

1.**A Desperate Time for the World's Tigers**

It is a desperate time for the world's tigers. There were once a lot of these majestic creatures throughout eastern and southern Asia. Now, wild tigers live only in small areas of India, China, eastern Russia, and a few other countries. Conservationists have been working for decades to save the big cats but the number of wild tigers continues to drop. There were an estimated 100,000 tigers living in the wild a century ago, compared with no more than 5,000 today. Now, a new conservation idea is being discussed that could stop wild tigers from becoming extinct.

People sometimes hunt endangered species, like the tiger, to sell the animal's body parts for souvenirs, medicines, and even food illegally. Some people even pay high prices to buy tiger skins or other animal parts on the black market. By selling just one tiger, poachers can make enough money to live for a full year.

A lot of people think that the tigers can really heal people. For more than 3,000 years, Chinese medicine has used tiger parts to treat sickness and injury. Followers of this type of medicine believe that eating the animal's body parts will help cure diseases.

2.**Barbie at 50 - The Most Famous Doll in the World**

50 years ago Barbie Millicent Roberts first appeared in the world of toys. Barbie, as everyone called her, has become the most successful toy doll in history. According to Barbie's parents, the Mattel Company, 90% of all American girls between 3 and 10 have at least one Barbie at home.

In today's world, however, Barbie is facing an identity crisis. There are many rivals on the market. Bratz dolls, for example, came to life seven years ago. They look more like today's pop stars with lots of makeup and miniskirts. Today Bratz is a challenge for Barbie, as the company offers a wide variety of clothing too.

It seems that Barbie has lost her appeal for older girls. For younger girls playing with a Barbie is much fun, but when you get older you want something more chic and modern. Indeed, sales have been going down for over the past year, partly because of the world's economic crisis.

On the international scene, Barbie remains number one. Although Matell has been selling fewer Barbies in the United States over the past year, sales in other countries has been going up. In January Matell opened its first Barbie store in Shanghai, where girls can shop, eat or even become their own fashion designer.

3.**Australian Government Angering Cigarette Brands**

The Australian government has angered the leading international cigarette brands. It has ordered companies to remove the branding from their cigarette packets. This means from January the 1st, 2012, there could be no logos on cigarette packs. All cigarette boxes will be a dull, olive green colour that was specially chosen because people thought it was so unattractive. In addition, all product names will be the same size, colour and font. Politicians believe that taking away any brand appeal will reduce smoking.

Tobacco giant, Philip Morris, maker of the world's leading cigarette brand Marlboro, wants to sue the Australian government. They say the new packaging means there is unfair competition. They point out that the law says logos are property and thus their property is being attacked. Companies have been angry for some time because of the gory and graphic pictures they have to put on their boxes alongside health warnings. Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard said: "We've made the right decision and we'll see it through."

4.**Tall People at Higher Risk of Getting Cancer**

Scientists have found that tall people have a higher risk of getting cancer. Researchers from Britain's University of Oxford say that for every 10 cm above 150 cm, a person was 16 per cent more likely to get cancer. Women who were over 175 cm tall were 37 per cent more at risk than women who were 150 cm. The study found that with the tallest women the rate of cancer was 10 per thousand women. For smaller women, it was 7.5 per thousand. The study was very large. It looked at the health of over one million women between 1996 and 2001.

Cancer experts said tall people do not need to be worried by this new report. They say that being tall is not a reason for cancer and that there are other things that cause cancer. One reason might be tall people have more cells, so there is a higher chance of cells becoming cancerous. Another possibility is that growth hormones add to the risk of cancer. Doctors say the most important way to reduce the risk of cancer is to live healthily. People who smoke, drink lots of alcohol and are overweight have a bigger risk of getting cancer.

5.**No Treatment for Overweight Women**

Doctors in Florida are refusing to treat women if they are overweight. A report from the *Sun Sentinel* newspaper says that 15 out of 105 gynaecology clinics in Florida have a weight limit. Doctors at the clinics will not see new patients if they weigh more than 90kg. This is even if the women have no health problems. One of the excuses they gave reporters is that their medical equipment is difficult to use with obese people. Doctors say it is not against the law to refuse patients.

Many doctors and patients are furious this is happening. People say doctors have to treat anyone who enters their office. They believe any doctor who does not see a patient is letting down the medical profession. Dr Maureen Whelihan of West Palm Beach said: "If I had that policy, I'd lose half my patients." She has a point. The USA has one of the highest rates of obesity in the world. If doctors put weight limits on patients, much of the country would be sick.

