



Jane  
Goodall  
Institute

Learning Resource



# Fighting the Illegal Wildlife Trade

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# Fighting the Illegal Wildlife Trade



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## Get the links

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The illegal wildlife trade has devastating impacts on animal populations and ecosystems. It can also fuel organised crime and undermine local communities. Learn more about the problems of poaching and trafficking and how you can help, no matter where you live.

## In this activity you and your students will:

- ▶ Learn definitions of poaching and trafficking.
- ▶ Learn about some of the problems that these can cause, for animals, people and the environment.
- ▶ Learn about how you can become a more savvy consumer to help stem demand for illegal wildlife products.

## What things will my students create?

- ▶ A poster campaign to pass on your new-found knowledge.

## Poaching vs Trafficking

There are two main parts to the illegal wildlife trade. **Poaching** is the illegal hunting or capturing of wild animals<sup>1</sup>. **Trafficking** refers to the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. Although they are separate activities they often go hand in hand.

### Kopi luwak – ‘civet coffee’



An Asian palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*)  
Jordy Meow, CC BY 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons



Kopi luwak, coffee seeds from faeces of palm civet. Lampung, Indonesia  
Wibowo Djatmiko (Wiel46), CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Kopi luwak, also known as civet coffee, is a coffee that consists of partially digested coffee cherries, which have been eaten and defecated by the Asian palm civet. The cherries are fermented as they pass through a civet’s intestines, and after being defecated they are collected, cleaned and used to make the world’s most expensive coffee.

The expense is mainly due to the rarity value – traditionally it would be gathered from the forests where the wild civets

lived with little to no interaction with the animals themselves. Unfortunately, the high prices that can be charged for kopi luwak mean that much of it is now produced from intensively farmed civets rather than gathered in the wild. To stock these farms, civets are regularly **poached** from their native habitat and **trafficked** to the farmers. As trafficking refers to the trade in both wild animals themselves and to their products, selling kopi luwak made in this way is also an act of **trafficking**.

<sup>1</sup> Some definitions of poaching widen this to also include the illegal harvesting of wild plant species

# What problems does the illegal wildlife trade pose?

The illegal wildlife trade poses problems at many levels, not just for the animals that it directly involves.

## Exercise

You might want to run this part of the resource as an activity. Split your group into three – one sub-group will consider the harms for **the animals directly involved**, the second should consider harms for **the ecosystem from which the animals are removed** and the third the harm to **people living in the area where the poaching/trafficking takes place**. Give them some time to come up with a list of key points then have them report back to the others.



## Harm to the animals themselves

For an individual animal, harms include transportation from their native habitat, abusive treatment (such as the intensive farming of civets) and death (for example the killing of rhinos to harvest their horns for use in folk remedies and other traditional 'medicines'). Poaching can also seriously affect entire populations of animals. Although numbers are rising due to concerted conservation efforts, with just 3,142 animals estimated by IUCN to be living in the wild, the black rhinoceros is still critically endangered and poaching is one of the major causes of this.

## Harm to the ecosystem

The ecosystem from which an animal is taken is threatened directly; by e.g. destruction of habitat by poachers (either as part of their hunting methods or to enable the building of infrastructure to make trafficking the animals easier) and indirectly; by the removal of animals from the ecosystem. Removing one animal from an ecosystem can have massive reverberations on other animals and plants in the region.

## The IUCN Red List

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of biological species. It classifies species into groups, from 'least concern' (e.g. the Asian palm civet), through 'critically endangered' (e.g. the black rhino) up to 'extinct'. Read more and check the status of a species at [iucnredlist.org](http://iucnredlist.org) – you can find the Asian palm civet here: [bit.ly/3lwJHid](http://bit.ly/3lwJHid) and the black rhino here: [bit.ly/40fYhtw](http://bit.ly/40fYhtw)



## Harm to people

The illegal wildlife trade can harm local people in a variety of ways. It can take people's livelihoods (e.g. cheaper illegal civet farming making traditional 'poo collection' unprofitable), homes (as poachers assert control over an area) and even their sources of food and water as harm to the ecosystem takes hold. Although the fight against the illegal trade can provide some different jobs, all too often they are controlled by a small set of outsiders and little is given back to the community. There's a great discussion of this that is suitable for older students here: [bit.ly/40q1CGx](http://bit.ly/40q1CGx)

## The return of the wolf



Grey wolf  
Public domain image via Wikimedia Commons

To understand the consequences of removing a species from an ecosystem we can look at a case study of putting a species *back* into an environment from which it had previously been removed. The reintroduction of the grey wolf to Yellowstone is a great, well documented example that lends weight to large mammal conservation/rewilding projects across the world (including the Himalayan wolf). Read all about the reintroduction here: [bit.ly/3TzJ9od](http://bit.ly/3TzJ9od)



# What can we do?

Wherever you are in the world, you can help in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade by being a savvy consumer.

There are a number of ways you can help prevent the trade – the list below is primarily adapted from conservation charity ZSL's guidelines ([bit.ly/3nerKp0](https://bit.ly/3nerKp0)). How many can your group come up with from this list? Can they think of anything else?

