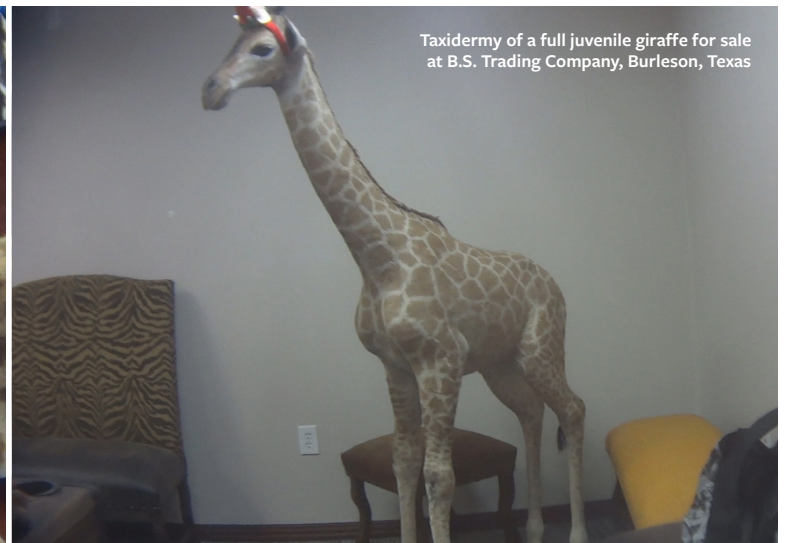




Giraffe-hide pillows for sale at the African Market's Trophy Room Collection, Myakka, Florida



Taxidermy of a full juvenile giraffe for sale at B.S. Trading Company, Burleson, Texas

## U.S. market for giraffe parts uncovered

*Undercover investigation reveals scale and variety of giraffe products sold, indicating the United States' role in the global trade*

**THE TALLEST ANIMAL IN THE WORLD** is in big trouble. In early 2018, the Humane Society of the United States conducted an investigation to determine the commercial availability of giraffe parts and products for sale in the U.S. Investigators found giraffe parts for sale from coast to coast at more than 52 U.S. locations and visited 21 of them. Broadly, here is what HSUS investigators found:

### FINDINGS:

- Western boots made from giraffe leather and specialty knives/ knife products made from giraffe bone were the most commonly found giraffe products.
- Other giraffe products included giraffe taxidermy “trophies;” giraffe hide pillows and rugs; giraffe skin bible covers and furniture; and giraffe bones and bone carvings.
- Some sellers falsely portrayed giraffes as dangerous, telling investigators that giraffes must be killed in defense of villages in Africa. These sellers said that the parts they sell are only a byproduct of this defensive killing.
- Some sellers of giraffe parts and products have criminal records for serious animal-related crimes, including the trafficking of rhino horn.
- American trophy hunters supply the U.S. market with giraffe trophies and parts, including skins and bones.

Giraffes, the gentle giants of the African savanna, are undergoing a silent extinction. According to experts, the wild giraffe population has declined by about 40% since about 1990. The main cause is habitat loss and illegal hunting for the bushmeat trade, but giraffes are also targeted by trophy hunters. Their parts—made into pillows, boots and gun handles, among other things—are traded internationally for commercial purposes.

In July 2017, Humane Society International, the Humane

Society of the United States, the Center for Biological Diversity, the International Fund for Animal Welfare and the Natural Resources Defense Council submitted a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the giraffe as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Analysis of giraffe trade into the U.S. conducted as part of this petition revealed that nearly 40,000 giraffe parts and products had been imported into the U.S. over the last decade. These parts are thought to represent nearly 4,000 individual giraffes, indicating that the U.S. is a substantial market for trade in giraffes. An endangered listing would effectively prohibit the import, export and interstate trade in giraffes, providing much-needed protection for this declining species. The USFWS has yet to respond to the joint petition.



Giraffe leather boots at a retailer in Texas

### Link between trophy hunting and the giraffe trade

- A Florida maker of giraffe-hide gun cases said the company buys giraffe hides from trophy hunters.
- An Arno Bernard Knives representative told the HSUS that the company uses giraffe bones left behind by trophy hunters for its knife handles.
- Several retailers told HSUS investigators the giraffe taxidermy and rugs they were selling were sourced from trophy hunters.
- Several outfitting companies offering giraffe hunts in Africa told the HSUS they would sell giraffe parts left behind by trophy hunters.
- A taxidermist in Namibia, a country very popular with trophy hunters, offered an HSUS investigator \$300 for giraffe skin and \$30 for giraffe bones.

### Falsehoods used to legitimize giraffe killing

Two sellers—BS Trading of Burleson, Texas, and Whitten Cases of Oldsmar, Florida—made false statements about giraffes while trying to sell giraffe parts to an HSUS investigator. Both sellers claimed that aggressive herds of giraffes cause destruction and must be killed to save African villages. However, the recent expert evaluation of the species made no mention of such behavior or retaliatory killings of giraffes.

### Giraffe traders convicted of wildlife trafficking

Three sellers of giraffe parts in the U.S. have been convicted of rhino horn trafficking or other wildlife crimes. All three are currently selling giraffe parts to the public and to other giraffe parts sellers in the U.S.

- Gene Harris owns Art by God, a Miami, Florida, company that resells taxidermy, among other things, and where an HSUS investigator found giraffe hide pillows, carved giraffe bones, giraffe taxidermy and a giraffe hide rug for sale. In 2014, Harris was convicted of rhino horn trafficking in the USFWS’ Operation Crash, a nationwide takedown of rhino traffickers in multiple states. An Art by God salesperson said the company sells taxidermy to other stores around the country, including Paxton Gate, a San Francisco-area chain.
- In 2016, Operation Crash also resulted in charges against James Lolli, co-owner of Lolli Brothers Auctions in Macon, Missouri—and the Lolli Brothers Auction company itself—for rhino horn trafficking. Lolli Brothers Auctions resells taxidermy, and the company’s website often features giraffe hides, taxidermy and

rugs for sale. Another taxidermy reseller, Mills Hide and Fur of Signal Mountain, Tennessee, told an HSUS investigator he is a regular at Lolli Brothers Auctions. He said this while trying to sell a giraffe skin rug.

- Wholesaler Atlantic Coral Enterprises of St. Augustine, Florida, is a major importer and wholesaler of giraffe bones, skulls and other giraffe parts. In 1971, company owner Paul Dachton was convicted of misdemeanor Florida alligator law violations.

### What giraffe products are available for sale in the U.S.?

- Giraffe leather: dyed and de-haired, mostly unrecognizable as giraffe
- Giraffe hide and hide products with the intact, distinctive giraffe fur pattern
- Raw giraffe bones and skulls, uncarved
- Giraffe bones, carved or etched, sold as home décor
- Giraffe bone knife and pistol-making supplies
- Imported knives with giraffe bone handles (from South Africa)
- Giraffe taxidermy
- Giraffe tail-hair bracelets

Giraffe product	Approximate price
Wholesale giraffe leather	\$25/ft <sup>2</sup>
Giraffe leather boots	\$400
Leather bible cover	\$400
Full giraffe hide	\$4,500
Hide rug	\$3,000
Hide pillows	\$200
Custom-made giraffe jacket	\$5,500
Giraffe feet	\$75
Hide duffel bag	\$400
Hide bar stool	\$1,500
Leg bones	\$150
Skull	\$500
Bone carving	\$400
Bone knife handle “scales”	\$40
Bone pistol grips	\$60
Knife with bone handle	\$450
Tail-hair bracelet	\$10
Taxidermied trophy	\$8,000

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