

National Geographic film *“Battle for the Elephants”*

explores the brutal **slaughter of African elephants for their tusks**, fueled largely by **China’s demand for ivory**. The film tells the story of how this charismatic and majestic land animal today faces market forces driving **the value of its tusks** to levels once reserved for **gold**.

This collection of [eight \(8\) short videos and educational resources](#) provides **information about elephants and the illicit trade that is undermining their future**.

Investigative journalists Bryan Christy and Aidan Hartley take you on a **journey** that examines the **supply and demand** sides of the **ivory trade**. With Christy you travel **to China** to see the thriving ivory market and the ancient tradition of ivory carving. Hartley takes you **to Africa**, where he gains rare access to ivory stockpiles and goes undercover to expose the criminal ivory trade network. You also witness the devastating **effects of poaching** on the **behavior of surviving elephants**.

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/battle-for-elephants/?ar_a=2

VIDEO 1: A Natural History of the African Elephant (3'41'')

Physical characteristics and social behaviors of the world's largest land animal

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/natural-history-african-elephant/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) What role elephants' outstanding memories may play in their survival?
- 2) In what ways elephant **communities** are similar to and different from human **families**?
- 3) How does poaching—the illegal harvesting of elephant tusks—affects the remaining elephants in a family? How does poaching might impact the ultimate survival of the community?

VIDEO 2: The Economics of the Illicit Ivory Trade (9'01'')

Elephant populations dwindle from black market ivory sales

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/economics-illicit-ivory-trade/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) In efforts to halt the illegal trade in poached ivory, Kenya has burned stockpiles of tusks and the Philippine government crushed more than 5 tons of ivory tusks. In what ways might these actions help or hurt efforts to halt the killing of elephants for their tusks—the supply side of the illicit trade?
- 2) The film poses the question of which competing force should be stopped to solve the problem of the illegal ivory trade—and the resulting dwindling of the elephant population. Why does investigative journalist Bryan Christy believes stopping the demand side will do more to halt the poaching?

VIDEO 3: The History of the Ivory Trade (2'25'')

History Has Been Tragic for Africa's Elephants

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/history-ivory-trade/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is it important to be aware of the history of the ivory trade?*
- 2) *What major factor influenced CITES' decisions to allow the sale of stockpiled ivory, and what was the result of the decisions?*
- 3) *Why has bringing the world's attention to the near-extinction of the elephant population in Africa been unsuccessful in stopping the killing of elephants?*

VIDEO 4: Trafficking Poached Ivory (2'25'')

Moving Elephant Ivory Is a Smuggler's Dream

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/trafficking-poached-ivory/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *What are the main factors in the smuggling of poached ivory to China?*
- 2) *Who are the various stakeholders—people affected by actions taken—in the issues of the illegal ivory trade, and how do they interact to make the problem worse or better?*

VIDEO 5: Craft or Species (2'06'')

Which Is More Important?

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/craft-or-species/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *How is the art of the master carver different from that of the factory carvers? Why is this distinction important?*
- 2) *Is it possible to maintain the tradition of ivory carving and ensure the survival of Africa's elephants at the same time? Why or why not?*

VIDEO 6: Tanzania's Ivory Stockpile (2'59'')

What Should Be Done with Stockpiles of Captured Elephant Ivory?

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/tanzanias-ivory-stockpile/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is the burning of poached ivory stockpiles such a powerful statement against elephant poaching? What message does this action send to the world?*
- 2) *What are the key factors in the conflict over stockpiled ivory and how might the conflict be resolved?*

VIDEO 7: Altered Elephant Behavior (2'33'')

Poaching Is Changing the Behavior of Surviving African Elephants

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/altered-behavior/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Where is the Selous Game Reserve, and why is it referred to as Africa's elephant "killing fields?"*
- 2) *Why is the change in elephant behavior an area of concern for scientists and elephant advocates?*

VIDEO 8: Partners in Elephant Conservation (1'53'')

Conservationists and Community Join Forces to Stop Elephant Poaching

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/partners-elephant-conservation/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is elephant conservation a "hard sell?"*
- 2) *Why is community support critical to the success of conservation and law enforcement efforts in Amboseli National Park?*
- 3) *In what ways is the conservation partnership between Richard Bonham and the community game rangers mutually beneficial?*

VOCABULARY:

CITES (*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*) ... international agreement whose aim is "**to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.**"

Conservation ... management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.

