

Niky's Sports, California's largest soccer retailer, finally halts illegal sales of shoes made from kangaroos

State's largest violator of ban on selling kangaroo parts changes course after law enforcement pays a visit

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Niky's Sports, California's largest soccer goods retailer, has stopped selling kangaroo skin soccer shoes (or "cleats") through its eight stores, adhering to a state law banning commerce in kangaroo body parts after long being out of compliance, according to the Center for a Humane Economy.



K-leather shoes

Niky's Sports CEO Luis Orellana, who runs the business with family members Eder, Edson and Marlon, refused to comment to the Center about the decision to halt illegal sales. Niky's Sports sold more kangaroo skin soccer shoes than any other California retailer, Center investigators said. Niky's has stores in Los Angeles, Lancaster, South Gate, Bell Gardens, Santa Monica, Long Beach and Woodland Hills.

“

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Wayne Pacelle

Niky's Sports' policy change came after a warning letter from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, a visit by police detectives, inquiries from state elected officials

and ongoing, in-person monitoring by Center volunteers.

With Niky's coming into compliance, Xtreme Soccer is now the most egregious violator of this law, the Center believes. David Mora, who owns the retail chain with stores in Anaheim, Bakersfield, Hawaiian Gardens, Oxnard, Santa Barbara, and Torrance, admitted in writing to the Center's investigators that his stores are illegally selling kangaroo skin soccer shoes and did not agree to halt sales. As late as Friday, February 19, Xtreme Soccer was selling a number of models

of the illegal shoes. His salesperson even acknowledged to our undercover customer that they are illegal.

Pro Soccer of Pasadena, which previously offered customers one of the largest single-store inventories of illegal soccer cleats in the state, recently halted all sales of kangaroo skin shoes, according to Pro Soccer President Tony Tatikian.

A Center [investigation](#) in 2020 found widespread violations of California's ban on the commerce of kangaroo-derived products, given the lack of enforcement of California Penal Code § 653o. Officials from California Fish and Wildlife and other agencies are now taking action to increase compliance.

"We documented more than 100 stores in California illegally selling kangaroo skin soccer shoes or cleats," said Wayne Pacelle, president of the Center for a Humane Economy, "and we believe that number has been cut in half since we launched our effort to see that the law is obeyed. We will continue to apply pressure until the trade in kangaroo parts stops at all retail outlets." The ban applies to on-line as well as brick-and-mortar sales.

Dick's Sporting Goods, headquartered in Pennsylvania but with outlets throughout California, promptly stopped selling kangaroo leather when approached by the Center, citing coding errors with vendors' software, and has rededicated itself to following the law. Nike.com and adidas.com have also said they will start following the law, after the Center's investigation revealed their regular sales of kangaroo-based shoes into the state.

If Niky's decision is replicated by other retailers, the impact could be felt on the other side of the planet where two million wild kangaroos are slaughtered each year in Australia largely for soccer shoes. California's market is one of the largest in the world – and about 15 percent of the U.S. market for kangaroo products. Closing it off to shoe manufacturers applies pressure on the retailers to halt their involvements in the largest commercial wildlife slaughter in the world – far larger and bloodier than the infamous seal hunts in Atlantic Canada.

California's groundbreaking law, which was a precursor to the U. S. Endangered Species Act, also protects many other species such as polar bears, dolphin, tigers and sea turtles.

U.S. Congressman Salud Carbajal, D-Calif., representing Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria and other communities, introduced the [Kangaroo Protection Act](#), H.R. 917, with Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (Penn.) this month to establish a national ban on the trade in kangaroo parts. The bill, crafted in cooperation with the Center and its sister organization Animal Wellness Action, promptly generated discussion on the floor of the Australian Parliament. In September, Carbajal and two other Congressmen urged California's Attorney General to fully enforce California's ban.

Two Hollywood filmmakers made a short film released by the Center earlier this month revealing

the true source of some Nike soccer shoes. The video went viral after numerous celebrities, including Ricky Gervais and Woody Harrelson, posted it on social media. [View it here](#).

The Center recognizes Soccer Loco, with locations in San Diego, Carlsbad and San Ysidro, as a prime example of a retailer choosing to follow the law from the beginning even as competitors chose to violate the law.

"We are using the power of the California marketplace to push Nike and others to recognize that the era of making shoes by killing kangaroos in their native habitats must end," said Pacelle.

EVIDENCE: This photo taken February 19, 2021 at the Xtreme Soccer store in Hawaiian Gardens, CA shows one of several models of illegal kangaroo skin shoes currently being sold by Xtreme Soccer, now California's most egregious violator of California's law banning all commerce in kangaroo body parts. This Umbro Medusae III Elite sells for \$224.95 and, according to other store owners, is among the illegal models that turns large profits for law breakers.

The Center for a Humane Economy ("the Center") is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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