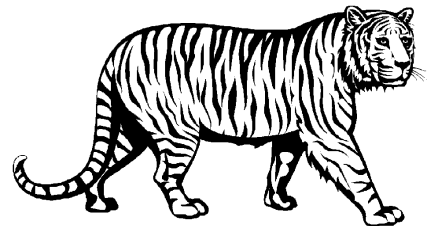


WILD

TIGER



#tinytiger

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Created By: Felicita Wight

Wild Tiger

What? Wild Tiger is a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to conserving India's Bengal tigers and their habitats. We believe that tigers can survive and rural communities can develop sustainably together.

Why? The diversity of wildlife found in India are maintained and supported by the tiger. People who depend on the ecosystem for food, cash crops, and natural products also benefit from conserving the tiger. Protecting the apex predator means protecting everything else in the ecosystem.

How? We work to protect the largest remaining population of tigers in the world. India's Bengal tigers are threatened by a number of global and local issues. Scientific research and education is fundamental to successful conservation.

Research: Field research in India examines both the biological environment and human dimensions of the tiger's existence. India's tiger population is critical to long-term conservation as the largest concentration of tigers left in the wild. We provide resources supporting year-round research in Central India.

Education: Education is essential in our efforts to save tigers and promote coexistence.

A variety of threats, like wildlife crime, climate change, and habitat encroachment face tigers in the wild. An interdisciplinary understanding of threats is required to meet 21st century conservation needs as traditional conservation strategies have failed. The tiger's future is in our hands. Innovative solutions need to be found. Tigers need STEM leaders who engage in critical thinking. We rely on educating the future generation, providing them skills and knowledge, so they may be able to save endangered species in the future.

About This Activity Guide

Despite the combined efforts of the international community, governments and civil society there has been a significant increase in wildlife crime. Wildlife trade is the fourth largest global illegal trade after narcotics, counterfeiting, and human trafficking. Creating the material for school age students presented the opportunity to introduce the issue to a broad audience. The material was designed as an activity guide because various facets of the topic could be explored through basic science principles and social studies skills. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, students will gain a deeper understanding of the role wildlife play in the environment and how legal and illegal trade affects a species' survival. This activity guide provides a hands-on, problem-solving activity which create the opportunity to learn about wildlife trade issues in an interactive and thought provoking manner.

Go to www.wild-tiger.org for further STEM exploration and to download more activity guides!

How to Use This Activity Guide

The purpose of this education activity guide designed to acquaint students with the increasing problems associated with wildlife trade. This guide is intended to be useable for both formal and non-formal facilities. The activities are aimed at upper elementary through high school students. There are three units, each consists of a topic overview with two to three activities based on the subject matter. Every activity includes an objective, method, background information and procedure accompanied which include an introduction, conclusion, and discussion questions as well as extension suggestions. All activities have **key terms** which highlight the learning objectives. Supplemental materials are provided at the end of each activity. Each section also has a supplemental case study for students or teachers to examine the topic deeper.

This activity guide can be used as a tool for educators to incorporate the topic of wildlife crime into programming or a school curriculum. The activities are designed to cover broad environmental science topics and introduce key terms in a fun and interactive manner. Through a multi-disciplinary approach, this booklet will provide students with a deeper understanding of the role wildlife plays in the environment and how legal and illegal trade affects wildlife survival, as well as stimulate environmental stewardship beyond the classroom.

Tigers in the United States

Intro:

Non-native species are introduced through legal importation of exotic pets that escape into the ecosystem. The source of these problems is due not only to illegal commerce but also to loopholes and unclear regulations of exotic pets. Everything from the smallest reptile to a full-grown tiger can be sold to anyone for the right price. However, unlike domestic pets, exotic animals have not been developed over thousands of years to live with humans. Some captive-bred animals are still called exotic pets because “they have not been intensively and selectively bred for life with humans (Kennedy, 2005).” The term exotic pet has no firm definition; it can refer to any wildlife kept in human households—or simply to a pet that’s more unusual than the typical dog or cat (Slater 2014). An exotic pet can include animals such as primates, parrots, reptiles, and big cats.

Objective:

Students will be able to explain the pros and cons of exotic pet ownership and understand the differences between a domestic animal versus a wild animal.

Method:

Debate about exotic pet ownership.

