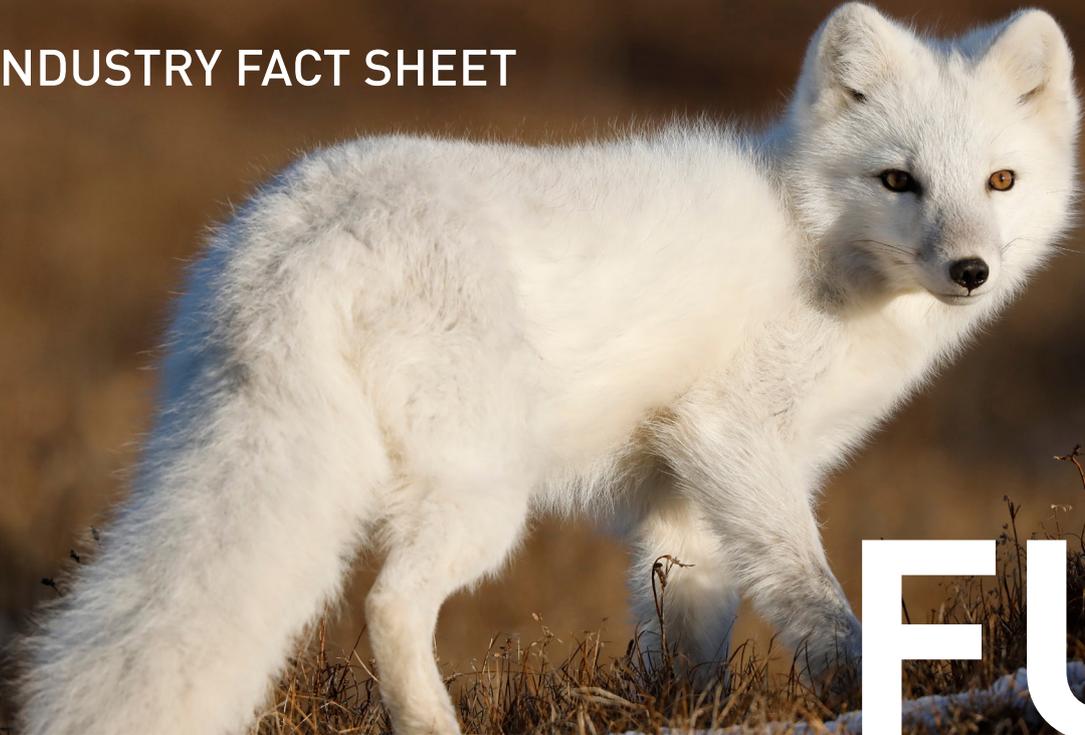


INDUSTRY FACT SHEET

© Agami Photo Agency | Shutterstock.com



FUR

Millions of animals, including minks, foxes, raccoon dogs, and chinchillas are killed every year in the global fur trade – an industry which, until recently, was worth more than USD22 billion per year¹. Due to a decline in demand and the devastating COVID-19 outbreaks on mink farms, the number of animals killed for their fur has fallen from around 100 million annually² to 60 million in 2020^{3,4}. These animals are either farmed in horrific conditions or caught, using crude and barbaric traps, from the wild.

The awful truth behind the fur industry has garnered global attention and, in response to the increasingly

strong public opposition to the cruelty of the trade, a steadily growing number of countries, including Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and the UK, have banned fur farms⁵. Opinion polls across the globe consistently demonstrate that most people are opposed to fur farming⁶. An international YouGov poll commissioned by FOUR PAWS in 2021 shows that, when it comes to fashion, the animal welfare issue people are most concerned about is fur. Almost 80 percent of respondents to the survey indicated that they were concerned about the welfare of animals killed for fur⁷.

INDUSTRY ACTION

Most of the world's biggest companies no longer wish to be associated with the animal cruelty of the fur industry and many of them have officially joined the Fur Free Retailer program. Examples of fur free fashion companies:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| BALENCIAGA | PRADA |
| BURBERRY | RALPH LAUREN |
| CALVIN KLEIN | SAINT LAURENT |
| CANADA GOOSE | STELLA MCCARTNEY |
| DOLCE & GABBANA | TOMMY HILFIGER |
| GIORGIO ARMANI | VALENTINO |
| GUCCI | VERO MODA |
| H&M | VERSACE |
| JEAN PAUL GAULTIER | VICTORIA BECKHAM |
| MANGO | VIVIENNE WESTWOOD |
| MONCLER | ZARA |

"This decision reflects the wishes of not only the brand, but also that of our customers."

