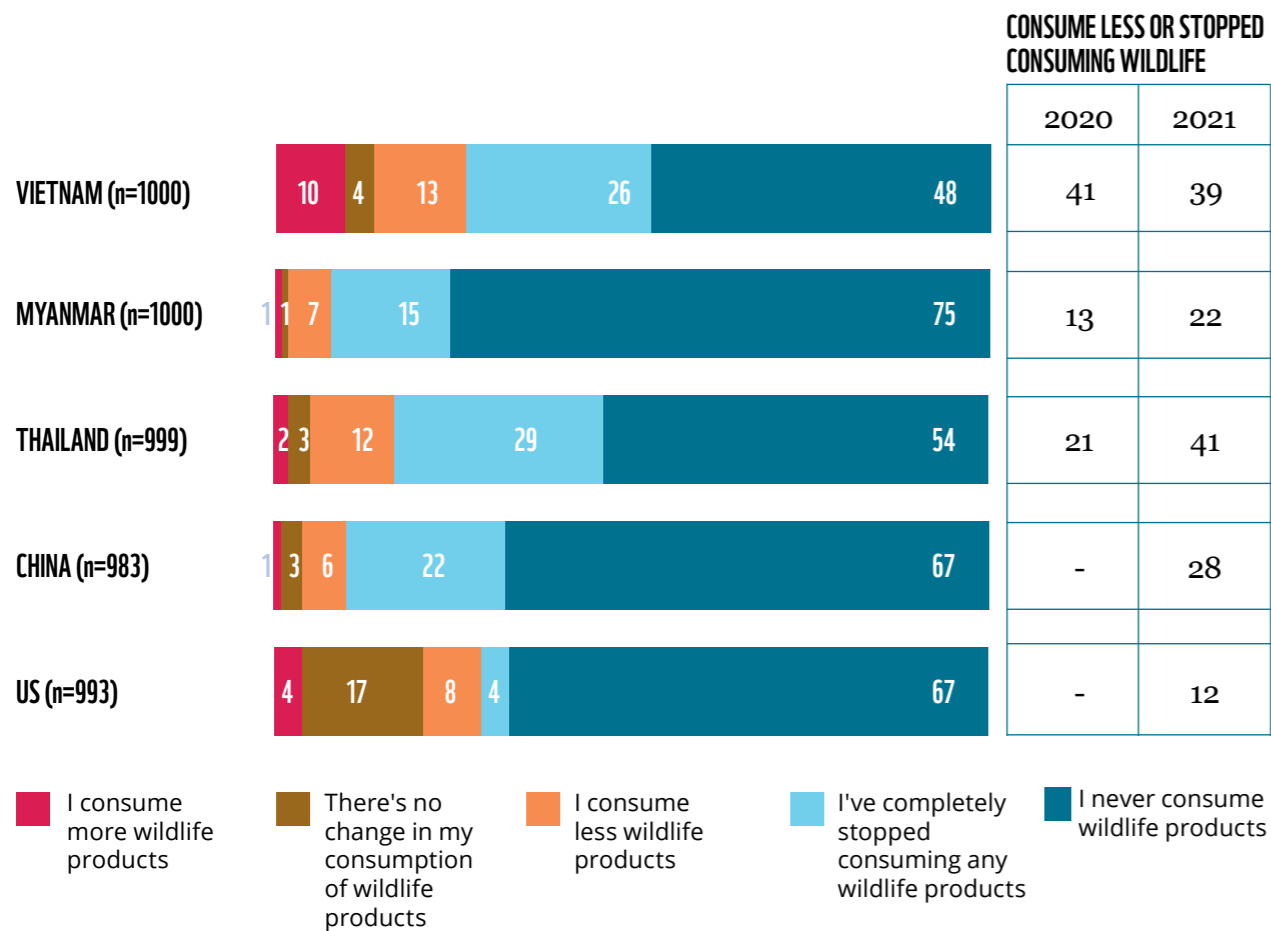
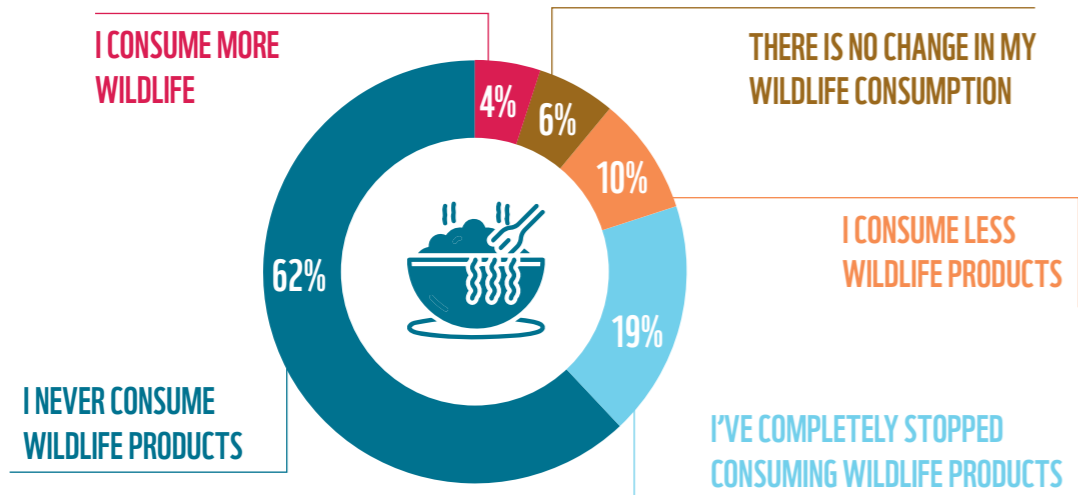
## TYPE OF WILDLIFE SPECIES BOUGHT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Base: Among Wildlife Product Buyers, %



# IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON CONSUMPTION OF WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

Base: Among those aware of COVID-19, %



# FUTURE INTENTION TO BUY WILDLIFE PRODUCTS IN WILDLIFE MARKETS

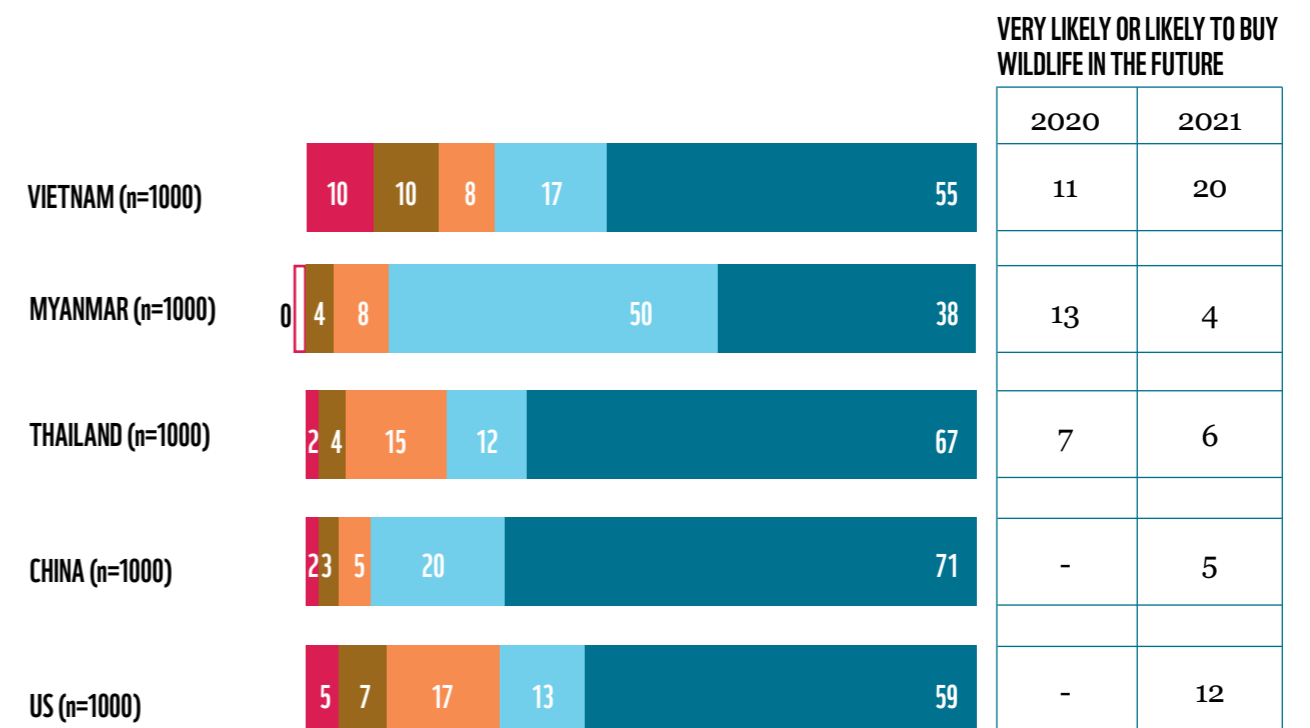
Base: All Participants



**9%**  
ARE LIKELY OR VERY LIKELY TO BUY WILDLIFE PRODUCTS IN THE FUTURE



Very likely    Likely    Neither likely, nor unlikely    Unlikely    Very unlikely



