

Good Atoms or Bad Atoms? Iran and the Nuclear Issue

For more than a decade, the United States and other governments have worried that Iran wants to build nuclear weapons. Iran's government has staunchly defended its right to a nuclear program on the basis that it is only developing nuclear materials for peaceful purposes. This right is protected by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which Iran has signed. Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has said that producing or using nuclear weapons is immoral, but Iran has not always been open about its nuclear program. For example, in 2009, the discovery of an Iranian secret nuclear enrichment plant both worried and angered the international community. The dilemma for the international community is that it is difficult to distinguish between "good atoms" for peaceful purposes like nuclear power and "bad atoms" for military purposes.

The United States and Iran have entered a period of intense negotiations about the future of Iran's nuclear program. China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom are also participating in the negotiations. The deadline to conclude the negotiations is November 24, 2014. The United States and other governments want to prevent Iran from having the capacity to make nuclear weapons. Israel's government, in particular, sees an Iran with nuclear weapons as a dire threat.

The United Nations, United States, and European Union have placed economic sanctions on Iran in an attempt to pressure it to cooperate. (**Economic sanctions** are punishments that restrict financial transactions or trade in an effort to get a country to change its policies or behavior.) The sanctions have severely damaged Iran's economy and caused hardships for the Iranian people, but have not yet led to a resolution of the issue.

There have been other steps to stop or delay any potential nuclear weapons program. In 2010, a sophisticated computer virus, known as Stuxnet, attacked Iranian nuclear enrichment facilities. Many experts believe that Israel and the United States were behind the attack. In addition, several key Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated in Tehran. The stakes over a potential nuclear weapons program in Iran are so high that war is also seen as a possible outcome if negotiations fail.

Iran's newly-elected President Hasan Rouhani and U.S. President Obama have indicated that they would like to try to resolve these issues through negotiation and diplomacy. But the U.S. relationship with Iran has been filled with hostility and mistrust for many years, making negotiations difficult.

What Should Be Done?

You are about to explore this important issue and then role-play three options for U.S. policy with your classmates. When you have completed this you will be asked to make your own judgement about what U.S. policy should be.

It will be helpful to keep the following questions in mind as you prepare for the role play:

- What is the history behind the mistrust and disagreement between the United States and Iran?
- Should the government of the United States trust Iran's government? Should the government of Iran trust the U.S. government?
- Does Iran plan to build a nuclear weapon, or just to develop nuclear energy?
- What are the potential consequences of an Iranian nuclear weapon? What are the potential consequences of fighting a war to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon?

Article: The Price of Ivory

Conservationists are working to stop the killing of elephants for their tusks

APR 19, 2013 | By Suzanne Zimbler



DAVID WALL—GETTY IMAGES

DOZENS OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS SLAUGHTERED. That headline has become all too common. Last month, poachers killed at least 86 elephants in Chad and 28 in Cameroon. Both countries are in a region of Africa that has lost more than 60% of its elephants to illegal hunters in the past decade, according to a recent study from the Wildlife Conservation Society.

In 2012 alone, experts say, 30,000 elephants were killed in countries across Africa. "We're seeing the highest levels of poaching since our record-keeping began," Crawford Allan, of the World Wildlife Fund, told TFK.

Why are so many elephants being killed? The answer lies thousands of miles away from Africa, in a handful of Asian countries. In China, business is booming in fancy shops that sell expensive statues and jewelry made of ivory.

The material comes from elephant tusks. But for many ivory purchasers, the gentle giants are not only out of sight but also out of mind. "Surveys indicate that seven out of 10 Chinese citizens don't realize that an elephant has to die in order [for them] to get ivory," says Will Travers, of the Born Free Foundation. In recent years, as China's economy has grown, so has the demand for ivory.

The Trouble with Tusks

The hunt for ivory is not a new problem. In the 1980s, as many as 1 million elephants were slaughtered in Africa. The "Ivory Wars" continued until 1989, when a treaty called CITES banned the sale of ivory from one country to another. Elephant populations began to increase. But that progress was short-lived.

Several African countries had been storing large stockpiles of tusks. To many people, allowing valuable ivory to collect dust in storage seemed like a waste. So CITES officials let a few countries sell their ivory.



China bought large quantities of tusks. Today, that ivory is sold legally throughout the country. Unfortunately, this has made it possible for illegal ivory to be sold as well.

Now conservationists are putting pressure on China to crack down on the sale of illegal ivory. Experts say more help is required in Africa too. "A lot of our focus has been on providing training and equipment for the people on the front lines, the rangers," says Kelvin Alie, of the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Last year, Gabon, in central Africa, set fire to its ivory stockpile. By burning millions of dollars worth of tusks, the nation made a strong statement. "We don't want our children to inherit an empty forest," said the country's President, Ali Bongo. With allies like Bongo, elephants just might stand a chance.

TEACHERS: [Click here](#) to view Common-Core aligned lessons and graphic organizers for this article.

"The Price of Ivory" originally appeared in the April 19, 2013 issue of TIME FOR KIDS: Edition 5-6.



