

Endangered Species

Tigers, Snow Leopards, Giant Pandas, and Blue Whales are all amazing animals. What do these animals have in common? They are **endangered species**. A species is endangered when there are very few of the animals left in the world. The entire species might disappear completely. When a species is entirely gone, it is extinct.



Tigers are an endangered species

One in every eight bird species, one in every four mammals, one in every three amphibians, and one in every five plants are endangered. A group called the IUCN tracks which species are endangered. It works to protect endangered species.

There are between 7 and 10 million species on our planet. That's a lot of biodiversity! It is natural that some will go extinct or that new species will grow. Some species die out over hundreds of years. Others die out quickly in a faster **mass extinction**. For example, the dinosaurs faced mass extinction. Scientists believe an asteroid hit Earth and killed off all the dinosaurs.

The number of endangered species today is very high. We are having another mass extinction. But this time, it is not natural. Humans are at the cause of the problem. We are doing things that hurt lots of animals.

Humans destroy animal **habitats** or homes by cutting down trees. We are also hunt and fish too much. We take more food than we need to eat, and we pollute our Earth.



Cutting down trees to clear space for human use causes animals to become endangered

It is a tough job to protect species from going extinct. But, we can still make a difference. We can protect habitats by creating national parks. We can make and follow hunting and fishing laws. We should not take more than we need. We can also work to keep our Earth clean.

Even though humans have been a part of the problem, we can be a part of the solution to protect animals!