Victoria Beckham spokesperson on decision to ban fur

PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO FUR FARMING

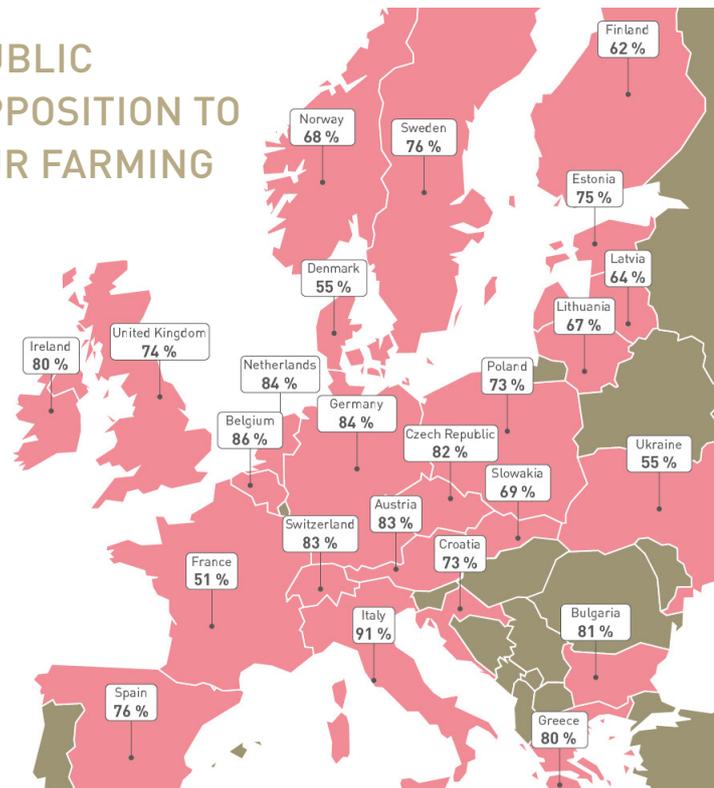


Image courtesy of Fur Free Alliance



Replace

Farming and trapping animals for their fur is entirely unnecessary and unjustifiable. The only way to stop the suffering of billions of animals is to join the growing number of brands that are saying no to fur.

As the industry will always be inhumane and industry-owned certification programmes such as WelFur and FurMark fail to provide adequate animal welfare guarantees, the only solution is to ban fur entirely and replace it with eco-friendly materials such as recycled acryl, partially plant-based polymer, or products such as KOBA® Faux Fur¹¹.



Be transparent

With so many consumers turning their backs on fur, it is vital that brands are transparent about their stance on fur. By joining the international Fur Free Retailer Program¹² brands provide accurate information about their commitment to a permanent fur-free policy and equip consumers to make an informed choice.

Ensure to transparently communicate your current use of animal derived materials and your timeframe for supply chain improvements. Ideally this information would form part of a robust and comprehensive overarching animal welfare policy, which is clearly communicated to suppliers.



© FOUR PAWS | Wildlight

China is the biggest producer of farmed fur, followed by European countries including Denmark (before the COVID-19 pandemic), Poland, and Finland. The USA, Canada, and Russia are also significant producers. China is also the biggest importer of raw fur³, the biggest exporter of fur garments⁸, and the biggest consumer of fur garments⁹. Russia, USA, and some European countries are also major importers of fur garments¹⁰.

Animal welfare issues

- Most animals used in the fur industry are wide-roaming predators entirely unsuited to captivity. On fur farms they are kept in tiny, dirty, wire mesh cages which prevent movement and the expression of the animals' natural behaviours. This causes physical, psychological, and behavioral problems¹³ and increased cub mortality¹⁴.
- Handling methods include beating, strangling, and dragging animals and injuries sustained during this treatment, or through animals fighting or self-injury, are left untreated and quickly become infected.
- When they reach a couple of months of age, farmed animals are killed using inhumane methods such as gassing, or electrocution through the mouth and anus. Such methods inflict severe pain and distress^{15, 16, 17}.
- Approximately 3-5 million wild animals, including coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and beavers, are caught, and killed in traps annually in the USA alone¹⁸. The traps, which include wire neck snares and



© FOUR PAWS | Fred Dott

steel-jaw leghold traps, rarely cause immediate death and result in immense pain and stress¹⁹ as the animals die of exhaustion, predation, starvation, drowning, shock, injury, or blood loss. Animals that are alive when found are often brutally killed through drowning, suffocation, beating or have their chests crushed by the people who set the traps²⁰. The traps also pose a serious risk to animals other than those they were intended to catch²¹.