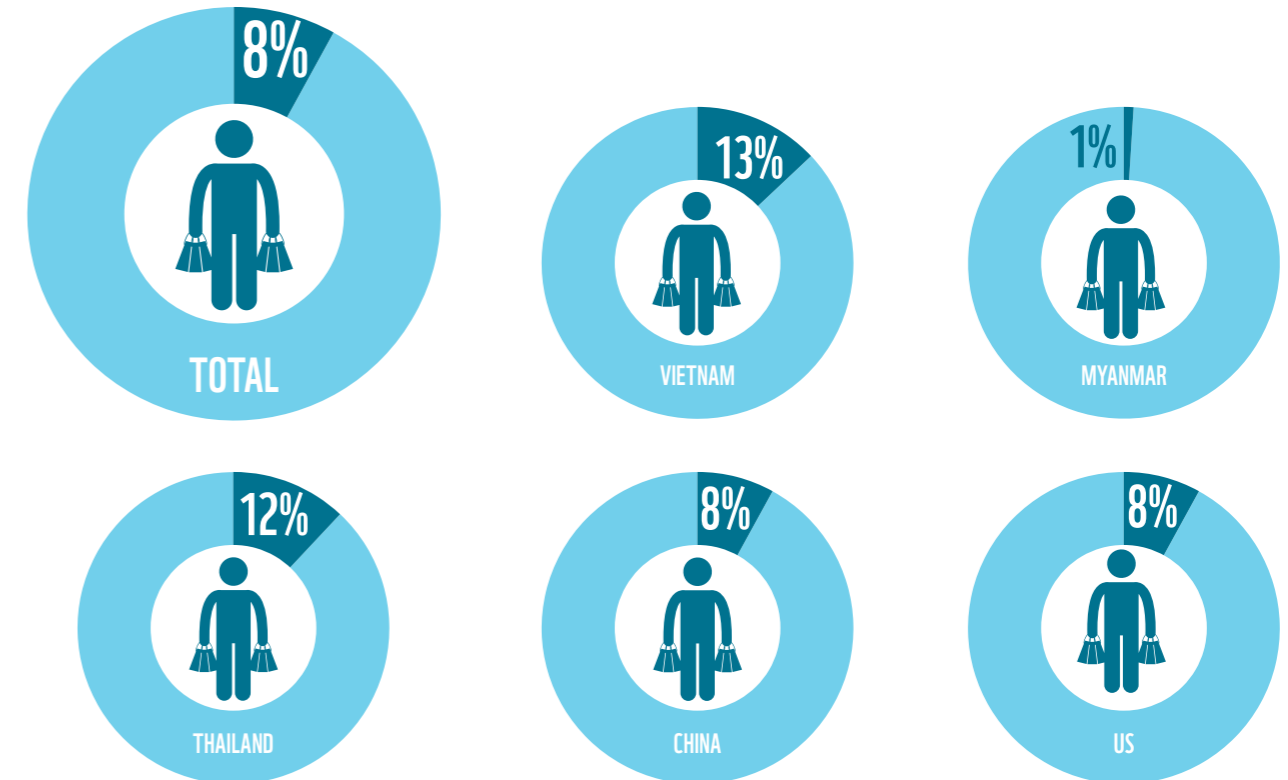
## IF WILDLIFE MARKETS WERE CLOSED

Base: Among Those Who Are Likely to Buy Wildlife Products in the Future, %



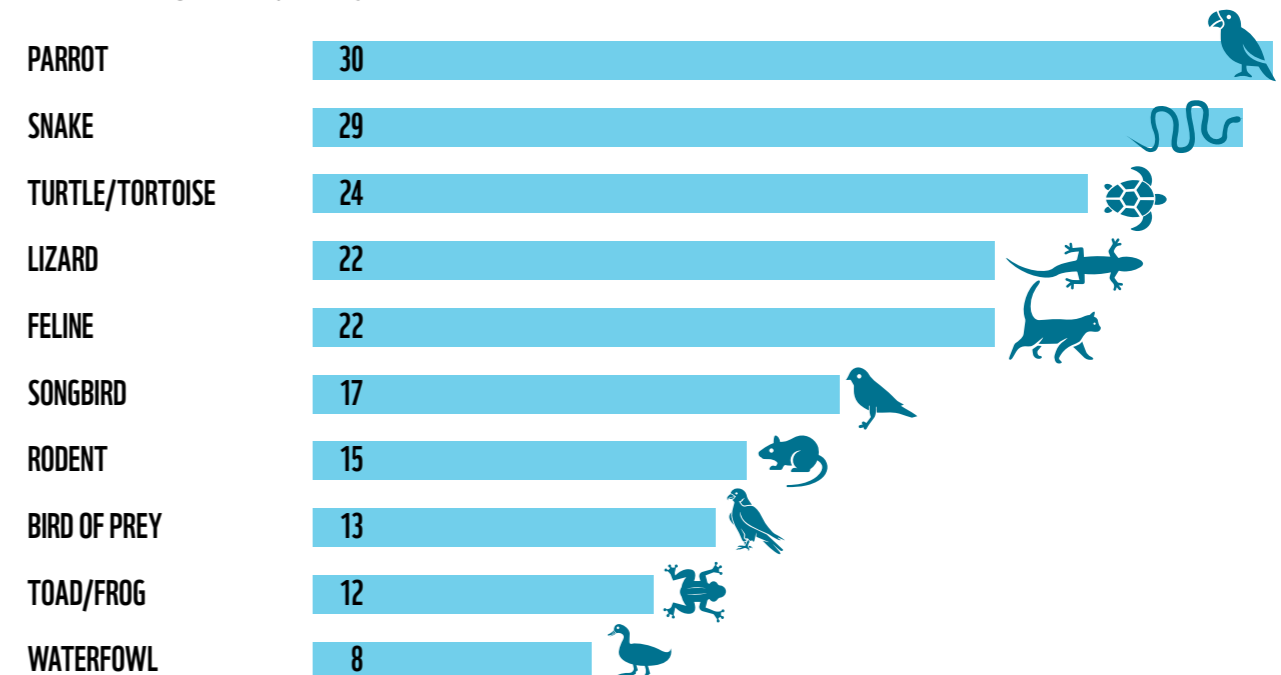
## PAST 12-MONTH PURCHASE OF EXOTIC PETS

Base: All Participants



## TYPE OF EXOTIC PETS BOUGHT IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Base: Among exotic pet buyers, %





## OPINION SURVEY ON PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE IN 5 MARKETS: VIETNAM

84%

believe closure of high-risk wildlife markets where they sell animals coming from the wild is **very** or **somewhat effective** in preventing similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future.

94%

**are very likely** or **likely to support** the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all high-risk markets selling animals coming from the wild.

88%

would be **extremely** or **very worried** if no measures are taken to close all high-risk markets selling animals from the wild.

95%

**strongly support** or **support** increased efforts to **preserve forests** and **end deforestation** in their country or overseas specifically to prevent future pandemics. **92%** say they are **concerned** or **very concerned** when told that “**deforestation** leads to closer contact between people and wildlife, increasing the risk of coronaviruses and other diseases jumping from animals to humans.”

93%

**strongly support** or **support** a “**One Health**” approach to dealing with pandemics. **45%** say they have heard of the “**One Health**” approach without being prompted.

14%

**purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months from **open wildlife markets**. **12%** **purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months **online**. **13%** **purchased exotic pets** in the past 12 months.

39%

