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Internet trade threatens exotic animals

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17 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Internet trade threatens exotic animals

BNE: The world's endangered species are under threat from yet another source, in addition to poachers, collectors wanting stuffed rhino heads and Chinese medicine practitioners. Internet shoppers are creating a boom in the sale of exotic animals that represents another nail in the coffin for many creatures threatened with extinction. This is according to a report compiled by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The report "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet" found in "an intensive one-week Web search", 146 live primates, 5,527 elephant products, 526 turtle and tortoise shells, 2,630 reptile products and 239 wild cat products for sale. There were also unspecified numbers of other products.

The report represents the tip of the iceberg. Experts estimate the lucrative illegal global trade is worth billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web exacerbates the situation. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and anonymous. The result is a cyber black market where the future of the world's rarest animals is being traded away," said IFAW's Phyllis Campbell-McRae. The report recommended tougher worldwide protection: "The current legal framework and enforcement efforts are inadequate to deal with this appalling situation. A more effective response is essential." Ms. Campbell-McRae warned: "Trade in wildlife is driven by consumer demand, so when the buying stops, the killing will too. Buying wildlife online is as damaging as killing it yourself."

WARM-UPS

1. I'M A SIBERIAN TIGER: Imagine you are a Siberian tiger – one of the endangered animals for sale on the Internet. Walk around the class and talk to the other “Siberian tigers” about your life and the threat from poachers. Do you have any friends in captivity?

2. PRODUCTS: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think of the following examples of trade in animals:

- A crocodile skin handbag
- An elephant foot stool
- A fox fur coat
- Rhino horn medicine
- Ivory bracelets
- Chimpanzees as pets
- Elephants as pets
- Tiger meat

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Exotic animals / endangered species / poachers / stuffed rhino heads / Chinese medicine / nails / coffins / elephant products / icebergs / black markets / killing

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. EXOTIC: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “exotic”. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. ANIMAL TRADING: In pairs / groups, talk about how far you agree with these opinions on trading in animals and animal products:

- a. Trading in animals is no different from farming and killing animals.
- b. There is little difference between using leather from cows and snake skin.
- c. Traditional Chinese medicine should be exempt from international regulations.
- d. Big profits and the commercial demand for animals will ensure their survival.
- e. People caught selling endangered species should get 30 years in prison.
- f. People will never stop buying fur coats or ivory bracelets.
- g. The best answer is to breed the animals and legalize the sale of their products.
- h. A tiger skin coat looks absolutely beautiful.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think poachers and traders in exotic species should receive life in prison. Students B think poachers and traders in exotic species should receive heavy fines. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. There are collectors who want to buy stuffed rhinoceros heads. T / F
- b. Internet shoppers are increasing the threat to endangered species. T / F
- c. Many animals die in coffins that are nailed down. T / F
- d. A one-week Web search discovered vast quantities of animals for sale. T / F
- e. Many animals are being smuggled on icebergs. T / F
- f. The Web exacerbates the problem because traders are anonymous. T / F
- g. The current legal framework adequately protects animals. T / F
- h. A conservationist urged consumers to kill animals themselves. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| a. endangered | put together |
| b. poachers | concealed |
| c. nail in the coffin | fuelled |
| d. compiled | remunerative |
| e. intensive | deathblow |
| f. lucrative | worsens |
| g. exacerbates | dire |
| h. anonymous | threatened |
| i. appalling | exhaustive |
| j. driven | illegal hunters |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. endangered species are under | by consumer demand |
| b. collectors wanting stuffed | numbers of other products |
| c. represents another nail | rhino heads |
| d. turtle and | enforcement efforts are inadequate |
| e. There were also unspecified | the situation |
| f. The report represents the tip | threat from yet another source |
| g. The World Wide Web exacerbates | appalling situation |
| h. The current legal framework and | tortoise shells |
| i. deal with this | in the coffin for many creatures |
| j. Trade in wildlife is driven | of the iceberg |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Delete the incorrect word from the pairs in *italics*.

Internet trade threatens exotic animals

BNE: The world's *endangered / dangerous* species are under threat from yet another source, in addition to *preachers / poachers*, collectors wanting stuffed rhino heads and Chinese medicine practitioners. Internet shoppers are creating a boom in the sale of exotic animals that represents another nail in the *coffin / heart* for many creatures threatened with extinction. This is according to a report *compiled / comprised* by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The report "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet" found in "an *intensive / intensifying* one-week Web search", 146 live *primitives / primates*, 5,527 elephant products, 526 turtle and tortoise shells, 2,630 reptile products and 239 wild cat products for sale. There were also unspecified numbers of other products.

