

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 4

PART A Group Interaction

This article appeared on a website:

Instagram craze threatens species' survival

An Instagram-driven craze in Japan for keeping otters in cafes and as pets has caused an increase in catching the animals from the wild, putting them in danger of extinction, investigators from environmental groups say.

Because of the animal's popularity, many people have opened otter cafes in Japan, where customers touch, play with, feed and cuddle them. Hundreds of people are also buying them to keep at home. Not only is the trade cruel because the stolen otters are given unsuitable homes, diets and surroundings, but worse – it is bringing down populations of the species.

All four species from Southeast Asia are already in decline from loss of their natural habitat and climate change, but now the pet trade poses a new human threat. The population of some species has decreased by half in three decades.

Cassandra Koenen, who heads the Wildlife Not Pets campaign, says, "Just because a wild animal is cute, it does not mean you should take it home with you. Unfortunately, cute animals can generate a lot of likes on Instagram."

"Once otters are in people's homes, there is no way to provide the space and freedom these animals would have in the wild. Many animals are kept in small spaces and don't have the correct nutrition, even if owners have the best intentions to care for them properly."



Your class is doing a project on animal conservation. Your group has been asked to discuss the topic of keeping pets. You may want to talk about:

- the advantages of keeping wild animals as pets
- the disadvantages of keeping wild animals as pets
- how social media may affect the choice of pets
- anything else you think is important

PART B Individual Response

1. What is your favourite animal?
2. What do you think is the best pet to have?
3. Why do some people go to cafes to see wild animals?
4. Should cafes use wild animals to attract customers?
5. Why do some people keep dangerous animals as pets?
6. Why are some people not suitable pet owners?
7. Why do some owners spend a lot of money on their pets?
8. Are the rights of animals given too much importance?