Environmental concerns

- Fur production is an intensely toxic and energy-consuming process, with pelts being dipped in toxic chemical soups and animal waste run-off from farms polluting soil and waterways^{22, 23, 24}.
- Keeping of thousands of animals on fur farms also has a severe ecological footprint, as it requires land, water, feed, energy, and other resources^{25, 26}.
- The fur trade adversely affects biodiversity as trapping methods can result in the capture of unintended species and therefore pose a threat to wildlife populations²⁷. Furthermore, species bred for their fur, like American mink or raccoon dogs, have been released into environments they are not native to. As invasive alien species they pose a big risk to native species^{28, 29, 30}.

Human health impacts

- Intensive mink farms housing thousands of animals provide the perfect grounds for diseases. This represents an unacceptable risk to human health, and it is feasible that such a facility could be the source of a future disease outbreak. Mink are the only farmed species that has contracted COVID-19 from humans and transmitted it back to them^{31, 32, 33}.
- There are multiple adverse health implications for workers in fur processing facilities including reduced pulmonary functionality³⁴ and skin conditions³⁵ due to inhalation of, or contact with, highly toxic substances.
- Due to the use of chemicals during processing, fur trims on fashion items often contain alarming levels of toxins, such as formaldehyde and ethoxylates, that can pose a threat to consumers³⁶.

FOUR PAWS calls on fashion companies to stop using fur; to reduce the number of animal derived materials used overall, in favour of sustainable animal-free alternatives; and to ensure that the animals which continue to be used within domesticated animal supply chains experience an excellent state of welfare.

For more information, review the **FOUR PAWS policy development guidelines**.

“ Together we can drive an animal-friendly fashion future, and create a world where people treat animals with respect, empathy and understanding. ”



