



A new report shines a light on cruel farming of Aussie crocodiles by French luxury brands

Thousands more Australian saltwater crocodiles could be cruelly farmed and killed for their skins unless the Federal Government acts, according to a new report by animal welfare charity, World Animal Protection.

French luxury brand Hermès plans to greatly expand their farming of Australian saltwater crocodiles in Australia's Northern Territory, by up to 50,000 crocodiles if plans for an additional crocodile facility proceed.

Australia accounts for 60% of the global trade in saltwater crocodile skins, with two thirds of that produced in the Northern Territory.

Fashion Victims outlines that three to four crocodiles are killed to produce skins 'fit' for high-end items such as Hermès handbags. These sentient animals are farmed in crowded, plastic-lined enclosures to protect their skin from damage before a brutal slaughter. Crocodiles experience pain and pleasure and in the wild will live for around 70 years but in captivity are killed at around two to three years of age.

The new Hermès farm comes as the use of exotic skins is becoming increasingly controversial; leading brands like Chanel, Victoria Beckham, Mulberry, Karl Lagerfeld, Vivienne Westwood and Tommy Hilfiger have committed to or are moving away from using exotic skins and wild animals in their products, shifting to humane and sustainable alternatives.

Head of Campaigns at World Animal Protection, Ben Pearson said:

"Farmed crocodiles are wild animals, not handbags. They are sentient beings who deserve to enjoy a wild life, not languish in plastic-lined pens for the profits of French fashion houses. They don't deserve to pay the hefty price of their life for an expensive handbag."

"Using crocodile skins for handbags will inevitably fall out of fashion. We have already seen this with other grotesque practices such as the use of fox and mink fur for coats and gloves.

A recent poll, conducted by World Animal Protection, found Australians were largely unaware of the cruel industry with 74% of people not aware how Australian crocodiles were being farmed and killed for their skin*. The polling also showed that most Australians (88%) were unaware that French luxury companies like Hermès and Louis Vuitton (LVMH) owned most of the Northern Territory's crocodile farms*.

The welfare of crocodiles on these farms is governed by an outdated and inadequate Code of Practice that relies on decades-old science. It was meant to be updated years ago but has not been.

"We are calling on the Minister for Environment, Sussan Ley, to stop the expansion of this cruel and barbaric industry, by rejecting an export permit for the Hermès crocodile farm. As Environment Minister she has obligations to promote the humane treatment of wildlife. Crocodile farming is the exact opposite, Mr Pearson added.

"An expansion of crocodile farming would also send a message to the international community that the Australian Government believes the farming of wild animals and wild animal products is acceptable. Instead, they should be sending a signal that it is not and that the trade in wild animals and wild animal products must be phased out.

"The wildlife trade is not only a source of animal suffering but threatens human health by creating conditions that could lead to future pandemics. We must accept that human wellbeing is intrinsically linked to the health of animals and the natural world."

Every day, thousands of wild animals are poached or farmed and sold into the cruel global multi-billion-dollar commercial trade. World Animal Protection is working to shift the way the world views wild animals, so they are no longer treated as mere assets to be exploited for commercial gain.

The global NGO has been lobbying the G20 world leaders - of which Australia is a member - to end the global wildlife trade, and has received 1.1 million petition signatures.

World Animal Protection is calling on the Australian Government to work on a time-bound phase-out of the industry.

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