6.**One Dog per Family in Shanghai**

Dog lovers in Shanghai face strict new rules. China's largest city has set a limit of one dog per family to try and keep down the pet population. City officials also say they want to stop rabies from increasing. About 2,500 people die of the disease every year in China. The new pet ownership rules are not all bad news for pet owners. The high fee for dog registration has come down, in the hope that more owners will register their animals. There are many unregistered dogs in the city.

The dog population in China has risen greatly as more people become richer. The problem is that not all pets are wanted. There are hundreds of thousands of abandoned dogs in China. People decide they no longer want their pet and throw it into the street. Local governments frequently kill tens of thousands of dogs to stop rabies spreading. Packs of stray dogs are a frequent sight in city suburbs. Dog owner Chu Lin said: "I agree this is a problem but I love my dogs. Why do I have to give one away?"

7.**Millions of E-mail Accounts Hacked**

Millions of e-mail accounts have been hacked after hackers broke into a company that stores personal data. People who have given their e-mail address to Hilton and Marriott Rewards, Disney and many credit card companies may now get more spam. All of the companies used a database marketing service called Epsilon to handle the privacy of e-mail accounts. Management teams are now in urgent discussions to protect the privacy of their clients and keep their e-mail accounts secure.

Online security is becoming a worry for many of us. We think big companies will have secure systems to stop hackers accessing our private details. This incident shows that even the biggest companies cannot guarantee to keep our private information safe. Perhaps these big companies should stop trying to send us endless marketing e-mails. Our inboxes seem to be full of mail we do not want trying to sell us things we do not need. It can be very difficult to unsubscribe from them.

8.**Number of Cosmetic Surgery Increasing**

The number of people having cosmetic surgery is increasing. This could be a sign that the world economy is making a recovery. Statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons show that the number of operations increased by five per cent between 2009 and 2010. Spokesman Dr. Phil Haeck said: "This is just one more tiny sign that the economy is moving forward. It's slow, but it may be that we'll slowly pull out of this recession." In the U.K. the number of surgical procedures reached 100,000 for the first time.

These are welcome figures for the industry, but they come at a time when the safety of cosmetic surgery is in question. A British woman died after an operation organized on the Internet. Claudia Adusei's operation took place at a hotel near Philadelphia Airport. Many doctors said the type of operation she had was very risky. With more and more people going under the knife, there may be an increase in accidents in the future. People need to think carefully about whether they really need that nose job or tummy tuck.

9.**Staying in Education Helps Blood Pressure**

A new study shows that staying in education for a long time helps blood pressure. Scientists have found a link between the number of years spent studying and low blood pressure. The research looked at data from 4,000 people in the USA. They found that those who had a university education had lower blood pressure than people who did not enter higher education. Study leader Eric Loucks said people who left school early were more likely to have a stressful job and low income. He said both these things contributed to stress.

Many people think it is more stressful to stay on in education. University exams are famous for causing students lots of stress. It also seems strange that people with university degrees have lower blood pressure than those without. Graduates usually become managers in companies, or teachers and those positions are very stressful. The report looked at blood pressure levels at the end of a 30-year period. It could be that people who were in education longer were richer and had a better standard of living. Money worries often cause a lot of stress.

10.**Real-life Superhero in Washington**

There is a real-life superhero living in Washington. He calls himself Phoenix Jones and patrols and protects his town of Lynwood, a suburb of Seattle. He doesn't have a superhero car, like Batman. Instead, he gets around in his Kia, driven by his partner. Jones does look like a real superhero. He has a black and gold costume and looks like he just walked out of a Hollywood movie. He wears a bulletproof vest and carries a Taser stun gun and pepper spray. He recently stopped a car theft by chasing away the criminal who was breaking into a vehicle.

Jones decided to become a superhero because he got fed up with the crime in his town. He told reporters: "When I walk into a neighbourhood, criminals leave because they see the suit. I symbolize that the average person doesn't have to walk around and see bad things and do nothing." He is part of a wider team of citizens who want to help make their streets safer. They are all well trained. "Everyone on my team either has a military background or a martial arts background," he said.

11.**Women Are Better at Managing Money**

An international survey has found out that women are better at managing money than men. They work harder to become financially independent and they are not as likely to get into debt as men. The survey showed that both men and women think the same. Almost 5,000 men and women in 12 countries were asked.

Although 40% of women said they used credit cards most of them thought that having more than one credit card could lead to financial problems. On the other side most women admitted that they spent more than men.

The results of the survey could help companies understand the needs of women because they live longer and usually have less money when they retire. Women who share their money with their husband often suffer more when a relationship ends. Some of them have saved up money if they get into such a situation, other simply don't care.

About 6 out of every 10 women said they were financially independent. However almost half thought that a man should be responsible for paying the mortgage or house payments.

12.**The Availability of Water in the Future**

Each human needs about 20 litres of water a day for the basics - washing, cooking and drinking. But there are many places around the world, where people get five litres of water and less to live on. The situation is worst in Africa, especially some communities of Eastern Africa.