**consume less** or **stopped** consuming wildlife because of COVID-19.



## OPINION SURVEY ON PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE IN 5 MARKETS: MYANMAR

86%

believe closure of high-risk wildlife markets where they sell animals coming from the wild is **very** or **somewhat effective** in preventing similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future.

88%

**are very likely** or **likely to support** the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all high-risk markets selling animals coming from the wild.

87%

would be **extremely** or **very worried** if no measures are taken to close all high-risk markets selling animals from the wild.

90%

**strongly support** or **support** increased efforts to **preserve forests** and **end deforestation** in their country or overseas specifically to prevent future pandemics. **88%** say they are **concerned** or **very concerned** when told that “**deforestation** leads to closer contact between people and wildlife, increasing the risk of coronaviruses and other diseases jumping from animals to humans.”

86%

**strongly support** or **support** a “**One Health**” approach to dealing with pandemics. **6%** say they have heard of the “**One Health**” approach without being prompted.

4%

**purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months from **open wildlife markets**. **2%** **purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months **online**. **1%** **purchased exotic pets** in the past 12 months.

22%

**consume less** or **stopped** consuming wildlife because of COVID-19.





## OPINION SURVEY ON PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE IN 5 MARKETS: THAILAND

75%

believe closure of high-risk wildlife markets where they sell animals coming from the wild is **very** or **somewhat effective** in preventing similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future.

