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# BENGAL TIGERS

Grade Levels: 7-13+

26 minutes

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA 1999

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## DESCRIPTION

Anthony Marr champions the cause of the endangered Bengal tiger, focusing on 40 tigers at an Indian national park. From 100,000 animals in 1900 to less than 5,000 today, the tigers face extinction from lack of space, poachers, desire for folk medicine, apathy, and ignorance. Shows tigers hunting, eating, resting, and with new cubs. Photography supports facts about this most exotic and revered predator. NOTE: One brief mating scene.

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## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Life Sciences

- ◆ Standard: Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment
  - Benchmark: Knows that all organisms (including humans) cause changes in their environments, and these changes can be beneficial or detrimental
  - Benchmark: Knows ways in which organisms interact and depend on one another through food chains and food webs in an ecosystem (e.g., producer/consumer, predator/prey, parasite/host, relationships that are mutually beneficial or competitive)
  - Benchmark: Knows ways in which humans can alter the equilibrium of ecosystems, causing potentially irreversible effects (e.g., human population growth, technology, and consumption; human destruction of habitats through direct harvesting, pollution, and atmospheric changes)

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## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To become aware of why tigers are poached.
2. To identify cultures that prize tiger parts.
3. To create an awareness of tigers as an endangered species.
4. To stimulate interest in protecting endangered species.

## BEFORE SHOWING

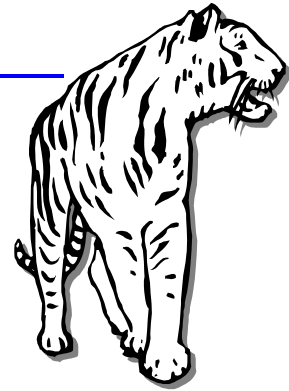
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1. Most of this video is shot in India's Bandhavgarh National Park. Locate the park on a map of India.
2. There is a flourishing trade in tiger parts. In what cultures are tiger parts prized? What are they used for?
3. How many tiger cubs do you think a mother can usually raise to maturity within a year?

## AFTER SHOWING

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1. Is it illegal to import, sell or use traditional medicines containing tiger parts where you live? What would you do if you walked into a shop selling such items?
2. Anthony Marr says that convincing Indian children to want to protect tigers is a key step in tiger conservation. It's easy to say, "I want to save tigers," but can they really help? Discuss some concrete steps international agencies and Indian villagers could take to improve the relationship between people and tigers.
3. As long as dead tigers fetch so much money on the international market, there will be poaching. Anthony Marr promotes ecotourism as one way to make tigers more valuable alive than dead. Has ecotourism helped save other species? What are some of the positive effects of ecotourism? What are some of its negative effects?



## SUMMARY

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India and tigers go hand in hand. There were once over 100,000 of these majestic, regal beasts roaming the country's forests. But years of trophy hunting during the colonial era, ongoing rampant habitat destruction and poaching for the tiger parts trade have made their situation critical.

If tigers disappear, it will be almost entirely due to very preventable human causes: habitat destruction, poaching and poisoning.

The international trade in tiger parts is illegal—and highly profitable. Many traditional Chinese remedies for common ailments use tiger bones. China exported 27 million products with tiger derivatives between 1990 and 1993.

While some Western conservationists adopt a strident, morally absolute point of view, Chinese Canadian Anthony Marr does not blame Indian villagers who poison the tigers that kill their livestock. Nor does he condemn those in China who buy tiger medicine without realizing how environmentally destructive it is. At the same time, he is passionate in his conviction that the killing of tigers and the destruction of their forests must stop.

## RELATED RESOURCES

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### Captioned Media Program

- Protecting Endangered Animals #2000

### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **TIGERS IN THE WILD**

<http://www.panda.org/resources/publications/species/tiger99/index2.html>

From the World Wildlife Federation, click on buttons such as "The Tiger in History and Culture," "The Threats Facing the Tiger," "What Needs to Be Done," to learn more about this endangered species.

- **CYBER TIGER**

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/97/tigers/maina.html>

From National Geographic, take care of your very own tiger! Name your tiger, create a home, and more!

- **THE TIGER INFORMATION CENTER**

<http://www.5tigers.org/directory/kids.htm>

Click on "Tiger Basics," "Tigers in Trouble," "All About Tigers," and more.