Poach ... to hunt, trap, or fish illegally.

Trade ... buying, selling, or exchanging of goods and services.

Incentive ... offer or encouragement to complete a task.

Lucrative ... profitable or money-making.

Stakeholder ... person or organization that has an interest or investment in a place, situation or company.

VIDEO 1: A Natural History of the African Elephant (3'41'')

Physical characteristics and social behaviors of the world's largest land animal

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/natural-history-african-elephant/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *What role elephants' memories may play in their survival?*
- 2) *In what ways elephant **communities** are similar to and different from human **families**?*
- 3) *How does poaching—the illegal harvesting of elephant tusks—affects the remaining elephants in a family? How does poaching might impact the ultimate survival of the community?*

Explore the physical characteristics and social behaviors of the African elephant.

BACKGROUND:

This video takes an up-close look at African elephants in their natural environment. Viewers will gain insight into the structure of elephant matriarchies—communities made up of related females—and learn about how members communicate to coordinate movement, care for one another, and mourn the deaths of family members.

The video also provides a brief overview of the physical characteristics that make African elephants so unique—including their tusks. The illegal poaching of elephants for their tusks and the resulting black-market trade in elephant ivory has pushed the elephant population to the lowest levels ever recorded.

Produced to accompany the National Geographic film *Battle for the Elephants*, which explores the history of and economics behind the brutal slaughter of African elephants for their tusks, this short video takes us into the world of the African elephant—a world where survival is increasingly at risk.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: Soila Sayialel, the naturalist in the video, describes elephants' outstanding memory. What role elephants' memories may play in their survival?

A: Elephants' good memories help the entire community **find sources of food and water**—places they have been before at different times of the year. This is especially important in times of drought, and is a key reason for protecting the matriarch, who has lived many years and experienced cycles of drought and plenty.

Q: In what ways do students think elephant **communities** are similar to and different from human **families**?

A: Answers will vary! Elephant communities are **similar to human families that are close-knit and formed around a strong social structure**. Elephant communities are families made up of related females, and some human families, like elephant families, are headed by females. One **difference may be that elephant family structures don't vary as much as human families**. Human families can take many forms, and can be made up of related and unrelated individuals—male and female.

Q: How do students think poaching—the illegal harvesting of elephant tusks—affects the remaining elephants in a family? How do they think poaching might impact the ultimate survival of the community?

A: Elephants feel real grief at the death of a family member and go through **mourning** similar to what humans may experience. The elephant community also has a close-knit social structure, and the **loss of part of that social structure** has a negative impact on the whole community. Elephants may suffer **negative physical impacts** that could weaken their health and reduce their chances of survival.

VIDEO 2: The Economics of the Illicit Ivory Trade (9'01'')

Elephant populations dwindle from black market ivory sales

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Answers the questions:

1) *In efforts to halt the illegal trade in poached ivory, Kenya has burned stockpiles of tusks and the Philippine government crushed more than 5 tons of ivory tusks. In what ways might these actions help or hurt efforts to halt the killing of elephants for their tusks—the supply side of the illicit trade?*

2) *The film poses the question of which competing force should be stopped to solve the problem of the illegal ivory trade—and the resulting dwindling of the elephant population. Why does investigative journalist Bryan Christy believe stopping the demand side will do more to halt the poaching?*

Explore the issues of supply and demand that fuel the illegal trade in ivory, and go undercover to learn about the rising prices of black-market ivory.

