



Linh Dao & Pavla Hanáčková

ANIMALS IN DANGER OR HOW WE CAN HELP THEM



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BEWARE! DANGER!

OR ANIMALS IN DANGER

It's no secret that Earth's animals and vegetation are in danger. Well, living in the wild is no piece of cake. In a way, the inhabitants of our beautiful planet were resigned to their fate. But oops, here came the humans. And with them, cities appeared, and other modern conveniences popped up. At the same time, though, there are fewer animals and vegetation because they lose their natural territories to humans. Animals are endangered, and it's mainly the fault of us, people. We've already irreversibly lost certain species but there are still many others which desperately need our help and effort.



CAN YOU HELP ME?

The animals for whom the bell tolls are listed in **The Red List of Threatened Species**. The list is divided into several categories, depending on the seriousness of the threat. Luckily, there are many organizations and people who want to help the nature. The World Wide Fund for Nature, for example, tries to inform the wide public about what's going on and what can be done to help. ►

THE HUMAN FACTOR

What can humans be blamed for? The climate change which causes our planet to get hotter, icebergs to melt, and seas to get warmer; the piles of garbage and chemicals which pollute the water and endanger its inhabitants; the change of the environment – plains, forests, and rainforests are turned into fields which drives away animals and vegetation; or excessive hunting and fishing. This is just a short list of the things people are capable of doing. ◀



Extinct in the wild:
Tasmanian wolf



Critically endangered:
vaquita



Endangered species:
red panda



Vulnerable species:
koala



Lower endangerment level:
leopard gecko



ANIMAL CHARM

We all know that certain animals need our help nowadays or we're going to lose them. The animal species that humans find pretty have it a little bit easier – like pandas, for example. Who would want to lose the cute pandas, right? But there are other animals which people find nowhere near this cute – such as beetles. But they, too, have a crucial influence on the environment! ◀

WE WON'T
STARVE, YAY!



US VS THOSE FOREIGNERS

As people discovered foreign countries, they brought along something of their own: very often an animal or a plant. The pretty plant may have made their yard look more beautiful and the cat may have been a good companion, but it also disturbed the local natural environment. Some of the **imported** animals caused the native species to disappear because they were unable to defend themselves. The newly planted vegetation can also fight with the native one, and even have an effect on animal inhabitants. ▲

MY NAME IS
TURACO AND I LIVE
IN CAMEROON,
AFRICA.



ALL I NEED IS...

Some animals and plants can be found at a single place in the whole world – that's because that's where they fare the best. These animals and plants are called **endemic species**. For example, they may be dependent on a certain type of food. If the natural environment of these unique inhabitants is disturbed, it can have a negative effect and make them suffer. ▲

RAINFORESTS

LIFE-GIVING FORESTS

Rainforests are nicknamed “the green lungs of our planet”. Even though Earth’s rainforests take up a relatively small area, their significance is indescribable. That’s because they create oxygen without which we wouldn’t be able to survive. Despite this, a huge part of rainforests has been destroyed or felled already. Unfortunately, this keeps happening. Not only does this destroy the homes of animals and plants, but it can also influence our weather and the temperature which the unharmed rainforests keep in balance.

UNIQUE PLACE

Rainforests stretch along the equator, from South Africa through Africa to Southeast Asia and Pacific islands. Because they’re located in the **tropical zone**, it’s incredibly hot and humid in there. They simply teem with life – nowhere else in the world can you find so many animal and plant species as in the rainforest; almost half of all kinds of animals and vegetation can be found here. The local plants are very important for us – many of them are a valuable source of medicine. ▼

DESTRUCTION & FELLING

Humans simply refuse to listen to reason. Instead of valuing rainforests, they destroy them. People want to have a place for their homes, plantations, farms, and roads. How do they get it? By **felling** or **burning** the rainforest. But the forest is a home not only to people, but also to thousands of plants and animals, many of which haven’t even been discovered yet. ►



AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RAINFOREST

Today you can find other things in a rainforest than just trees: barren desolate places, plantations with various crops (for example **oil palms**), farms and cattle pens. Many animals are pushed outside their natural territories which, of course, harms them. Some of them have a problem with getting food while others can’t produce offspring. ▲



IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

We should find inspiration in **native tribes** which live there. They use the rainforests with respect and take only what’s absolutely needed. They know that everything in a rainforest is interconnected. The trees get water from the ground and release it further. When ground is bare, it gets dry and stops being fertile as under normal circumstances, animals fertilize it with their droppings. Rainforest plants do something similar – when they decompose, it creates nutrition for other plants. ▼



FRAGILE BALANCE

A rainforest, that’s a fragile place where everything is **interconnected**. Many plants and animals depend on one another – some plants, for example, need various kinds of birds, insects or other animals to pollinate them and spread their seeds. Trees receive and distribute moisture, everything dead disintegrates and provides nutrition to other plants. That’s why it may stun you to learn that the ground in rainforests is usually very poor. When a rainforest is destroyed, it’s incredibly hard to renew it. ◀



HOW CAN I HELP?

