



# WHO IS IN GREAT DANGER?

Researching animal extinction



## GRADES 3 - 6

### KEY WORDS

- endangered
- threatened
- extinct
- species

### STANDARD

- SCI.4.3.4

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn that certain species of animals have become extinct because they failed to produce enough young to keep pace with the death rate.
- Students will learn that extinction may have occurred as a result of natural conditions or as a result of human intervention.
- Students will learn that species that are declining in numbers are classified as endangered or threatened according to their danger of extinction.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Humans have caused animals to become extinct or endangered by destroying natural habitats, using pesticides, overhunting, using skins, feathers, or other animal parts for clothing or fashion accessories, and keeping exotic animals as pets.

### PROCEDURE

- Have students use resources such as books, the internet, or magazines to find an animal that is in danger of becoming extinct because of the factor listed on the worksheet.

### RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Have students share their examples and discuss how each factor contributes to species rarity.
- Example Answers:
  - Migratory animals include many bird species, such as sandpipers, albatrosses, Kirtland's warbler, and whooping cranes, insects like monarch butterflies, and fish like Bluefin tuna.
  - Animals that are rare due to having very few young include gorillas, great pandas, manatees, condors, and eagles.
  - Species that need a special place to nest include bluebirds.
  - Animals living in recreation areas are grizzly bears, lions, elephants, wolves, and many birds.
  - Animals living in residential or agricultural areas include Amur leopards and Sumatran elephants.
  - Species that have something people want include elephants (tusks), rhinos (horns), sturgeon (eggs for caviar), turtles (shells, meat), birds-of-paradise (feathers), and snow leopards (pelts).
  - Animals that are at risk of extinction due to rarity include Tasmanian devils, gorillas, tigers, spotted owls, lemurs, and Galapagos tortoises.

### EXTENSIONS

- As a class, or in small groups, choose a species that is already extinct, and have students explore the reasons for its extinction.





# WHO IS IN GREAT DANGER?

Find an example of an animal that is endangered or might become endangered because of each of the following reasons.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

The animal must migrate.

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal has only one or two babies at a time.

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal needs a special place to nest.

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal lives in an area people use for sports or hunting.

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal lives where people want to build farms and houses.

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal has something people want (fur, skin, tusks, etc).

\_\_\_\_\_

The animal is already very rare.

\_\_\_\_\_