BACKGROUND:

Illegal trade in animal parts is a global problem that's signaling the extinction for many endangered species. Experts estimate that about 25,000 elephants were killed last year alone, for their ivory tusks. The driving economic forces that facilitate the illicit trade are supply and demand.

In this short video, we travel to China, where investigative journalist Bryan Christy explains how a longstanding tradition of carving ivory, combined with a booming middle class, is fueling demand for ivory. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) reports that nearly all of the current demand for elephant ivory comes from the Chinese market. The International Fund for Animal Welfare estimates that 84 percent of the ivory sold in China is illegal.

Then, in east Africa, we follow investigative journalist Aidan Hartley as he goes undercover to learn first-hand about the rising prices of black market ivory. Using specialty cameras to infiltrate the criminal network, Aidan documents the illegal supply leaving Africa.

This video was produced to accompany the National Geographic film *Battle for the Elephants*, which explores the history of and economics behind the brutal slaughter of African elephants for their tusks.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: In efforts to halt the illegal trade in poached ivory, Kenya has burned stockpiles of tusks and the Philippine government crushed more than 5 tons of ivory tusks. In what ways might these actions help or hurt efforts to halt the killing of elephants for their tusks—the supply side of the illicit trade?

A: These actions might help because they work to dry up the supply side of the equation. **Limiting the supply may force the producers of ivory products to use only legally obtained ivory or curtail their production.** On the other hand, **reducing the stockpiles of poached ivory may result in more poaching in order to meet demand**

Q: The film poses the question of which competing force should be stopped to solve the problem of the illegal ivory trade—and the resulting dwindling of the elephant population. Why do you think investigative journalist Bryan Christy believes stopping the demand side will do more to halt the poaching?

A: Answers will vary, but the most likely result of **reducing the demand for ivory products in China and other parts of the world will be a decrease in the prices paid to poachers.** Without a lucrative market for their poached ivory, the criminal networks involved in the ivory trade may decide that the risks involved outweigh the benefits.

VIDEO 3: The History of the Ivory Trade (2'25'')

History Has Been Tragic for Africa's Elephants

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/history-ivory-trade/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is it important to be aware of the history of the ivory trade?*
- 2) *What major factor influenced CITES' decisions to allow the sale of stockpiled ivory, and what was the result of the decisions?*
- 3) *Why has bringing the world's attention to the near-extinction of the elephant population in Africa been unsuccessful in stopping the killing of elephants?*

Trace the history of the ivory industry around the world and recognize the deadly connection between the illegal trade in tusks and the decline of the elephant population.

BACKGROUND:

Throughout history, the human desire for ivory—used in products from jewelry to piano keys to priceless religious art objects—has far outmatched efforts to stop the killing of African elephants for their tusks. In 2012, investigative journalists Bryan Christy and Aidan Hartley explored the illegal ivory trade and the plight of Africa's elephants, and documented their work in the National Geographic special *Battle for the Elephants*.

This video excerpt from that film explores the history of the ivory trade and the resulting devastation of Africa's elephant population—from 26 million elephants in 1800 to fewer than one million today. The clip examines factors that fueled the "ivory frenzy" of the early 1900s and documents the steady and startling decline in the elephant population. A worldwide ban on ivory sales in 1989 led to a rebound in the population, to about a million. But in 1999 and 2008, due to pressure from countries in Asia and southern Africa, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) allowed two sanctioned sales of ivory. The video looks at attempts to stem the killing—attempts that largely have proven unsuccessful, evidenced by the fact that more than 25,000 elephants were killed in Africa in 2012 alone.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: Why is it important to be aware of the history of the ivory trade?

A: Answers will vary. Awareness of the history of the **illegal ivory trade** will increase understanding of the role **market demands** play in the decline of the elephant population. Knowing the issues surrounding the decline of the elephant population will help people critically examine needs for **conservation** of this natural resource.