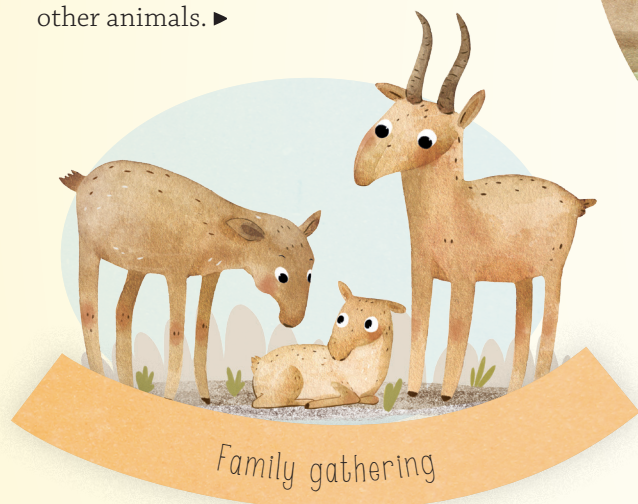
It will take a great effort to save the rainforests but nothing is impossible. Many countries where rainforests can be found are already trying to renew them: they ban or limit the creation of plantations, are on the lookout for poachers and black-market sale of pets, or save endangered animals. Around the world, campaigns spring up to renew these unique places. Even small measures can help: don’t waste paper, buy fair-trade bananas, and explain to your friends how important rainforests are. ►

NOMADS FROM THE PLAINS

WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THESE CHANGES?

AMERICAN BISON

Millions of these huge beauties once used to roam the Great Plains of America. When Europeans came to America, they literally decimated the bison. Nomadic bison had a huge influence on the plains. During their journey, they helped shape the appearance of the wilderness and contributed to its health. How, you ask? By grazing down grass in various altitudes, they created nesting sites for birds. Bison leave a trail of **depressions** behind where rainwater gathers and gives both home and water to other animals. ►



SAIGA ANTELOPE

Saiga antelopes are one of the most endangered inhabitants of Mongolian steppes. They're threatened from all directions: hunters hunt them recklessly, they lose their natural territories, and must deal with adverse weather. Although they're perfectly equipped to live in harsh conditions, the current fluctuations harm them. We should pamper and protect these strange hoofed animals because they've been with us ever since the times of mammoths and sabre-toothed tigers. ▲

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET

This unassuming animal is one of the most endangered inhabitants of the Great Plains of North America. They were at death's door once before, but luckily, people managed to rescue them. But the fight is far from over. Their territory is getting smaller in front of our very eyes. Also, ferrets depend on prairie dogs: not only they are a main part of their diet, but the ferrets also use their dens as a home to raise their young in. If the number of prairie dogs decreases, so will that of black-footed ferrets. ▼



GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

Living in American plains isn't easy for greater sage-grouses. Long gone are the times when they could wander around their territories, preen in front of their chosen ones and perform **mating dances** for them. Their mating call can't be heard because of wind power plants which make a lot of noise. There's more fields and fewer places where they can gather for mating, also known as lek. ►



BURROWING OWL

Unlike regular owls, these little American ones live under the ground, simply moving into the dens of other animals. But there are more and more department stores, car parks, and houses intruding into the owls' territory. The birds are greatly harmed by **pesticides** or agents for pest extermination. They like to eat mice and insects whose bodies may contain these toxic substances. ►

BLACK RHINOCEROS

African savannahs are inhabited by a leaf-eating rhinoceros which is pretty much cursed by its **horn**. Why? Because it attracts the attention of poachers who believe in the myths about its healing powers. Poachers sell rhino horns for great sums of money. Luckily, people try to protect these animals, attempt to restore the ravaged areas where rhinos live, and guard them in reservations in the middle of national parks. ◀



AFRICAN WILD DOG

African farmers aren't fond of them because they think they are after their cattle. But it's an unjust accusation – the cattle are usually hunted by lions or hyenas. That's why environmentalists try to protect the dogs by equipping them with collars which send out information about their location, or by helping the farmers build pens that protect their cattle. But mainly: environmentalists try to explain that the dogs need to be protected, not the other way around. After all, men have caused their numbers in wilderness to dwindle. ◀



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Written by Pavla Hanáčková
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Help us save
the wild!

AGE 6+

Take a look around – does it look like everything in the wild is all right? Have you noticed the litter strewn everywhere, the withering trees, or the dying plants? Do you feel like you see certain plants and animals less and less? No wonder – we, the people, have made it pretty warm for the wild. Soon, the only way for us to know certain kinds of animals will be the pictures. People are on the rise and nature is in decline. We fell trees, settle formerly unexplored places, and rob animals and plants of their homes. If you want to help the wild, then don't hesitate to read on! You'll learn what places, animals, and plants are in danger and how you can lend them your helping hand.



Funny book full
of beautiful
illustrations.

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