Background:

Exotic pet owners tend to fall into multiple overlapping categories. “**Exotic**” refers to a species which is not native to the owner's locale; and “**pet**” is a companion animal living with people (Damania & Bulte, 2007). A pet animal is any animal that is commonly kept as a pet in family households, such as dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters (Regulations, 2006). This term excludes exotic animals and wild animals. Most animals involved in the exotic pet trade are bred in captivity.

Captive breeding refers to the method of breeding animals in a controlled environment and raising them under human care. These animals are no longer completely wild, nor are they a domesticated species. These captive-bred species are used for commercial enterprises by aqua culturists, pet breeders, and live-bait producers or non-commercially by hobbyists (Jenkins, 2007). However, issues arise with captive breeding programs such as inbreeding, subspecies creation, and sterile hybrids of these species. A captive pet may revert at any time to its natural instinctive behavior by striking out against the human affection that usually evokes acceptance (Levin, 1982).

A **live auction** is a method of buying goods at a location where the item is sold to the highest bidder. Hundreds of people gather from all across the country to buy, sell, or trade almost every animal you can imagine. Animal buyers are not questioned about their knowledge and expertise about possessing these animals, nor are they required to verify that they reside in a state which permits ownership of the purchased species (Henn, 2015). Some buyers come from zoos; others have private petting farms or animal parks.

Grade level: 5-8

Subject Areas: Social Studies

Duration: 45 minutes

Setting: Classroom

Materials:

- ✓ Debate Fact Sheet
- ✓ White Board/markers
- ✓ Writing Pad

Key terms: domesticated, wildlife farming, captive breeding, live auction

Many of the large exotic animals end up in backyard menageries without proper care (Slater, 2014).

Procedure:

Before the Activity:

1. Set up two desks in the front of the room
2. Divide class in half assigning each a side (for or against) cat ownership
3. Print out Tigers in the US – enough for each student

Intro- Debate Question:

A patchwork of rules reflects the conflict between the desire to protect the public and the historic notion that people have a right to keep pets. Today, many big cats, such as tigers, are bred in captivity. State legislation on the issue of big cat ownership ranges from complete bans on private ownership to no regulations at all.

It is estimated there are more tigers kept as pets in Texas than there are wild in India. While there is no federal authority to regulate or monitor ownership of live tigers, some States and local jurisdictions have regulations controlling the possession and intrastate sale of big cats (USFWS, 2011). Now it is your chance to weigh in on the topic; should exotic pets be permitted and bred in the United States. You will get to make a case either **for** or **against** big cat ownership.

Activity:

1. Introduce the debate question as: “Should Tigers be allowed in the United States.”
2. Provided students with “Tigers in the United States.”
3. Have students read provided material
4. Give students 10 minutes to prepare 2-3 points on their debate side; either **for** or **against** permitting big cats in the United States
5. After each side has presented, give students 3-5 minutes to come up with a rebuttal
6. Next each side will present their rebuttal
7. List the arguments on a white board
8. After, have a class discussion about the opinions shared

Conclusion:

How would the tigers in captivity see the issue of exotic pet ownership? They are creatures born to roam the wildness, not in a backyard cage of Texas. The issue is far from black or white. Some feel it is not only dangerous to bring captive-bred wildlife into the suburbs, but cruel to the animal. Others feel it is their right to keep whatever pet they want especially if it poses no harm on the wild populations of the species.

Questions:

1. What were your final thoughts on the case for exotic pet ownership?
2. Has your opinion changed before the activity?
3. Could one solution be found? Is there a middle ground?
4. What points were persuasive? Why?

Extensions:

- ❖ Create a research paper on the topic

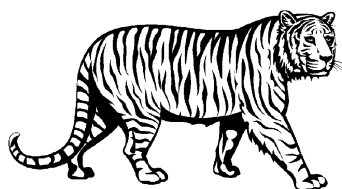
- ❖ Switch perspective
- ❖ Write a state representative on the topic.

Debate Fact Sheet

Tigers in the United States

Tigers are shockingly cheap and easy to purchase as a pet. Today, tigers can be found in backyards, urban apartments, sideshows, truck stops and private breeding facilities. Tigers are wild animals and can pose a risk to the public's safety. Even when raised from a cub in captivity, the species is not domesticated and could be unpredictable. **Captive breeding** refers to the method of breeding animals in a controlled environment and raising them under human care. These animals are no longer completely wild, nor are they considered domesticated species. Other issues arise as well such as inbreeding (offspring from closely related generations), subspecies (genetically different from other such populations of the same species), and hybrids (offspring of two different animals).

