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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 in danger from the Internet.

Online shoppers are buying huge numbers of exotic animals. This is another nail in the coffin for many creatures already threatened with extinction. Poachers, collectors wanting stuffed rhino heads and Chinese medicine already threaten thousands of species. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) wrote a report called "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet". It found thousands of rare animals for sale in its one-week Web search.

The report is the tip of the iceberg. Experts value the illegal global animal trade at billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web makes the situation worse. "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. She also 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 hunters. 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 / Internet / 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. ANIMAL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “animal”. 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 these opinions. Do you agree or disagree with them?

- 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. It's OK to use exotic animals in traditional Chinese medicine.
- d. Businessmen want big profits, so many animals will survive.
- 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 go to prison for life. 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 people 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 found huge numbers of animals for sale. | T / F |
| e. Many animals are being smuggled on icebergs. | T / F |
| f. The Web makes the problem worse because traders are anonymous. | T / F |
| g. There is a large black market in exotic animals. | T / F |
| h. A conservationist told consumers to kill animals themselves. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| a. endangered | setback |
| b. huge | cautioned |
| c. nail in the coffin | discovered |
| d. creatures | top |
| e. found | massive |
| f. illegal | secretive |
| g. tip | illicit |
| h. anonymous | threatened |
| i. warned | harmful |
| j. damaging | animals |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. endangered species are in | rhino heads |
| b. Online shoppers are buying | the situation worse |
| c. another nail | huge numbers of exotic animals |
| d. stuffed | by consumer demand |
| e. thousands of rare animals for | of the iceberg |
| f. The report is the tip | the killing will too |
| g. The World Wide Web makes | sale |
| h. a cyber black | danger from the Internet |
| i. Trade in wildlife is driven | in the coffin |
| j. when the buying stops, | market |

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 in danger from the Internet. Online *shoppers / shippers* are buying huge numbers of exotic animals. This is another nail in the *heart / coffin* for many creatures already threatened with *distinction / extinction*. Poachers, collectors wanting stuffed rhino heads and Chinese medicine already *treat / threaten* thousands of species. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) wrote a report called "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet". It found thousands of *raw / rare* animals for sale in its one-week Web search.

The report is the *tip / top* of the iceberg. Experts *value / worth* the illegal global animal trade at billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web makes the situation *worse / worry*. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and anonymous. The result is a cyber black market where the future of the world's *barest / rarest* animals is being traded away," said IFAW's Phyllis Campbell-McRae. She also warned: "Trade in wildlife is *piloted / driven* by consumer *demand / supply*, 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 'life'.

- 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:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| • endangered | • tip |
| • huge | • worse |
| • collectors | • black |
| • medicine | • traded |
| • report | • driven |
| • search | • killing |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about endangered species?
- d. How would you feel if the giant panda became extinct?
- e. Do you have a responsibility 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 Chinese medicine?
- h. What do you of someone who wants a stuffed rhino head in his / her living room?
- i. Why do people want to buy 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 penalty should be given to traders in endangered species?
- d. Do you think people will ever stop buying exotic animal goods?
- e. Do you think there are particular countries that 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 farmed to cut out the black market and stop 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 farmed to cut out the black markets in animals and products. This may protect animals in the wild. Team up with classmates who have 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 for sale. 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 and want the animals in the wild to survive. You have plans for cloning exotic animals to sell.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMING IS GOOD.

Role B – CONSUMER

You think exotic animal farming is the best answer 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 you are a conservationist. 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 profits are more important than animals. Animals have rights. You think legalizing animal farming will increase poaching. You think cloning will destroy all wildlife. You think exotic animal farmers should go to prison.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY EXOTIC ANIMAL FARMING IS TERRIBLE.

Role D – EXOTIC ANIMAL

You are tired 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

BNE: The world's _____ species are in danger from the Internet. Online shoppers are buying huge numbers of _____ animals. This is another nail in the coffin for many creatures already threatened with _____. Poachers, collectors wanting _____ rhino heads and Chinese medicine already threaten thousands of _____. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) wrote a report called "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet". It found thousands of rare animals for sale in its one-week Web _____.

The report is the tip of the _____. Experts value the illegal global animal trade at billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web makes the _____ worse. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and _____. 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. She also _____: "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. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| a. endangered | threatened |
| b. huge | massive |
| c. nail in the coffin | setback |
| d. creatures | animals |
| e. found | discovered |
| f. illegal | illicit |
| g. tip | top |
| h. anonymous | secretive |
| i. warned | cautioned |
| j. damaging | harmful |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. endangered species are in | danger from the Internet |
| b. Online shoppers are buying | huge numbers of exotic animals |
| c. another nail | in the coffin |
| d. stuffed | rhino heads |
| e. thousands of rare animals for | sale |
| f. The report is the tip | of the iceberg |
| g. The World Wide Web makes | the situation worse |
| h. a cyber black | market |
| i. Trade in wildlife is driven | by consumer demand |
| j. when the buying stops, | the killing will too |

WHICH WORD?

Internet trade threatens exotic animals

BNE: The world's *endangered* / ~~dangerous~~ species are in danger from the Internet. Online *shoppers* / ~~shippers~~ are buying huge numbers of exotic animals. This is another nail in the ~~heart~~ / *coffin* for many creatures already threatened with ~~distinction~~ / *extinction*. Poachers, collectors wanting stuffed rhino heads and Chinese medicine already ~~treat~~ / *threaten* thousands of species. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) wrote a report called "Caught In The Web - Wildlife Trade On The Internet". It found thousands of ~~rare~~ / *rare* animals for sale in its one-week Web search.

The report is the *tip* / ~~top~~ of the iceberg. Experts *value* / ~~worth~~ the illegal global animal trade at billions of dollars a year. The World Wide Web makes the situation *worse* / ~~worry~~. "Trade on the Internet is easy, cheap and anonymous. The result is a cyber black market where the future of the world's ~~barest~~ / *rarest* animals is being traded away," said IFAW's Phyllis Campbell-McRae. She also warned: "Trade in wildlife is ~~piloted~~ / *driven* by consumer *demand* / ~~supply~~, so when the buying stops, the killing will too. Buying wildlife online is as damaging as killing it yourself."