Q: What major factor influenced CITES' decisions to allow the sale of stockpiled ivory, and what was the result of the decisions?

A: The main reason for CITES' lifting of the ban on sales of **stockpiled ivory** was the **increased demands** for ivory from southern African and Asian countries. The lifting of the ban for these special sales had the effect of **sanctioning illegal trade** in tusks and increasing poaching once again.

Q: Why has bringing the world's attention to the near-extinction of the elephant population in Africa been unsuccessful in stopping the killing of elephants?

A: Even with an ivory ban in place and global public opinion strongly favoring enforcement of the ban, the **demand for ivory** continues, perhaps stronger than ever. The money made through the **illegal ivory trade** is a key factor in losing the fight to stop **poaching and smuggling** poached ivory.

VIDEO 4: Trafficking Poached Ivory (2'25'')

Moving Elephant Ivory Is a Smuggler's Dream

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/trafficking-poached-ivory/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *What are the main factors in the smuggling of poached ivory to China?*
- 2) *Who are the various stakeholders—people affected by actions taken—in the issues of the illegal ivory trade, and how do they interact to make the problem worse or better?*

Investigative journalists tell the story of who's selling and who's buying in the global ivory trade—and look at the ease with which ivory is smuggled out of Africa.

BACKGROUND:

The National Geographic Television film *Battle for the Elephants* explores the rapid destruction of African elephants, fueled by the growing trade in illegal ivory. This clip from the film follows the path of poached ivory from the port of Mombasa, Kenya, to the ivory carvers and luxury ivory shops in China.

According to TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring partnership between the World Wildlife Fund and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2011 was the worst year on record for elephant poaching since the international ivory trade ban took effect in 1990. Most of the poaching takes place in Africa. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) reports that 25,000 elephants were killed in Africa in 2012, though other observers say it could be many more. In Tanzania alone, poachers kill 30 elephants a day. Many reasons exist for the continued poaching in Africa, including lack of sufficient enforcement officers, corruption among the enforcement community, real danger from armed poachers, and a well-organized and well-funded criminal network behind the poachers.

The vast majority of smuggled ivory—experts say as much as 70 percent—ends up in China, where a newly wealthy middle class fuels the demand for luxury ivory products. Although seizures of illegally obtained ivory take place, much of the smuggled ivory still gets through. Less than 1 percent of the shipping containers unloaded in the Port of Hong Kong are inspected for smuggled ivory. Ivory traders who do get caught are seldom arrested and, if they are, they face feeble penalties. The combination of improved international trade links and weak enforcement proves a powerful and extremely lucrative incentive for the criminal networks leading the poaching of African's elephants.

According to John Heminway, writer, producer, and director of *Battle for the Elephants*, "In Africa, wildlife conservationists...are risking their lives to protect these animals, but they are losing the fight. The market for smuggled ivory is too lucrative for poachers to resist, and our research suggests demand for ivory in China is only going to rise."

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: What are the main factors in the smuggling of poached ivory to China?

A: Factors include, but are not limited to, the growing **demand** for ivory in China; the limited supply of legally obtained ivory; limited **inspections** of shipping containers; shortage of **law enforcement** agents; **corruption** within the systems involved in enforcement of the ban on ivory sales, the arrests and convictions of **poachers** and **smugglers**, and the **incentives** for the criminal networks involved in poaching and smuggling.

Q: Who are the various stakeholders—people affected by actions taken—in the issues of the illegal ivory trade, and how do they interact to make the problem worse or better?

A: **Stakeholders** include the poachers, smugglers, law enforcement community,

conservationists, producers and purchasers of ivory products in China. In one way or another these stakeholders participate in the **supply chain** of illegally obtained ivory—and the decline of the **African elephant** population. The principle of **supply and demand** brings the stakeholders into contact in some way throughout the process, and decisions made by each stakeholder impact the interests of the others. A change in any link in the chain—a **decision** or action that breaks or strengthens the chain—filters down to impact the end product.

