

Congo gold mining threatening endangered species

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Species around the world are being increasingly threatened by human activity. Lamentably, hundreds of thousands of creatures have already become extinct as the result of humans' ever-

increasing demands on Earth's resources. Gold mining in a national park in the Democratic Republic of Congo is putting at risk an animal called the okapi. The park is called the Okapi Wildlife Reserve. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The okapi is also called the forest giraffe as it is a relative of the giraffe. However, its neck is nowhere near as long as that of a giraffe's. It is also known as the zebra giraffe due to its striped hind legs. The okapi is only found in the area of Congo that is being mined.

Conservationists have called for an immediate halt to the "rapidly expanding" levels of mining. They have urged the government to revoke the mining company's license, to "protect the unique forest ecosystem and the local communities that depend on it". The conservationists warned that: "Miners are literally eating the reserve out of its wildlife by hunting animals for food. There is almost no wildlife left around the mine itself, and wildlife numbers are massively reduced around mining towns. There have even been cases of armed hunters trafficking okapi skins and elephant ivory in and around the mines." They added that: "If the Congo government acts now, this unique World Heritage Site can still be saved."

Sources: phys.org / mongabay.com / bbc.com

Writing

All mining of gold and other precious metals and minerals should stop. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

species / human activity / creatures / gold / mining / threatened / okapi / giraffe / conservationist / unique / forest / ecosystem / wildlife / hunter / trafficking / ivory

True / False

- 1) The article says millions of creatures have become extinct. T / F
- 2) Gold mining is taking place outside a UNESCO World Heritage Site. T / F
- 3) The okapi is also called the zebra giraffe because it has stripes. T / F
- 4) The okapi is found all over central and southern Africa. T / F
- 5) Conservationists want the mining to be scaled down a little. T / F
- 6) Conservationists want the mining company's license revoked. T / F
- 7) Miners have killed many animals in the park so they can eat them. T / F
- 8) Hunters in the park are killing animals for ivory and skins. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. threatened | a. riches |
| 2. lamentably | b. remarkable |
| 3. extinct | c. rear |
| 4. resources | d. wiped out |
| 5. hind | e. hugely |
| 6. immediate | f. endangered |
| 7. revoke | g. instant |
| 8. massively | h. peddling |
| 9. trafficking | i. tragically |
| 10. unique | j. cancel |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of gold?
- b) Why do we need mining?
- c) How concerned are you about endangered species?
- d) Should the Congo gold mine close down?
- e) How many more species will become extinct?
- f) What do you know about the okapi?
- g) What can you do to help the okapi?
- h) What advice do you have for the conservationists?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Species around the world are being | a. mining company's license |
| 2. creatures have already | b. an animal called the okapi |
| 3. ever-increasing demands | c. trafficking okapi skins |
| 4. putting at risk | d. become extinct |
| 5. nowhere near | e. an immediate halt |
| 6. Conservationists have called for | f. out of its wildlife |
| 7. urged the government to revoke the | g. increasingly threatened |
| 8. Miners are literally eating the reserve | h. ivory |
| 9. cases of armed hunters | i. on Earth's resources |
| 10. elephant | j. as long |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why do we need gold?
- What do you think of mining?
- How do you feel when a species becomes extinct?
- How can we stop species extinction?
- What do you think of the trade in ivory?
- Why is profit more important than the environment?
- What questions would you like to ask the conservationists?

Spelling

- scieesp around the world
- hundreds of thousands of suaccrete
- already become tenxtci
- The okapi is also called the forest ffiareg
- it is a etveiral
- due to its ditsrpe hind legs
- rapidly xpgnaneid levels of mining
- kevoer the mining company's license
- protect the uugnie forest ecosystem
- ivesslamy reduced
- armed hunters tcnkiigffar okapi skins
- elephant vyiro

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. a	5. c
6. g	7. j	8. e	9. h	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Gold

You think gold is the thing we most need to mine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their resources aren't needed as much. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): coal, rare-earth metals or salt.

Role B – Coal

You think coal is the thing we most need to mine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their resources aren't needed as much. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): gold, rare-earth metals or salt.

Role C – Rare-earth Metals

You think rare-earth metals are the thing we most need to mine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their resources aren't needed as much. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): coal, gold or salt.

Role D – Salt

You think salt is the thing we most need to mine. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their resources aren't needed as much. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): coal, rare-earth metals or gold.

Speaking – Mined Resources

Rank these with your partner. Put the resources that should be left in the ground at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------|---------------------|
| • Gold | • Salt |
| • Coal | • Rare-earth metals |
| • Clay | • Iron |
| • Chalk | • Diamond |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 F	5 F	6 T	7 T	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.