The report represents the *tip / top* of the iceberg. Experts estimate the *lucrative / laxative* illegal global trade is worth billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web *exacerbates / exterminates* the situation. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and anonymous. The result is a cyber black market where the future of the world's *rarest / rarified* animals is being traded away," said IFAW's Phyllis Campbell-McRae. The report recommended tougher worldwide protection: "The current legal framework and enforcement efforts are inadequate to deal with this *appealing / appalling* situation. A more effective response is essential." Ms. Campbell-McRae warned: "Trade in wildlife is *driven / chauffeured* by consumer demand, so when the buying stops, the killing will too. Buying wildlife online is as damaging as killing it yourself."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'wild'** and **'cat'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...? Was there a relationship between the correct and incorrect words?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "EXOTIC ANIMALS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about endangered species and Internet trading.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- source
- boom
- coffin
- compiled
- intensive
- unspecified
- tip
- exacerbates
- black
- inadequate
- response
- killing

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What are your thoughts on endangered species?
- d. How would you feel if the giant panda became extinct?
- e. Do you have a responsibility to do something to protect the world's threatened creatures?
- f. What would you do if you saw someone wearing a tiger skin coat?
- g. Do you think it's OK for animals to be killed for use in Chinese medicine?
- h. What do you of someone who wants a stuffed rhino head in his / her living room?
- i. What is the attraction of exotic animal products?
- j. Should leather and fur products be banned?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What should be the penalty for traders in endangered species?
- d. Do you think people will ever stop buying exotic animal goods?
- e. Do you think there are particular nationalities like to buy exotic animals and products?
- f. Mike Tyson has a pet tiger. What do you think about this?
- g. Which animal would you most like to protect and why?
- h. What should the world do to stop the trade in endangered animals?
- i. Do you think endangered animals should be commercially farmed and killed to cut out the black market and prevent poaching?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ROLE PLAY: This role play is to discuss whether or not exotic animals should be commercially farmed to cut out the black markets in animals and products and thus protect animals in the wild. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

Role A – EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMER

You can breed thousands of Siberian tigers. You know you can reduce the price of tigers for pets, fur and for use in Chinese medicine. You believe animals must be used in Chinese medicine. You are a conservationist. You want the animals in the wild to survive. You have plans for cloning exotic animals for commercial purposes.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMING IS GOOD.

Role B – CONSUMER

You think exotic animal farming is the best solution to animal conservation. You feel sorry for the millions of animals who die while being illegally smuggled across borders. You like exotic animal products but have never bought any because of conservation concerns. Animal farming means you can now buy a tiger skin coat.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMING IS GOOD.

Role C – CONSERVATIONIST

You think exotic animal farming is a terrible idea. It sends people the wrong message that commercialism is more important than conservation. Animals have rights. You think legalizing animal farming will increase poaching. You think cloning will destroy all wildlife.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMING IS TERRIBLE.

Role D – EXOTIC ANIMAL

You have had enough of worrying about whether or not you or your family will be caught by poachers. You cannot sleep at night. Dozens of your relatives and friends have been taken to be pets or medicine. You have heard many bad things about animal farms. Animals should be left alone in the wild.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY ANY USE OF ANIMALS IS NOT FAIR.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Internet trade threatens exotic animals

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The report represents the tip of the _____. Experts estimate the _____ illegal global trade is worth billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web _____ the situation. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and anonymous. The result is a _____ black market where the future of the world's rarest animals is being traded away," said IFAW's Phyllis Campbell-McRae. The report recommended tougher worldwide protection: "The current legal _____ and enforcement efforts are inadequate to deal with this _____ situation. A more effective response is essential." Ms. Campbell-McRae warned: "Trade in wildlife is _____ by consumer demand, so when the buying stops, the killing will too. Buying wildlife online is as _____ as killing it yourself."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. LETTER: Write a letter to the IFAW boss. Tell him / her what you think of the trade in exotic animals on the Internet. Give him / her advice on what he /she should do try and stop the illegal trade in exotic animals. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar thoughts and advice?

4. ENDANGERED SPECIES: Make a poster on one of the world's endangered species. Include information on the animal's lifestyle and habitat, the dangers it faces and the products made from it. Show your posters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all find out about similar animals or things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
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| d. compiled | put together |
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PHRASE MATCH:

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| g. The World Wide Web exacerbates | the situation |
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| i. deal with this | appalling situation |
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WHICH WORD?

Internet trade threatens exotic animals

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