- 1. Be a savvy tourist:** avoid tourist attractions that exploit wildlife and selfie opportunities with exotic animals.
- 2. Be savvy on your socials:** Don't share or like posts with wild animals that show them interacting with people who aren't experts, wearing clothing, being abused or otherwise in non-natural situations. Learn more at [janegoodall.org.uk/forever-wild](https://janegoodall.org.uk/forever-wild).
- 3. Buy sustainably sourced products from verifiable sources:** the Fairtrade and other certification schemes can help here, but if you can't verify them then walk away.
- 4. Say no to endangered and exotic animal products:** Avoid buying products derived from wildlife, plants, or other items made from them, online or in stores, even if legal within the country of origin<sup>2</sup>. Such products might include jewellery, bags, traditional 'medicine', food, etc.

- 5. Avoid the unusual:** Don't order that extraordinary menu item just so you can tell your friends that you tried it (do you really need to try that kopi luwak?).
- 6. Wild animals aren't pets:** As well as being difficult to care for, pets such as snakes and spiders can often be sourced from the wild and potentially trafficked. People buying pets should always make sure that they are from a certified captive bred stock and not from the wild.
- 7. Report the crime:** Report suspicions of wildlife crime to your local law enforcement (and never buy something 'as proof', it won't help and can get you into trouble with the law).
- 8. Support the charities creating routes to recovery:** There are a number of charities active in the fight against the illegal wildlife trade. The World Wildlife Fund works in many areas across the globe ([bit.ly/3nxki8A](https://bit.ly/3nxki8A)) and others such as the Jane Goodall Institute's Forever Wild campaign about chimpanzees target specific areas or animals ([janegoodall.org.uk/forever-wild](https://janegoodall.org.uk/forever-wild)).

## Folk remedies and traditional 'medicine'

When they are ill, many people across the world turn to folk remedies and traditional 'medicine' for a cure (most commonly because they do not have sufficient access to scientific medicine). Traditional 'medicine' refers to a set of techniques and preparations used by people for healthcare since long before we had an understanding of how disease works and is rarely more effective than a placebo. In some cases these preparations involve the use of animal products that have been obtained from trafficking. One of the most commonly cited examples of this is powdered rhino horn but there are plenty more, such as pangolin scales.

<sup>2</sup> The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement to limit trade in products derived from endangered animals and plants. Almost 4000 seizures of goods in violation of CITES were made in the EU in 2020, many of them bound for consumers who didn't realise that what they were importing was illegal [bit.ly/40v7SMI](https://bit.ly/40v7SMI)

# Spread the word

The more people who know how to be a savvy consumer, the better – it's time to spread the word!

There are lots of ways that your group can help educate people to be better consumers. One suggestion is to create a poster campaign that can be displayed around your school. Here are some tips and tricks on how to design an effective campaign:

- ▶ **Choose a single message for your campaign.** Take a look through the 7 points above and choose just one (we recommend choosing one of the first 5). Which is most relevant to where you live? If you have a large group then you might also consider splitting into sub-groups and having each one choose a different topic.
- ▶ **Narrow it down.** For example, if you chose 'Say no to endangered and exotic animal products' then pick a particular topic within that, such as traditional 'medicine' products or fashion items.
- ▶ **Choose your 'icon'.** Within your chosen field, pick an 'icon' to use as the focus of your poster. For example snakeskin bags and purses.
- ▶ **Think of a tagline.** Posters work well when the main message is short and easy to understand – an example you might have seen is 'Save the Rhino'. This doesn't mean you can't have more text on your poster too, but it gives something to catch the eye and make people want to learn more.
- ▶ **Create your poster.** Be as creative as you like. It can be an illustration, or you could use photos (Wikimedia Commons is a great source for legal images), make a collage, anything!



An example poster from Born Free: [tinyurl.com/2r5u6zsu](https://tinyurl.com/2r5u6zsu)

## Want to help improve this activity?

This activity is a living document! Help us by editing this activity to make it as good as possible, just use this short link (just type it into your web browser's address bar): [tinyurl.com/zk4k9xz9](https://tinyurl.com/zk4k9xz9) – full instructions are provided. Any edits that can make this resource easier to use in the classroom are very welcome, so please follow the link and make your contribution!



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## JGI & DP World

The Jane Goodall Institute has partnered with DP World to support the growth of the Roots & Shoots programme. DP World are a leading provider of worldwide smart end-to-end supply chain logistics with a presence in 55 countries, enabling the flow of trade across the globe. This exciting partnership supports the creation of resources on the wider marine ecosystem as well as supporting the expansion of Roots & Shoots groups around the world. **Find out more: [bit.ly/jgi-dpw](https://bit.ly/jgi-dpw)**



# Tell us how you got on

When your project is finished we'd love to see what you did! If you already have an account you can upload a story with images to the Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots UAE website (find us at [www.rootsnshoots.ae](http://www.rootsnshoots.ae)) to show off pictures and videos of your ships to a wider audience. If your school or youth group does not already have an account then just fill in the form on the website and we can set you up.

## UAE Year of Sustainability

2023 is the Year of Sustainability in the UAE where we ask the question how can we be sustainable as a **community**, with our **nature**, and our **resources**? Through knowledge-sharing and storytelling, together we can spread essential information about sustainability and its importance, so share your work as wide as you can and tag/mention the campaign on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok with the account @UAEYearOf and the hashtags #UAE52 and #TodayForTomorrow. Learn more at [UAEYearOf.ae](http://UAEYearOf.ae).

## Keep up to date with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots UAE

As well as the website you can also find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/RootsnShoots.ae](https://facebook.com/RootsnShoots.ae) or on Twitter as [@JaneGoodallUAE](https://twitter.com/JaneGoodallUAE)

