

Evaluate the success of conservation measures to reduce the illegal trade in ivory. What are the reasons behind the trade in ivory, what conservation measures have been put in place and by whom, produce evidence to support your claim for Wednesday after half term.

CITES and NIAP

CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. It is an international agreement designed to protect endangered animals and plants by regulating trade in both the living organisms and products made from them. In our study we are going to focus on the trade of Ivory. CITES have implemented National Ivory Action Plans (NIAP), which are used by convention in a number of member states of primary concern. The countries of primary concern are; Kenya, Tanzania, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Uganda.

NIAPs although used by a number of countries are independent to each country to try and create guidelines which are specific to them. Thailand is a country in which Ivory is sought after for reasons said earlier, therefore it is a region in primary concern according to CITES, they have initiated a NIAP.

Thailand's NIAP:

The NIAP was introduced in late 2013 and included a lot of new measures. The Wild Animals Reservation and Protection Act amendment to grant African Elephants Status of protected species, this has implemented a New Elephant Identification Certificates, DNA from the Elephant is stored in digital form to prevent smuggling of Elephants as domesticated Elephants. There has also been 22 Ivory trade patrol teams and 11 joint task force teams set up through Thailand, the main aim is to increase enforcement of ivory smuggling. However in July 2014 concerns were raised over the implementation of the NIAP by CITES standing committee. In October 2014 Thailand came under more fire from the WWF, with Dr Colman who is the WWF expert on wildlife trade saying that the NIAP, 'does not fully demonstrate the urgency of the current crisis facing the world's elephants'. He went on to threaten that there may be the possibility of trade sanctions for Thailand if they do not improve their NIAP. Thailand in response invested more money into their NIAP and by January 2015 cited that they have confiscated 165.7 kg of ivory in a single raid, and have also arrested the criminals involved. Thailand have also worked to raise public awareness among the four target groups; tourists, ivory traders, ivory owners, and the general public about the ivory trade. Four sub-committees have been set up to carry out, monitor, evaluate, and report back to Thailand's national committee on CITES and the Prime Minister. Overall it is hard to tell from reports whether Thailand's NIAP is actually working, there have been no statistics produced about Thailand's ivory trade since the plan was introduced. Thailand have to report back to CITES every year with a progress report, if they are not achieving what they should be doing then they will face sanctions from other countries.

Overall it is hard to say whether the NIAP have been successful due to the lack of data. One reason for the lack of data may be due to the short timescale from which it has been introduced. Therefore no meaningful data has been produced yet by CITES or any individual NIAP.

Reasons Behind the Illegal Ivory Trade

The illegal trade of ivory and ivory products is worth around 1 billion dollars annually and throughout this decade an estimated 75,000 elephants were killed to sustain this trade. But what are some of the reasons behind this barbaric trade and why it is worth so much.

Religion and the ivory trade

A huge part of the illegal ivory is bought by and used for the creation of religious artifacts all around the world; in places like the Philippines, China, Japan, Thailand and even the Vatican a large part of their religions and culture are too do with ivory and therefore there is huge demand in that part of the world causing poachers in places such as Africa to illegally hunt and kill elephants because they know there ivory can be sold to those parts of the world for a premium price.

For places such as the Philippines the ivory is used in the ceremony of the *Santo Niño de Cebu*. In this ceremony several altar boys work together to disrobe a small wooden statue of Christ dressed as a king, a replica of an icon devotees believe Ferdinand Magellan brought to the island in 1521. They remove its small crown, red cape, and tiny boots, and strip off its surprisingly layered underwear. Then the monsignor takes the icon, while altar boys conceal it with a little white towel, and dunks it in several barrels of water, creating his church's holy water for the year, to be sold outside.