VIDEO 5: Craft or Species (2'06'')

Which Is More Important?

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/craft-or-species/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) How is the art of the master carver different from that of the factory carvers? Why is this distinction important?*
- 2) Is it possible to maintain the tradition of ivory carving and ensure the survival of Africa's elephants at the same time? Why or why not?*

Explore the longstanding Chinese tradition of ivory carving and consider which is more valuable: the craft or the species.

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, investigative journalists Bryan Christy and Aidan Hartley went undercover to expose the criminal network behind ivory's supply and demand, and documented their work in the National Geographic special *Battle for the Elephants*. This clip from the film takes a closer look at the production of ivory products in China—from the master carver who has honed his craft over 58 years to the assembly-line workers mass-producing items for an expanding market.

Observing a master carver in China painstakingly create a priceless piece of art from ivory, Christy acknowledges the exquisite beauty of the craft and the deep importance of ivory in Chinese culture and tradition. He poses the central question: "Is this craft or this species more valuable?"

The tradition of ivory carving in China began during the Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1050 BCE), but flourished with the opening of the Silk Road some 2,000 years ago, and became more intricate and widespread during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Traditional ivory carvers still create their delicate sculptures with meticulous detail and over long periods of time. Large, intricate pieces can take years to carve. However, the exploding demand for ivory products in China has resulted in the growth of an assembly-line type of mass production. As Christy says in the film, "The Chinese government is saying, when you look at a master carver, this is what we want to preserve."

For the master carver and the assembly-line carvers alike, legal ivory is in short supply. With the source of legally obtained ivory extremely limited, and China's demand for ivory increasing, factories often turn to the ivory underground—criminal networks that deal in poached ivory. The International Fund for Animal Welfare estimates that 84 percent of the ivory sold in China is illegal. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) reports that nearly all of the current demand for elephant ivory comes from the Chinese market.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: How is the art of the master carver different from that of the factory carvers? Why is this distinction important?

A: The intricate, painstaking work of the **master carver** is part of the ancient **tradition**

of carving in China—one that many feel needs to be protected as part of the **culture** of the country. The master carver makes fewer pieces because of the skill he or she has developed over many years, and his or her work takes much longer than that of the assembly-line carvers, which probably means that the master carver uses much less ivory over the span of his career. The master carver's work also has more **monetary value** in the **marketplace**. The factory carvers represent a shift to mass production that brings work of less value into the market, filling the growing demand for ivory products at a lower cost. This trend has a negative impact on **elephant survival** because the demand for ivory, much of which will be obtained by **poaching**, increases.

Q: Is it possible to maintain the tradition of ivory carving and ensure the survival of Africa's elephants at the same time? Why or why not?

A: If yes, answers may include taking action to support the master carvers while regulating the amount of **ivory products** produced in factories. However, this would most likely face stiff opposition from **consumers**, as the demand for luxury ivory products is increasing. If no, answers might include the fact that most of the ivory used in China is obtained illegally—a trend that is not likely to change because the **ban on ivory sales** remains in effect, limiting the supply to poached ivory. As demand grows, the fate of Africa's elephants is dire.

VIDEO 6: Tanzania's Ivory Stockpile (2'59'')

What Should Be Done with Stockpiles of Captured Elephant Ivory?

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/tanzanias-ivory-stockpile/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is the burning of poached ivory stockpiles such a powerful statement against elephant poaching? What message does this action send to the world?*
- 2) *What are the key factors in the conflict over stockpiled ivory and how might the conflict be resolved?*

Investigative journalist Aidan Hartley gains rare access to Tanzania's tons of stockpiled ivory, making him and his camera crew the first ever to document Tanzania's "ivory room."

BACKGROUND:

In 2012, investigative journalist Aidan Hartley was granted unprecedented access to what is considered the largest known cache of raw ivory in the world. Hartley's report is part of the National Geographic film *Battle for the Elephants*, which explores the brutal slaughter of African elephants for their tusks.