Why Little Penguins At Australia's Phillip Island Sport Stylish Sweaters

By *Meera Dolasia* on October 24, 2014

CCSS NAS-3 Grades: 3-8 Word Search



If you happen to visit the Penguin Foundation at [Australia's](#) Phillip Island Nature Park, you may encounter an unusual sight - Little penguins waddling around in brightly colored **turtleneck** sweaters. Unfortunately, it is not because the **flightless** birds are trying to establish a new fashion trend, but because they are victims of oil spills. Confused? Read on!

According to the Foundation that rescues and **rehabilitates** the birds, the hand-knitted sweaters are **crucial** in saving the lives of the helpless creatures when they get affected by oil spills. Besides the danger of ingesting some, penguins exposed to large amounts of oil are also more likely to die of starvation and exposure. That's because the oil separates and mats their feathers, allowing water to seep in. This makes the birds cold and heavy, and less efficient at catching **prey**.



The good news is that if the birds are lucky enough to be rescued and taken to centers like the one run by the Penguin Foundation, they can be cleaned and released back to the wild, in no time at all. However, there is still the danger of them **ingesting** some of the poisonous substance before the cleaning process has been completed. Given that a patch of oil the size of a thumbnail is enough to kill the little bird, conservationists had to think of an **innovative** solution.

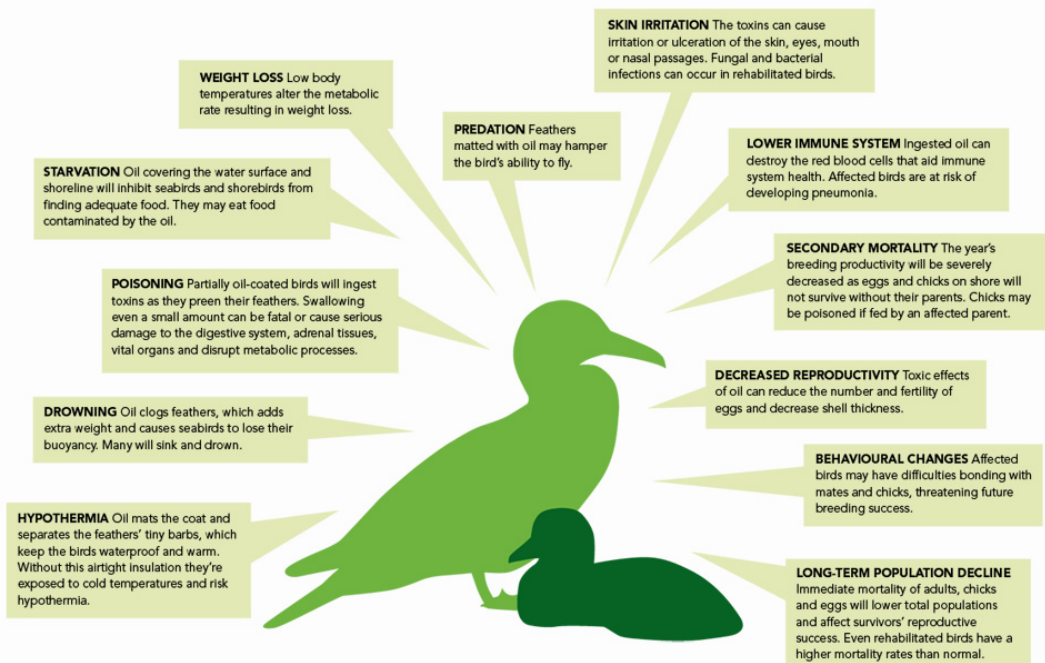
In 1998, a volunteer came up with the idea of attiring the Little penguins with the sweaters and it worked like a charm. The Foundation officials say that during the last major oil disaster near the area in 2001, the sweaters helped save 96% of the 453 **contaminated** penguins.



Over the years, the researchers have fine-tuned the knitting pattern to make sure that the wool does not damage the penguin's feathers and that their flippers or beaks do not get **entangled**. The sweaters are knitted with 100% wool, which has a unique ability to act as a breathable **insulator**. This helps keep the tiny penguin bodies at the perfect "Goldilocks temperature" - neither too hot, nor too cold! The Penguin Foundation is not the only one using this method to save the birds. The Tasmanian Conservation Project has also been saving their oil affected Little penguins using these adorable "wooly jumpers".

Of course, these flightless birds are not the only victims of careless oil spills. According to the Penguin Foundation, over 100,000 birds of all kinds are **contaminated** each year. Unfortunately, not all are as lucky as the Little penguins that end up at this **sanctuary**.

THE PHYSICAL TOLL



Also known as "blue" or "fairy" penguins, Little penguins are the smallest of the 17 species of the birds that are **endemic** to the southern hemisphere (Australia, **New Zealand**, Antarctica, sub-Antarctic islands, **South America** and **Africa**). The **diminutive** animals that measure a mere 33cm (13in) tall and weigh just one kilogram (2.2 lbs), used to waddle around southern Australia and New Zealand in large numbers. However, over the years their numbers have declined **drastically**, thanks to predators like **feral** and domestic cats, as well as the spread of human settlement. As a result, there are now only about a million of the cute birds left in the colonies that are scattered around the region's various small islands and some **isolated** coastal locations.

Resources: penguinfoundation.org, wikipedia.org, mirror.co.uk