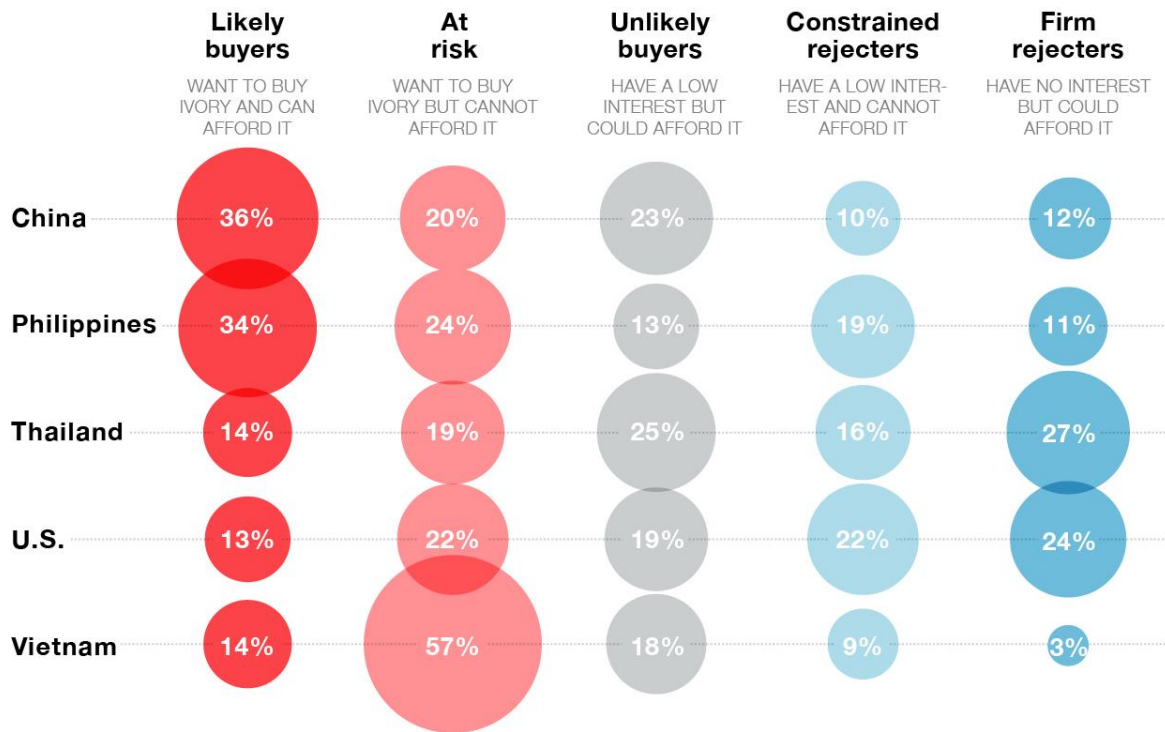
Although the official description know suggests that these statues of Christ or *Santos* are made out of wood, they were historically always made out of ivory as ivory to them has connotations of purity and holiness. Therefore *Santos* made out of ivory can fetch a very high price in the Philippines and thus making religion the leading cause of the purchase of illegal ivory in the Philippines.

In Thailand, ivory is used similarly as locals believe "Ivory removes bad spirits," and ivory in Thailand is carved into a variety of 'good luck charms' such as amulets. Although some of the ivory in Thailand is from there small population of Asian elephants and harvested humanely (after the elephant has already died of natural causes) poachers use this as an easy way to slip there illegal African ivory into Thailand as these charms such as the amulets can fetch up to 100,000 US dollars a pieces.

Wealth and Image in the Ivory Trade

Another big factor for the ivory trade is that it is seen worldwide as a symbol of wealth. Young people around the world are wanting to buy ivory products to help with their 'image' Ivory is well known to be expensive and its illegitimacy to some young people can offer a 'cool' vibe to it.

There is huge interest in buying Ivory around the world and often case when someone has the funds to buy it they will to show off their wealth.



This graph shows the percentages of people in places around the world where the ivory trade is particularly strong and there likeness to buy it based on the financial position it shows quite worryingly that a large part of people in China and the Philippines want to buy it and have the funds to helping to explain why the ivory trade is so successful there and perhaps even more worryingly this graph shows that a huge portion of people in Vietnam (57%) would buy ivory but haven't got the funds, this would suggest that an economic boom in Vietnam could cause a huge increase in the trading of ivory there.

Central African Elephant Conservation Strategy (CAECS)

CAECS is a multi-organizational strategy with the goal of ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of elephants and their habitats in central Africa. The strategy was made in 2005 with the backing of many organizations such as the WWF. There are a number of objectives within the strategy which were set out in 2005;

- **Objective 1:** Reduce illegal killing of elephants and trade in ivory products
 - 80% decrease in the volume of ivory products seized over 10 years
 - 80% decrease in number of cases of illegal killing in 10 years
- **Objective 2:** Maintain and/or restore connectivity between Central African Elephant Populations
 - According to African Elephant Database (AED), Elephant ranges have not decreased and Elephant range fragmentation has not decreased in 10 years.
- **Objective 3:** Improve knowledge of elephant populations and their habitats
 - Most recent estimates from AED shows that the proportion of elephant range 'known' has increased in 10 years.
- **Objective 4:** Gain support of the wider public for elephant conservation
 - Opinion polls in year 1 and year 8 of strategy suggest an increase of understanding of the importance of Elephant conservation

Analysis of success:

Objective 1:

The result seems to be a great success, a large decrease in ivory products seized suggests that less ivory is being traded due to the strategies implementations. However there is still ivory being traded in central Africa. The decrease in elephant killings also shows that the strategy has been extremely successful in achieving the primary objective. The results suggest that the strategy has worked in objective 1 with some great results for Elephant conservation.

Objective 2:

The AED is run by the IUCN(International Union for Conservation of Nature), SSC(Species Survival Commission), and AfESG (African Elephant Specialist Group). They collect data on African Elephants every few years, and are the only reliable source on numbers of African elephant's numbers and population density. They have gained funding from worldwide organizations, which adds to their credibility. The results show no change in the connectivity of African elephant populations, which is a success as the objective was to maintain. However they have not restored any ranges, therefore it cannot be seen as a whole success.

Objective 3:

The results show that there has been a success.

Objective 4:

The results given suggest that the objective has been achieved.

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https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/str_afc0512_en.pdf

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<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2012/10/ivory/christy-text>

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