In this clip from the film, Hartley meets with Khamis Kagasheki, minister of natural resources for Tanzania, who agreed to allow Hartley and a camera crew to take the first-ever footage of the stockpile. The vast warehouse stores thousands of tusks accumulated over the last 23 years—90 metric tons valued at \$50 million. You will follow Hartley into the "ivory room"—a grim memorial to the dramatic decline of Africa's elephant population.

In July 1989, Kenya issued a call-to-action to alert the world to a poaching crisis. Then President Daniel arap Moi, together with then Executive Director of Kenya Wildlife Service Dr. Richard Leakey, burned 12 tons of ivory stock.

In September of that year, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) secured an agreement among its member states to ban all international trade in ivory. But, under pressure from countries in Asia and southern Africa, CITES sanctioned two sales of ivory, in 1999 and 2008—stimulating poaching across the elephant range

and ivory smuggling across the world.

In 2011, Kenya again drew attention to poaching deaths when President Mwai Kibaki set fire to more than 5 tons of ivory tusks and trinkets.

Unlike Kenya, Tanzania, one of the poorest countries in the world, has not agreed to burn its stockpile of ivory, arguing that the money from a sale could support conservation efforts. However, Tanzanian officials say that if an international agency were to buy the tusks with the intention of burning them, they would eagerly sell them. Tanzania asked CITES for an exception to the ivory ban for such a sale, with proceeds used only for conservation efforts, but they withdrew their request in early 2013.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: Why is the burning of poached ivory stockpiles such a powerful statement against elephant poaching? What message does this action send to the world?

A: Answers will vary. Elephants are among the Earth's most charismatic and majestic land animals, yet most people are either not aware of the plight of the elephants or feel they cannot **make a difference** in the fight to stop **elephant poaching**. Pictures of burning ivory tusks create a **strong image** of the brutality of the poaching of this much-loved animal. Supporters of a burn feel that this image would ignite public sentiment in a call to **enforce the ban** on ivory sales and increase the **apprehension of poachers**. The action would also send the message that the country is serious about taking action against poaching and the illegal ivory trade.

Q: What are the key factors in the conflict over stockpiled ivory and how might the conflict be resolved?

A: Key factors include the fact that the **ivory ban** is still in place and, therefore, the stockpiled ivory cannot be sold legally. The Tanzanian government sees this stockpile as a potential **source of great revenue**—money that could help this developing country in its efforts to **conserve** remaining elephant populations. On the other side of the conflict are those who see the stockpiles as a grim testament to the decimation of Africa's elephant population. They oppose the sale of the ivory because they feel it would only increase the **demand**, spur more **illegal trade** in ivory tusks, and increase **poaching**.

VIDEO 7: Altered Elephant Behavior (2'33'')

Poaching Is Changing the Behavior of Surviving African Elephants

CLICK LINK: http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/altered-behavior/?ar_a=2

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Where is the Selous Game Reserve, and why is it referred to as Africa's elephant "killing fields?"*
- 2) *Why is the change in elephant behavior an area of concern for scientists and elephant advocates?*

Researchers in the Selous Game Reserve document the impact poaching is having on the elephant population—an impact that is seen in the changes in elephant behavior.

BACKGROUND:

The Selous Game Reserve in the south of Tanzania is home to 60 percent of Africa's elephants. Among the largest undisturbed, protected areas in Africa, it has also become one of Africa's elephant "killing fields." Those on the front lines studying elephant behavior witness the alarming effect poaching has had on the elephants that survive. This clip from the National Geographic film *Battle for the Elephants* documents the disturbing changes in elephant behavior, including dramatic displays of fear and

increased agitation, stress, and aggression in the presence of humans.