Why do some places have so little water and how will the availability of water change in the future? Across the world 1.6 billion more people have access to clean drinking water than twenty years ago. But population growth and climate change could alter this picture. In some regions water is becoming very scarce, especially in places where consumption is already very high.

There are several rivers, for example, that don't even reach the sea any more. The Yellow River in China and the Murray-Darling in Australia are two examples. Mud and sand have to be removed from the bottom of the rivers so that they don't dry up. The Aral Sea in Central Asia and Lake Chad in Africa have shrunk in size because the rivers that flow into them have dried up. In Tanzania, streams are drying up because people are taking out more and more water to irrigate crops.

13.**The Cheapest Car in the World**

One of the biggest problems about buying a car is that you often have to borrow a lot of money so that you can pay for one. In most cases new cars cost tens of thousands of dollars, a price that not everyone can afford.

In India car maker Tata Motors have brought out the cheapest car in the world: the Nano, first introduced in 2008. It costs only 2,500 dollars plus taxes. Tata director sees the Nano as a “People’s Car”, designed especially for India’s lower middle classes, those who earn less than 200 dollars a month.

India makes about 1.2 million cars a year and the idea of a cheap car for everyone makes some experts sceptical. More cars lead to more traffic and more pollution, which also contributes to global warming.

One of the biggest trends in producing cars today is keeping them small so you can find a parking space quickly, running them with as little petrol as possible and having room for as many people as possible. This is exactly what the Nano combines. It is only 3 metres long and 1.6 metres tall but it still has four doors and room for five people.

The car is lightweight, the parts are glued together and there is only one windshied wiper instead of two. The Nano has a 30 horsepower engine and a four-speed manual transmission, found at the back of the car, like the legendary VW Beetle. It reaches speeds of up to 100 km an hour and needs about 2 gallons of fuel per 100 miles.

At 2,500 dollars you will only be able to buy the basic model of the Nano, without any extras. Air conditioning and other additional features would raise the price by about 4,000 dollars.

14.**David Beckham and Los Angeles Galaxy**

When David Beckham came to play for Los Angeles Galaxy in 2007 soccer fans looked up to him as a missionary who would make soccer popular in the United States. Two years later Beckham’s “mission” seems to be over. The 33 year old captain of the English national team played for AC Milano during the winter months because the Major Soccer League took a break. He was fascinated by playing for one of the top teams in Europe so much that he wants to stay in Milano for good.

Even though Beckham’s era is coming to an end, he has done a lot to improve soccer’s image in the United States. He created a mania, not only in Los Angeles but across the nation. When Beckham arrived he was on posters and billboards everywhere. His wife, Posh, had her own TV show and David even made it on to the cover of Sports Illustrated, a big honor for a soccer star.

Beckham also had a big effect on the number of visitors at Major League Soccer Games. In one of his first matches for Galaxy in New York, 66,000 fans came to see him. Galaxy’s home crowd increased by 25%. When the team played in other cities many fans came just to see Beckham. They wanted their money back when they found out that he was injured and wouldn’t play.

Soccer has become very popular on TV too. Big sports channels, which have ignored the sport in the past, are showing games. Americans are even interested in European League games as well.

Even though Beckham did so much for the soccer hype, his team LA Galaxy didn’t do quite so well. When he came to the USA after playing for Real Madrid for half of the season he only played five games because of an ankle injury. Galaxy finished in 11th place in the 13-team league.

15.**Skyscrapers**

Skyscrapers are the world's tallest buildings. They first appeared in New York and Chicago at the end of the 19th century. Skyscrapers are often like small cities. They offer space for offices, apartments, shops, hotels, restaurants and other services. Tens of thousands of people live and work there.

Skyscrapers have two parts: the foundation is the part below the ground and the superstructure is the part above the ground. Both sections hold the weight of the building.

A skyscraper needs careful planning before it can be built. First a big hole a few stories deep is dug into the earth. Sometimes this foundation reaches into solid rock. Then steel and concrete beams and columns are placed into it. They carry the weight of the superstructure.

When the foundation is finished cranes are used to raise a steel frame up into the sky. The pieces of this frame are bolted together. As it moves upward other workers lay floors and hang in the outside walls. The complete structure of the skyscraper must be finished before the inside systems can be installed.

A skyscraper must also be able to hold off strong winds. Modern buildings are able to swing a few metres in each direction, like a tree, without damaging the structure. Sometimes a steel core rises upwards from the inside of the building to give it better support.

