

*Factfiles*



# **ANIMALS IN DANGER**

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OXFORD BOOKWORMS 1

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## 1 Do animals matter?



and we never see them again. But with thirty million different species, do one or two matter? Different people give different answers to this question, but more and more people are saying, 'Of course they do – they are all important!'. So why do people think that?

One answer is this: animals make the world a richer place, a more interesting and a more beautiful place for us to live in.

We know about and can give names to about one million animals. But there are more than thirty million species of animal in the world. Every year some of these species disappear



Secondly, animals help us in many important ways. They give us meat to eat and milk to drink, and we can make things to wear from their coats. Scientists learn a lot from animals and this helps them to understand people. Doctors take things from animals, alive or dead, to help ill people. Thirdly, it is natural for us to protect animals because we are animals too. Many of these living things are in danger. Without our help, a lot more animals are going to die.

People and animals live in one world. Our land is their land; our trees are their trees; our rivers are their rivers. We want to protect animals because at the same time we are protecting our world.



## 2 Why are animals in danger?

A million years ago there were a lot more species of animal than there are now. Of course, some species disappear naturally, but today they are disappearing faster than before.



*Rhinoceros die because people want their horns*

Animals are in danger from natural accidents; some animals die because of small changes in the weather. But animals are also in danger from our behaviour. We cannot protect animals – or people – from accidents or changing weather, but we can think about our behaviour and change that.



*Fish in a dry river*

We put new buildings on empty land and do not think about animals. We make new roads; we move rivers; we take away trees.

Sometimes we take animals from their natural home to a different country. In this new home, other animals do not know

*Black rats*





*Pollution kills birds*

the newcomer and are not afraid of it. Black rats went by ship from Asia to the Galapagos Islands and killed many different species of bird. Some of those birds lived nowhere but the Galapagos, but after the rats came they disappeared.

Some visitors to new places take pictures of animals, but other visitors hunt and kill them. They do not kill the animals for food, but because they like hunting.

In many countries people can also make a lot of money from animals. Elephants die because people want ivory. Rhinoceros die because people want to buy their horns. Many bigger animals are in danger because their coats are beautiful and some people would like to have them to put in their



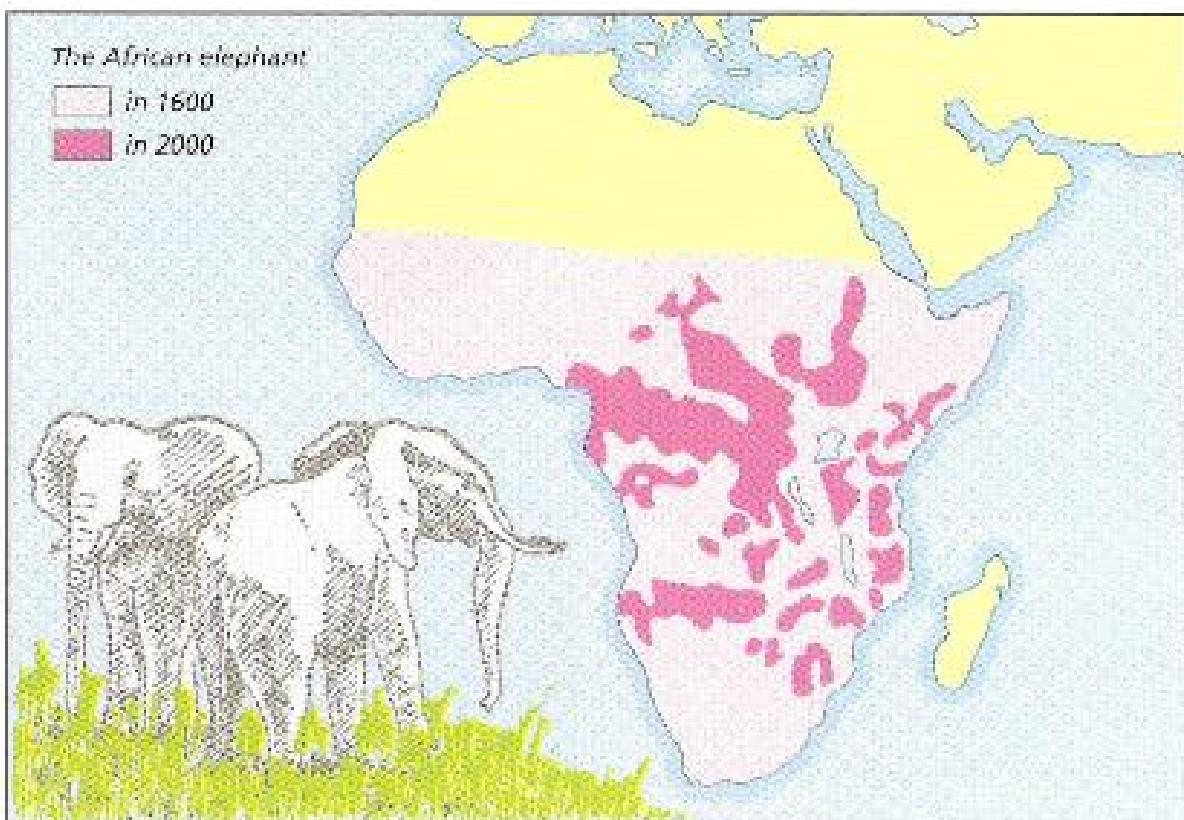
*Cutting down forests in Western Samoa*

houses, or to wear.