Scientists who study elephant behavior agree that survivors of poaching are stressed. Their fears can disrupt the elephants' complex matriarchal social structure, reduce their success in breeding, and increase their antagonism toward humans. Elephants mourn their deceased companions, demonstrating rituals that include touching the remains and carrying the deceased elephant's bones or tusks with them.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: Where is the Selous Game Reserve, and why is it referred to as Africa's elephant "killing fields?"

A: The Selous is located in southern Tanzania. DNA testing has confirmed that much of the **poached ivory** coming into Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city, for smuggling to countries around the world originates in the Selous, which is home to sixty percent of Africa's elephants.

Q: Why is the change in elephant behavior an area of concern for scientists and elephant advocates?

A: The change in **elephant behavior** in the Selous Game Reserve signals a critical disruption in the elephants' complex **social structure**—a structure that maintains the health and well-being of the elephant families and groups. As the elephants' social structure breaks down, their chances for successful breeding decrease, further reducing the animals' chances of **survival**. Fear replaces the animal's natural curiosity and sociability. Many feel that poaching, along with the residual effects of poaching on surviving animals, may lead to the **extinction** of the African elephant.

VIDEO 8: Partners in Elephant Conservation (1'53'')

Conservationists and Community Join Forces to Stop Elephant Poaching

CLICK LINK: [http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/partners-
elephant-conservation/?ar_a=2](http://education.nationalgeographic.co.uk/education/media/partners-
elephant-conservation/?ar_a=2)

Answers the questions:

- 1) *Why is elephant conservation a "hard sell?"*
- 2) *Why is community support critical to the success of conservation and law enforcement efforts in Amboseli National Park?*
- 3) *In what ways is the conservation partnership between Richard Bonham and the community game rangers mutually beneficial?*

Discover an elephant conservation success story that employs game rangers from within the local community to stop poachers.

BACKGROUND:

This short video from the National Geographic film *Battle for the Elephants* highlights an elephant conservation success story. The profiled program employs more than 200 members of the community around Kenya's Amboseli National Park as game rangers—some of the rangers were once poachers themselves. The rangers have joined Richard Bonham and the Big Life Foundation in the battle to stop elephant poaching.

Bonham and the Big Life Foundation pioneered this effective wildlife conservation program when it became clear that the only sustainable solution to elephant poaching was to partner with and involve the local community. The grassroots effort provides community members with added income, increased prestige, and a sense of camaraderie and shared mission. As Bonham says, this community involvement provides incentive to "fight for the elephants instead of against them."

This conservation effort is just one part of the ongoing battle between those who deal in

illegal ivory and those who work to stop the killing of Africa's elephants for their tusks. The ivory trade—and elephant poaching—is a story of supply and demand. Wealth, along with desire for ivory in China, drives the demand side; poachers increasingly drive the supply side.

Even with the ban on sales of ivory still in place, elephant conservation is a hard sell.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

Q: Why is elephant conservation a "hard sell?"

A: Even though many support the concept of elephant **conservation**, the **economic incentives** for **poaching** have outweighed the incentives for conservation. The illegal sale of ivory is a huge business, often run by crime networks. These are powerful factors that make it difficult to convince local residents to join in **law enforcement** efforts.

Q: Why is community support critical to the success of conservation and law enforcement efforts in Amboseli National Park?

A: Gaining community support involves the buy-in of the local residents, and this results in a strong **motivation** to save a vitally important natural resource. When local community members feel they are part of an important activity—when they become aware of their power to bring about **change**—they have a stronger and more sustainable impact on local problems.

Q: In what ways is the conservation partnership between Richard Bonham and the community game rangers mutually beneficial?

A: The game rangers earn a **living wage** and have increased **status** in the community as well as a sense of working with others toward a meaningful goal. For Richard Bonham and the Big Life Foundation the benefits include an increase in **poacher arrests** and safety for the elephants. Also, when poaching—which is most often run by criminal networks—is controlled, the community becomes safer for humans and elephants alike.