References

- ¹ Aloisi, S & Skydsgaard, N 2020, 'Flying fur prices put fox is focus as mink cull sparks shortage,' Reuters, accessed 4 June 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/focus-flying-fur-prices-put-fox-focus-mink-cull-sparks-shortage-2020-12-14/>
- ² Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association 2021, 'HSVMA statement on fur-farmed animals and the risk of disease,' retrieved 26 May 2021, HSVMA Statement - Fur-Farmed Animals and Risk of Disease
- ³ Finnish Fur Breeders' Association, 'FiFur Statistics 2021,' accessed 16 December 2021, https://fifur.fi/sites/default/files/fifur_statistics_2021_-_web.pdf
- ⁴ China Leather Industry Association, 'Statistical report on the number of mink, fox and raccoon skins in China (2020),' accessed 16 December 2021, <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xuNqvzESl4lvAGu8S5axgA>
- ⁵ Fur Free Alliance n.d., 'Fur bans,' retrieved 20 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/fur-bans/>
- ⁶ Fur Free Alliance n.d., 'Public opinion,' retrieved 20 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/public-opinion/>
- ⁷ YouGov 2021, 'Animal welfare and the fashion industry,' research commissioned by FOUR PAWS.
- ⁸ Hansen, H 2017, 'Global fur retail value,' Paper presented at Association of Russian fur breeders' annual summer conference, Svetlogorsk (Kaliningrad), Russian Federation, accessed 20 May 2021, http://static-curis.ku.dk/portal/files/183502174/_Svetlogorsk.pdf
- ⁹ Act Asia 2019, 'China's fur trade and its position in the global fur industry,' accessed 29 May 2021, <https://www.actasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/China-Fur-Report-7.5.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Hansen, H 2017, 'Global fur retail value,' Paper presented at Association of Russian fur breeders' annual summer conference, Svetlogorsk (Kaliningrad), Russian Federation, accessed 20 May 2021, http://static-curis.ku.dk/portal/files/183502174/_Svetlogorsk.pdf
- ¹¹ Koba 2020, 'About us,' accessed 10 May 2021, <https://www.ecopel.com/koba--bio-based-faux-fur.html>
- ¹² Fur Free Retailer 2021, 'The future of fashion,' accessed 20 May 2021 <https://furfreeretailer.com/>
- ¹³ Mason, G, Cooper, J & Clarebrough, C 2001, 'Frustrations of fur-farmed mink,' *Nature*, vol. 35, no. 6, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11242031/>
- ¹⁴ Braatstad, B & Bakken, M 1993, 'Maternal infanticide and periparturient behaviour in farmed silver foxes *Vulpes vulpes*,' *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, vol. 36, no. 4, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0168159193901329>
- ¹⁵ Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Health and Welfare 2007, 'Welfare aspects of the slaughter of fur producing animals in Ireland,' *Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*, Government of Ireland, accessed 10 May 2021, <http://www.fawac.ie/media/fawac/content/publications/scientificreports/FinalReportWelfareFurProducingAnimalsIreland280715.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Cooper, J, Mason, G & Raj, M 1998, 'Determination of the aversion of farmed mink (*Mustela vison*) to carbon dioxide,' *Veterinary Record*, vol. 143, no. 13, pp. 359-361, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9800303/>
- ¹⁷ Pickett, H & Harris, S 2015, 'The Case Against Fur Factory Farming,' *Respect for animals*, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Case-against-fur-farming.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Animal Welfare Institute 2021, 'Trapping and penning,' accessed 20 May 2021, <https://www.awionline.org/content/trapping-and-penning>
- ¹⁹ Zuardo 2017, 'How the United States Was Able to Dodge International Reforms Designed to Make Wildlife Trapping Less Cruel,' *Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy*, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://awionline.org/store/catalog/animal-welfare-publications/wildlife/how-united-states-was-able-dodge-international>
- ²⁰ Born Free USA 2021, 'Crushing Cruelty: Animal Trapping in the United States,' accessed 10 May 2021, http://7a1eb59c2270eb1d8b3d-a9354ca433cea7ae96304b2a57fdc8a0.r60.cf1.rackcdn.com/BFUSA47_TrappingReport2021-final.pdf
- ²¹ Massaro, P 2020, 'Trapping 101: A complete guide to taking furbearing animals,' *Skyhorse Publishing*, New York, USA.
- ²² ACT Asia 2018, 'Toxic Fur: A global issue,' accessed 10 May 2021 *Toxic Fur: A Global Issue. Research in China*.
- ²³ Fur Free Alliance, 'Toxic Fur,' accessed 20 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/toxic-fur/>
- ²⁴ Krautter, M 2011, 'Poison in Furs,' *EcoAid*, accessed 20 May 2011, https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/FourPaws-2011_Poison-in-Furs-Report.pdf
- ²⁵ David Suzuki Foundation 2011, 'The impacts of the mink industry on freshwater lakes in Nova Scotia: An overview of concerns,' accessed 10 May 2021, Mink Industry and Lakes in Nova Scotia ([furfreealliance.com](http://www.furfreealliance.com)).
- ²⁶ Marcinkowski, T & Urbański, J 2018, 'The attitudes of local residents towards fur farms in Poland,' *Polish center for Social and Economic Research*, accessed 10 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Local-impact-Poland.pdf>
- ²⁷ American Veterinary Medical Association 2008, 'Welfare implications of leghold trap use in conservation and research,' accessed 10 May 2021, <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/literature-reviews/welfare-implications-leghold-trap-use-conservation-and-research>
- ²⁸ Council of Europe, 2016 'Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats,' accessed 10 May 2021, 2016_Bern-Convention-SC36_EN_FINAL-Mink_P.35.pdf ([furfreealliance.com](http://www.furfreealliance.com))
- ²⁹ Fur Free Alliance, n.d. 'Impact on biodiversity,' accessed 24 May 2021, <https://www.furfreealliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Impact-on-biodiversity-1.pdf>
- ³⁰ Scalera, R, Genovesi, P, Essl, F & Rabitsch, W 2012, 'The impacts of invasive alien species in Europe,' *European Environment Agency*, accessed 24 May 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235424383_The_impacts_of_invasive_alien_species_in_Europe
- ³¹ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Health Organisation & World Organisation for Veterinary Health 2021, 'SARS-CoV-2 in animals used for fur farming,' accessed 24 May 2021, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-fur-farming-risk-assessment-2021.1>
- ³² European Food Safety Authority & European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control 2011, 'Monitoring of SARS-CoV-2 infection in mustelids,' accessed 24 May 2021, <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2021.6459>
- ³³ Fur Free Alliance & Eurogroup for Animals 2021, 'Scientific statement on public health risks from SARS-CoV-2 and the intensive rearing of mink,' accessed 24 May 2021, <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/news/scientific-statement-public-health-risks-sars-cov-2-and-intensive-rearing-mink>
- ³⁴ Chen, J, Lou, J & Liu, Z 2003, 'Pulmonary function in fur-processing workers: A dose-response relationship,' *Archives of Environmental & Occupational Health*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 37-41, accessed 19 May 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12747517/>
- ³⁵ Utii, J 2012, 'Fur farming and the fur industry,' in Rustemeyer, T, Elsner, P, John SM & Maibach, H (eds) *Kanerva's Occupational Dermatology*, Springer, Berlin.
- ³⁶ Pickett, H 2021 'The Environmental Cost of Fur' *Respect for Animals*, accessed 03 March 2022, https://respectforanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ENVIRONMENT-REPORT-NOV-2021_FINAL_LO-RES_SINGLES.pdf