84%

**are very likely** or **likely to support** the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all high-risk markets selling animals coming from the wild.

79%

would be **extremely** or **very worried** if no measures are taken to close all high-risk markets selling animals from the wild.

90%

**strongly support** or **support** increased efforts to **preserve forests** and **end deforestation** in their country or overseas specifically to prevent future pandemics. **79%** say they are **concerned** or **very concerned** when told that “**deforestation** leads to closer contact between people and wildlife, increasing the risk of coronaviruses and other diseases jumping from animals to humans.”

91%

**strongly support** or **support** a “**One Health**” approach to dealing with pandemics. **35%** say they have heard of the “**One Health**” approach without being prompted.

11%

**purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months from **open wildlife markets**. **8%** **purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months **online**. **12%** **purchased exotic pets** in the past 12 months.

41%

**consume less** or **stopped** consuming wildlife because of COVID-19.



## OPINION SURVEY ON PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE IN 5 MARKETS: CHINA

91%

believe closure of high-risk wildlife markets where they sell animals coming from the wild is **very** or **somewhat effective** in preventing similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future.

92%

**are very likely** or **likely to support** the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all high-risk markets selling animals coming from the wild.

82%

would be **extremely** or **very worried** if no measures are taken to close all high-risk markets selling animals from the wild.

94%

**strongly support** or **support** increased efforts to **preserve forests** and **end deforestation** in their country or overseas specifically to prevent future pandemics. **85%** say they are **concerned** or **very concerned** when told that “**deforestation** leads to closer contact between people and wildlife, increasing the risk of coronaviruses and other diseases jumping from animals to humans.”

93%

**strongly support** or **support** a “**One Health**” approach to dealing with pandemics. **53%** say they have heard of the “**One Health**” approach without being prompted.

10%

**purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months from **open wildlife markets**. **7%** **purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months **online**. **8%** **purchased exotic pets** in the past 12 months.

28%

**consume less** or **stopped** consuming wildlife because of COVID-19.

81%

are **much more** or **slightly more likely** to buy from companies taking action to prevent pandemics.



## OPINION SURVEY ON PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE IN 5 MARKETS: UNITED STATES

72%

believe closure of high-risk wildlife markets where they sell animals coming from the wild is **very** or **somewhat effective** in preventing similar pandemic diseases from happening in the future.

68%

**are very likely** or **likely to support** the efforts by governments and health ministries to close all high-risk markets selling animals coming from the wild.

59%

would be **extremely** or **very worried** if no measures are taken to close all high-risk markets selling animals from the wild.

68%

**strongly support** or **support** increased efforts to **preserve forests** and **end deforestation** in their country or overseas specifically to prevent future pandemics. **68%** say they are **concerned** or **very concerned** when told that “**deforestation** leads to closer contact between people and wildlife, increasing the risk of coronaviruses and other diseases jumping from animals to humans.”

65%

**strongly support** or **support** a “**One Health**” approach to dealing with pandemics. **14%** say they have heard of the “**One Health**” approach without being prompted.

7%

**purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months from **open wildlife markets**. **7%** **purchased wildlife products** in the past 12 months **online**. **8%** **purchased exotic pets** in the past 12 months.

12%

**consume less** or **stopped** consuming wildlife because of COVID-19.

67%

are **much more** or **slightly more likely** to buy from companies taking action to prevent pandemics.



WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the Earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)

GLOBESCAN

GlobeScan is an insights and strategy consultancy, focused on helping our clients build long-term trusting relationships with their stakeholders. Offering a suite of specialist research and advisory services, we partner with business, NGOs and governmental organizations to meet strategic objectives across reputation, sustainability and purpose. Established in 1987, GlobeScan has offices in Cape Town, Hong Kong SAR, London, Paris, San Francisco, São Paulo and Toronto, and is a signatory to the UN Global Compact and a Certified B Corporation. [www.globescan.com](http://www.globescan.com)

**A MAJORITY OF PEOPLE  
SURVEYED ARE DEEPLY  
WORRIED ABOUT FUTURE  
PANDEMICS. THEY SUPPORT  
GOVERNMENT ACTION TO  
TACKLE ROOT CAUSES LIKE  
HIGH-RISK WILDLIFE TRADE  
AND DEFORESTATION.**



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

together possible™ panda.org

© 2021

WWF, 28 rue Mauverney, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 364 9111 CH-550.0.128.920-7  
WWF® and World Wide Fund for Nature® trademarks and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund). All rights reserved.

For contact details and further information, please visit our international website at [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)