People have enjoyed the companionship and assistance of animals since the beginning of time. Species such as dogs lived alongside humans, animals like pigs became livestock, and exotic animals in royal courts were living proof of a king's might and influence. Nowadays, the majority of animals involved in the exotic pet trade including tigers are bred in captivity. There is an appeal to owning a different type of "pet" and captive breeding alleviates the pressure from harvesting wild populations. Many owners tend to their pet tigers with great care and at no small expense. These animals are considered personal property and pose an equal risk as any other pet animal.



A patchwork of federal laws governs the possession, sale, and exhibition of captive tigers. It is estimated that there over 5,000 tigers in the United States. Only six percent of the US captive tiger population resides in zoos and other facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The other ninety-four percent are found in other private hands. Six states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Nevada, Alabama and West Virginia) place no restrictions on owning a tiger; 14 states require a permit, and 30 states prohibit ownership. There are some federal laws in places such as the Captive Wildlife Safety Act (2003) law which make it illegal to import, export, buy, sell, transport, receive or acquire certain live big cats across state lines or the United States border. However, these laws may not apply to sales within a state.

Unfortunately, taking on an exotic pet is a bigger burden than people commonly expect. Currently, there are no mandates to keep a current record of how many tigers are in the country, where they are, who possesses them, when they die or how the body is disposed of tigers are expensive and require lots of space. Many private owners obtain tigers with good intentions but find out too late that they do not have the resources to care properly for their animal. It is not usually as easy to discard of an exotic pet as purchasing one. Unfortunately, many tigers often

end up in dreadful conditions. Keeping tigers as a pet covers many topics including conservation issues, public safety issues, and animal welfare issues.

Resource:

World Wildlife Fund, (WWF) (2014)
More Tigers in American Backyard than in the Wildlife [Fact Sheet]

Glossary

Domesticated-tamed animals- animals that have become adapted over time to life alongside humans, such as chickens, goats, cows, dogs.

Illegal wildlife trade or trafficking -the illicit procurement, transport, and distribution, internationally and domestically, of animals, and animal parts in violation of laws, foreign and domestic, and treaties.

Apex predators- are animals (adult), have no natural predators within their ecosystems and are at the top of the food chain.

Biodiversity -is the diversity among and within plant and animal species in a particular ecosystem.

Black market- where goods are traded illegally whether it be a physical locatable shop or on the Internet.

Bushmeat- is wild meat or game meat; referring to meat from non-domesticated mammals.

Captive breeding -refers to the method of breeding animals in a controlled environment and raising them under human care.

Captive-bred animals - term allotted to at minimum second-generation captive-bred animals, in other words an animal born in captivity to captive parents.

Domesticated (tamed)- species that have become adapted over time to life alongside humans.

Exotic pets- are species that have not been intensively and selectively bred for life with humans, this can include captive raised or wild caught species.

Exotic species -is an organism that is not native to that habitat.

Export- is in an item going out of the country to any other country of the world.

Illegal -not permitted or allowed.

Import -is an item coming inside a country from any other country.

Invasive species -is an exotic species whose introduction into an ecosystem in which the species is not native causes or is likely to cause environmental or economic harm or harm to human health.

Keystone species-are species that play essential roles in maintaining biological diversity of the ecological community and how an ecosystem functions.

Legal- permitted, allowed, lawful.

Live Auction is a method of buying goods at a location where the item is sold to the highest bidder.

Native species- species that occurs naturally within a region.

Non-native-a species living outside its native distributional range.

Pangolins- known as scaly anteaters, the species is at risk of extinction due the commercial hunting for human consumption.

Poaching- is when an animal is killed illegally, which could mean taking a wild resource out of season or through an illegal means.

Ranger- wildlife rangers are the men and women on the frontline of poaching, responsible for protecting endangered species within a protected natural area.

Smuggling- is the illegal transportation of objects or people including crossing international borders.

Traffic-is more conventionally used to indicate a tainted version of “trade;” refers to the act of trade (buying and selling) of flora and fauna illegally or against the law.

Wild-caught-species caught alive in the wild.

Wildlife farming- refers to the rearing of non-domesticated animals for the purpose of captive breeding.

Wildlife trade- is the selling of or exchange of wild animal and plant resources. This can include live animals and plants or a diverse range of products needed or prized by people such as skins, meat, medicinal ingredients, tourist trinkets, timber, fish and other food products.