

Tigers and gorillas for sale online

Level 3 | Advanced

1 Key vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these key words from the text.

endangered species primate adolescent anonymous
predominantly taxidermy unperturbed unaware

1. The practice of preserving dead animals by filling their skins with material so they look as if they are still alive is called _____.
2. An _____ animal is one which has not yet become a fully grown adult.
3. If you are _____ about something, you are not worried about it at all.
4. If you are _____ of something, you don't realize that it exists or is happening.
5. _____ is another word for 'mainly' or 'mostly'.
6. An _____ is a type of animal that may soon become extinct.
7. If someone is _____, no-one knows their name.
8. Any animal, including monkeys and apes, which belongs to the same group as humans is known as a _____.

2 What do you know?

Decide if the following statements are True or False. Then check your answers in the text.

1. Trading in exotic animals is legal.
2. Trading in exotic animals is worth billions of dollars a year.
3. It is possible to buy a gorilla on the internet.
4. It costs around \$700,000 to buy a Siberian tiger.
5. Parts of dead animals are also advertised on the internet.
6. Most exotic animals are sold to taxidermists.

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By John Vidal

Thousands of endangered animals supposedly protected by law are being traded openly on the internet and sold as “exotic pets”, say wildlife crime investigators working with an international animal charity.

An investigation of nearly 100 websites based around the world found a “shocking” selection of rare and endangered animals for sale. They included a hand-reared Siberian tiger (\$70,000), an adolescent gorilla (\$8,100) advertised as being in London, and other rare primates, falcons, seahorses and whole shells of turtles. One of the most expensive was a “sweet-natured” two-year-old giraffe being sold for \$15,500 in the US. “He has never been bad-tempered with me. A loving home is a must,” said the anonymous owner. The internet has revolutionised shopping for books, DVDs and airline tickets, but it has also opened up great opportunities to deal in illegal wildlife which, according to the United Nations, is worth billions of dollars a year and now rivals the arms and drug trades in scale. “Within one week we found over 9,000 wild animal products and specimens, and wild animals for sale, predominantly from species protected by law,” says the report for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). “More than 100 traders were identified, each advertising an unnamed, unspecified number of items,” said the authors of the report.

The range of live endangered animals for sale could have set up whole zoos, and the

parts of dead animals found on the web would have stocked streets of Chinese pharmacies. “They included some of the world’s most endangered species,” the report says. “There were live Amazonian parrots, wild cats, a green turtle which the seller claimed was captured from a Southeast Asian rainforest; even a live pet lion.” A total of 146 live primates were found in a week, some being advertised before they were even born. Commercial trade in any primate species is either prohibited or subject to strict controls. The gorilla for sale in London might not have actually existed, said an IFAW spokeswoman on Monday. “Possibly it was a Congo-based operation which would capture an animal to order.” Guaranteed to be real, however, were the hawksbill turtle shells, shahtoosh shawls from the Tibetan antelope and taxidermy specimens of lions and peregrine falcons - the last a protected British species - which were all found, along with a stuffed polar bear that was billed as being Victorian but looked suspiciously fresh.

Although thousands of species are in steep decline worldwide, quantity does not appear to be a problem for the sellers, who IFAW found ranged from individuals hoping to make money on a one-off exotic pet to professional traders who appeared to have access to a regular supply.

Neither did the fact that it is illegal to trade in the species worry the sellers. Many seemed unperturbed or unaware of the law.

The Guardian Weekly 17/8/2005, page 17

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3 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer.

1. How has the internet affected the trade in endangered animals?
 - a. It has enabled whole zoos to be set up.
 - b. It has opened up great opportunities to dealers in illegal wildlife.
 - c. It has introduced strict controls on advertising endangered animals for sale.
2. What was strange about the gorilla advertised as being in London?
 - a. It was comparatively cheap.
 - b. It probably came from the Congo.
 - c. It probably didn't exist.
3. What types of creatures are mentioned in the text?
 - a. mammals and birds
 - b. mammals, birds and fish
 - c. mammals, birds, fish and reptiles
4. What items are advertised for sale on the internet?
 - a. live animals, parts of dead animals and stuffed animals
 - b. an unnamed, unspecified number of items
 - c. one-off exotic pets

4 Vocabulary 1 - Find the word or expression

Look in the text and find the word or expression...

1. ... which means the opposite of 'common'.
2. ... which is the opposite of 'bad-tempered'.
3. ... which means the same as 'illegal' or 'not permitted'.
4. ... which is the opposite of 'specific'.
5. ... which is the opposite of 'domestic'.
6. ... which means 'as some people believe or say'.
7. ... which means 'in a way that makes you think there is something wrong'.
8. ... which means 'falling in number rapidly'.

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5 Vocabulary 2

Group these wildlife words from the text depending on their type.

tiger	gorilla	falcon	seahorse	turtle	
giraffe	parrot	green turtle	antelope	polar bear	
Mammals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Birds	_____	_____			
Fish	_____				
Reptiles	_____	_____			

6 Collocations - Prepositions

Complete the expressions by adding an appropriate preposition. Check your answers in the text.

1. subject _____
2. trade _____
3. _____ order
4. _____ decline
5. access _____
6. unaware _____

7 Discussion

Should people be allowed to keep exotic animals as pets?

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KEY

1 Key vocabulary

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. taxidermy | 5. predominantly |
| 2. adolescent | 6. endangered species |
| 3. unperturbed | 7. anonymous |
| 4. unaware | 8. primate |

2 What do you know?

1. F; 2. T; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F

3 Comprehension check

1. b; 2. c; 3. c; 4. a

4 Vocabulary 1 – Find the word or expression

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. rare | 5. wild |
| 2. sweet-natured | 6. supposedly |
| 3. prohibited | 7. suspiciously |
| 4. unspecified | 8. in steep decline |

5 Vocabulary 2

Mammals	tiger, gorilla, giraffe, antelope, polar bear
Birds	falcon, parrot
Fish	seahorse
Reptiles	turtle, green turtle

6 Collocations – Prepositions

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. to | 4. in |
| 2. in | 5. to |
| 3. to | 6. of |