16.**Animals in the Ukraine After the Chernobyl Disaster**

The Chernobyl disaster, in which a nuclear reactor exploded in 1986, still harms animals in the Ukraine. A British study has showed that the number of birds, insects and other animals has gone down over the past two decades. It appears that animals are dying because they are still exposed to a small amount of radiation, which the research team found at the Chernobyl site.

Especially the bird population is diminishing because the number of grasshoppers and other insects, which birds rely on for food, has gone down. At the moment the team is looking at the population of ground animals like squirrels, rabbits and foxes. Although the studies have not been completed yet, the number of these animals seems to have gone down too.

There may be two reasons for the reduced animal population. Firstly, radiation from the Chernobyl disaster could have been passed on from one generation to the next, due to dirt, food and contaminated water. Secondly, as one group of animals weakens, another may take its place. This new group may become endangered as well. Still, the danger is not nearly as big as it was a decade ago when the first study took place. At that time there were still very high radiation levels around the Chernobyl power plant and animals somehow still managed to survive. Since then, however, scientists have found out that some species mutated.

17.**Teeth**

Teeth are hard, bony structures that grow from the jawbone. Humans and other animals use their teeth to bite and chew food.

Unlike your brain, your teeth were not ready to work from the day you were born. Although babies start growing their first teeth before they are born, you can't see them until they are about 6 to 12 months old.

Humans grow two sets of teeth during their lives. The first set has 20 baby teeth. When a child is about 6 years old, these teeth become loose and fall out. Over the next few years 28 permanent teeth replace the baby teeth. When a person is around 20, four more back teeth, called wisdom teeth grow in. Many people have their wisdom teeth removed, so that the others have more space to grow straight.

We have different types of teeth in our mouth. Each one has a different function. The four front teeth are called incisors. They are very sharp and are used for cutting and chopping food. You use your incisors, for example, to crunch the skin of an apple.

18.**Chocolate**

Chocolate is a food that is popular all over the world. It is made from the seeds of the cacao tree. It can be eaten and also used as a flavour in ice cream, candy and other foods. Many people like the taste of chocolate and those who work hard eat it to give them energy.

Chocolate originally came from Mexico and Central America. Historians think that the Maya took the wild cacao trees from the rainforest and planted them in their own gardens. They crushed the seeds and mixed them with water and spices to make a hot drink. Chocolate and cacao were very important for Mayan culture. Families drank a hot chocolate drink at special occasions and at parties.

The Aztecs, a people who lived centuries later, used cacao beans as a form of money. They traded other valuable goods to get them because they didn't grow there. Only rich people had the money to buy cacao and drink hot chocolate. In the 16th century Spanish explorers brought cacao back to Europe, where the drink became popular quickly, especially among kings, queens and noblemen. Other European powers began to plant cacao trees in their own colonies.

Today the biggest chocolate producing countries are the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and France.

19.**Migration**

Many mammals, birds, fish, insects and other animals travel regularly from one place to another during a certain time of the year. This journey is called migration. Animals change their living areas because they may get more food, better places to build nests or more sunlight somewhere else.

Some animals travel thousands of kilometres across land and water. Others travel only short distances. Water animals, for example, often move vertically from deeper water to the surface area.

Birds are animals that travel the greatest distances. Many types of birds migrate each year between their breeding grounds in the northern part of the world and warmer regions near the equator where they spend their summer months. In tropical regions birds often travel from wet to dry areas.

The Arctic tern spends the summer in the Arctic regions and then flies half way around the world to the Antarctic for the winter. When flying, most birds follow geographical features, like mountains, rivers or islands.

A few types of butterflies are also long-distance travellers. The monarch butterfly, for instance, spends most of the winter in Mexico and then travels back to the United States in spring.

20.**Burj Dubai**

Burj Dubai is the tallest building that has ever been built. The world's tallest skyscraper, located in the United Arab Emirates, is 828 metres tall. Construction started in 2004 and, even though the interior is unfinished, the building officially opened in January 2009. According to the constructors, a South Korean firm, the skyscraper cost about \$1.5 billion.

Shortly after the opening ceremonies the tower was renamed Burj Khalifa, after the president of the United Arab Emirates, who gave Dubai about \$10 billion to pay its debts. Up to the completion of Burj Dubai the Taipex 101 in Taiwan was the world's tallest building. It reaches over 500 metres into the sky.

The new tower is Y-shaped and has 160 floors. Built with concrete and embedded steel plates the base gets smaller as the building gets taller. The top of the tower can sway 1.5 metres. Temperatures are about 7°C lower than at the base.

Construction experts say that building the tower has been the greatest engineering achievement ever accomplished. However, there are also negative sides. The skyscraper was built by thousands of workers from Southern Asia who earned very little. Some reports say that they had to work up to 14 hours a day, stayed in miserable houses and weren't allowed to leave the site. Many were injured and a few even died.