

Endangered Animals

An endangered species is a plant or animal that is in danger of becoming extinct. Scientists count the number of a certain species left in the wild. The species is called endangered when it seems likely that the plant or animal may die out in all of the areas it is normally found. It is listed as a threatened species if the numbers show that the species is likely to become endangered soon.

Some animals become extinct naturally over time. Many others become extinct because of climate changes or other environmental events that are caused by people. For example, when land is developed, the plants and animals that live there lose their habitat. Plants and animals are becoming endangered and going extinct at a much quicker rate than what is natural. More than 100 species of plants and animals go extinct each day. That's more than 36,000 each year!

The United States government passed a law called the Endangered Species Act in 1973. This protects plants and animals that are in danger of disappearing. There are more than 1,000 species on the list. Sometimes a species that gets listed is saved by people. Information is passed out describing the animals and plants that are in danger. People donate money and time to protect these species. But only a handful of animals get saved. Much more needs to be done.



Project

Study an endangered animal.

Materials

- Partial List of Endangered Animals
- research materials (books, Internet, magazines)
- poster paper
- pencil
- crayons or markers

Directions

1. Choose an endangered species from the list.
2. Use books, magazines, and the Internet to learn more about the animal.
3. Make a poster showing a picture of your animal; facts about its habitat, diet, and habits; and how to help keep it from becoming extinct.
4. Share your poster with your class.

For the Teacher

Make one copy of the Partial List of Endangered Animals (page 17) per student. Have students add to the list as they are doing their research.



Partial List of Endangered Animals

African Elephant

Arabian Oryx

Asian Elephant

Aye-Aye

Bactrian Camel

Bald Eagle

Basking Shark

Blue Whale

Boa Constrictor

Bobcat

Caiman

Cheetah

Cockatoo

Desert Tortoise

Dugong

Gazelle

Golden Lion Tamarin

Gorilla

Gray Wolf

Great Egret

Great White Shark

Grizzly Bear

Jaguar

Kakapo

Kangaroo Rat

Komodo Dragon

Lemur

Loris

Manatee

Northern Spotted Owl

Ocelot

Okapi

Panda

Puma

Pupfish

Quail

Red Panda

Red Wolf

Scarlet Macaw

Sloth

Spotted Dolphin

Tapir

Tarsier

Viceroy Butterfly

Whale Shark

Zorro