

Animal trafficking – student worksheet

1. Test yourself

1. What kinds of rainforest animals do you think traffickers sell as pets?
2. How much do you think traffickers can sell a rare or exotic bird for?
3. Why do you think traffickers prefer to steal *baby* animals from the Amazon rainforest?
4. How do you think the traffickers transport animals to other cities and hide them from the police?
5. What happens to the stolen animals when traffickers are caught by the police?
6. Why can it be dangerous to keep pets from the jungle (e.g. monkeys) in your home?

2. Read the texts below. Find the answers to the questions in Activity 1: test yourself.

Brazil has a huge diversity of creatures, especially in the Amazon rainforest, but every year thieves steal over 38 million animals and sell them as pets. The pet trade in Brazil is worth about \$2 billion.

A. Police officer

There are laws against animal trafficking, but it's difficult for us to catch these guys, as they're very organised. Animal traffickers work in large teams, including international contacts, motorcyclists and kids who warn them when we're coming. The traffickers are fast – and smart too. They quickly send dead animals to markets where they're sold for meat. Some animal parts are made into objects and sold to tourists (e.g. rugs from jaguar skins, bags from crocodiles and jewellery from turtle shells). We mostly try to stop the traffic of live animals. Usually they're carefully hidden (in socks or bags) and transported by motorbike. When we catch traffickers, they pay a fine or go to prison for a year and then try again. I think the government should give them much stricter punishments and punish all the people who help them! It should also give us more officers, because right now we just don't have enough.

B. Animal trafficker

Many Brazilians are unemployed, so we find other ways to make money. Colourful or exotic birds are the best. We can sell a typical bird for about \$150, but a rare macaw can sell for \$10,000. We send some animals abroad, but Brazil is the easiest market, because so many people in Brazil keep birds in cages. Exotic pets, like iguanas, monkeys and snakes, are

popular pets here too. So don't blame us! People want animals so we provide them. Besides, there are millions more animals in the jungle!

The problem for us is transporting them. We have to hide them from the police. Since babies are easiest to transport, we usually catch baby animals. Then we tape or cut the birds' beaks, so they don't make a noise. We sew the mouths of iguanas and tie their feet. Bigger animals don't fit in small spaces, so we break their bones. Sometimes we get caught, but instead of paying the fine we just bribe the police.

C. Vet

When traffickers are caught, the stolen animals are sent to us at rescue centres. Our job is to feed and look after them (most animals are injured). We put them back in their habitat, but first we have to teach them to fly (or move) again and how to find food. Every year we do this for around 7,000 animals, but the problem never ends. People who buy exotic pets are part of the problem! They need to understand that animals shouldn't live in cages. They also don't realise that the pets can bring diseases into their homes.

Animal traffickers destroy Brazil's animal diversity, cause destruction of the tropical rainforests and commit cruelty to animals. For example, they cut down trees to capture the baby birds. Then they take the babies away from their mothers and their natural habitat. They hurt them on the journey (around 90 per cent don't survive capture and transport). But traffickers don't care. I think they should work in a 'rehab' centre for a year as a punishment, like community service. If they saw what we see, they would stop.

3. Post-reading (part 1): Gathering information

1. Find out what crimes the animal traffickers commit and what punishments they receive. Complete the chart.

What crimes do animal traffickers commit?	
What punishments do they receive?	

2. Read the information you have collected as a group. Add more ideas of your own.

Post-reading (part 2): Discussion

3. Work in a group of three. Discuss: What punishment(s) would you give this person?

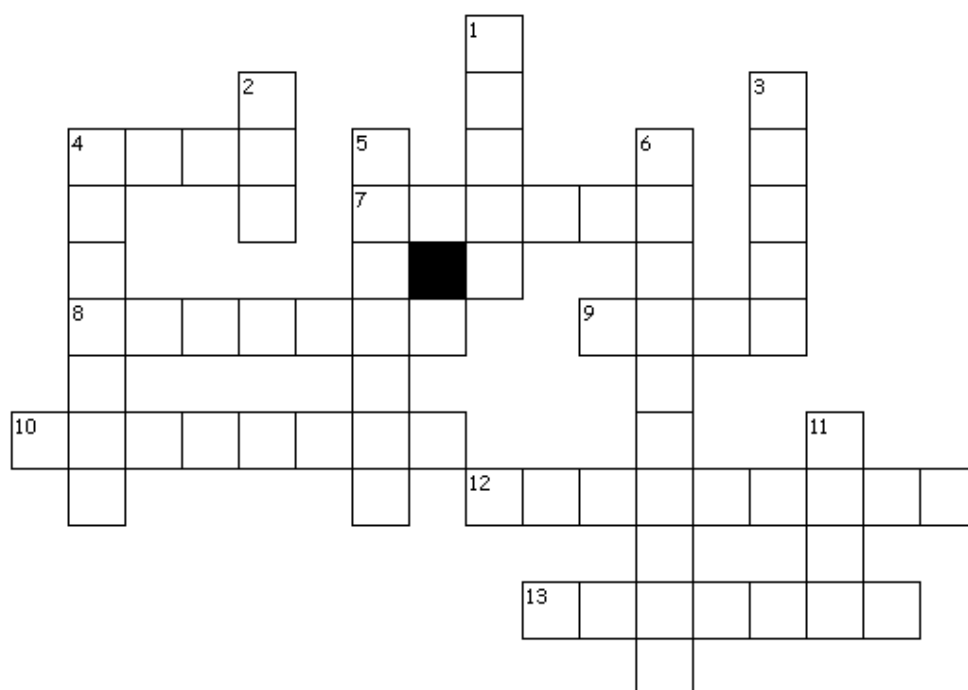
An animal trafficker stole a baby bird by cutting down a tree. He took the baby away from its habitat and mother. The bird was hidden in a sock and it died on the journey to a pet shop.

4. Agree as a group on the punishment. Give reasons and persuade each other if necessary.
5. Join another group of three. Compare your choice of punishment.
6. Agree as a group on the punishment. Give reasons and convince each other if necessary.

Optional activity

Complete the crossword with vocabulary in the box.

Amazon	cage	capture	endangered	diversity	fine	habitat
pet	rare	rehab	species	trade	traffic	tropical



Across →

4. metal box for animals
7. name of a jungle
8. to sell animals illegally
9. you don't see these animals often, because there aren't many
10. from a hot part of the country
12. many different types (of animal)
13. a group of animals that are similar (e.g. birds)

Down ↓

1. a kind of hospital for animals
2. an animal that lives in your home
3. buy and sell
4. catch
5. place where animals live
6. there are only a few (of an animal) in the world; the others have already died
11. money you must pay when you break the law