Pollution of our land, seas, rivers and sky is getting worse and worse. We are making our world a much dirtier place, so many animals cannot live in it. Pollution is bad for all of us. It is killing animals. Sooner or later it is going to kill people too.

The number of people in the world is getting bigger all the time. More people in bigger cities take more land and make more pollution. So we are taking the natural homes of animals very fast. Where can they go? In the end, the answer is often nowhere . . . and the animals die.

### 3 How bad is it?



Animals disappeared before there were people; that is true. But after the first people went to America from Asia 11,000 years ago, 73 per cent of the big animals in North America and 80 per cent in South America disappeared. Ninety per cent of big Australian animals disappeared after people moved there from Asia. In

Mediterranean countries there were once small elephants, but they disappeared too. Did people kill them all? Perhaps not – we do not know. But they did not help them to live.

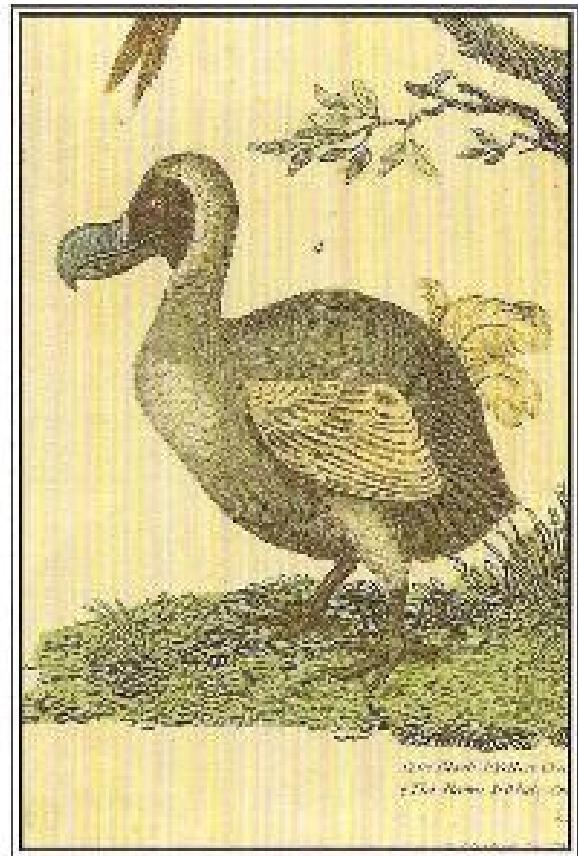
Later – about five hundred years ago – Europeans visited places all over the world for the first time. The European visitors

changed these places in many ways and they did kill a lot of the animals; we know that.

Today, people in richer countries want to buy more and more interesting things. Animals in danger are more interesting because there are not many of them. So hunters can get rich. They can kill elephants, rhinoceros and other animals for money.

Hunting, pollution and disappearing natural homelands; all of these are dangers to animals. More species disappeared in the last ten years than in the last fifty, and more disappeared in the last fifty years than the last three hundred. After one species disappears, other species die too. The dead species was important to them – perhaps for food, perhaps because it protected them.

Remember the famous dodo, a large quiet bird. It lived on the island of Mauritius. It did not fly, but it was not in danger from other animals, so it was not afraid.



*A dodo*

Nobody wanted to eat dodo meat because it was not very good to eat. But people visiting Mauritius from other countries killed dodos, and by about 1680 the last dodo was dead. This happened a long time ago, but we cannot forget the dodo – and we are never going to see a dodo alive again.

## 4 On land



*A tapir with her baby*

To most people, bigger land animals are more interesting than very small animals or birds. We see these animals on television and we visit them in zoos. We take pictures of them, often because they are beautiful. But many of them are in danger in their natural homes.

*Elephants in their natural home*

Tapirs are perhaps not the most beautiful animals in the world. They live on land but near water. They are very quiet, and they cannot move far because mothers carry their babies for a year before they are born. Then the babies drink their mothers' milk for a year after that.

People in many countries hunt tapirs because their meat is very good to eat. Today there are no tapirs in Mexico or El Salvador, and there are not many in Panama. Tapirs are also disappearing in Chile and a number of Asian countries.

There are a lot of different rhinoceros. In the old days there were rhinoceros in Europe and America, but now they are all in



Africa and Asia. These are also disappearing fast. In Indonesia there are no more than fifty Javan rhinos. This is a very small number but the Indonesians are protecting them from hunters. Perhaps our children are going to see Javan rhinoceros; perhaps they are not.



*A Javan rhinoceros*

Europeans did not know about the Northern white rhinoceros before 1903, but at that time there were a lot of rhinos in Central Africa. Now hunters kill them for their horns. Other people buy the horns from the hunters and make beautiful, expensive things from them. A hunter gets

*A rhinoceros horn knife*

twelve dollars, perhaps, but people buy a rhinoceros horn knife for hundreds or thousands of dollars.

By 1980 there were only 1,000 of these rhinos. In 1985 there were thirteen, and they all lived in one place in Zaire. Other countries wanted to take them to zoos, but

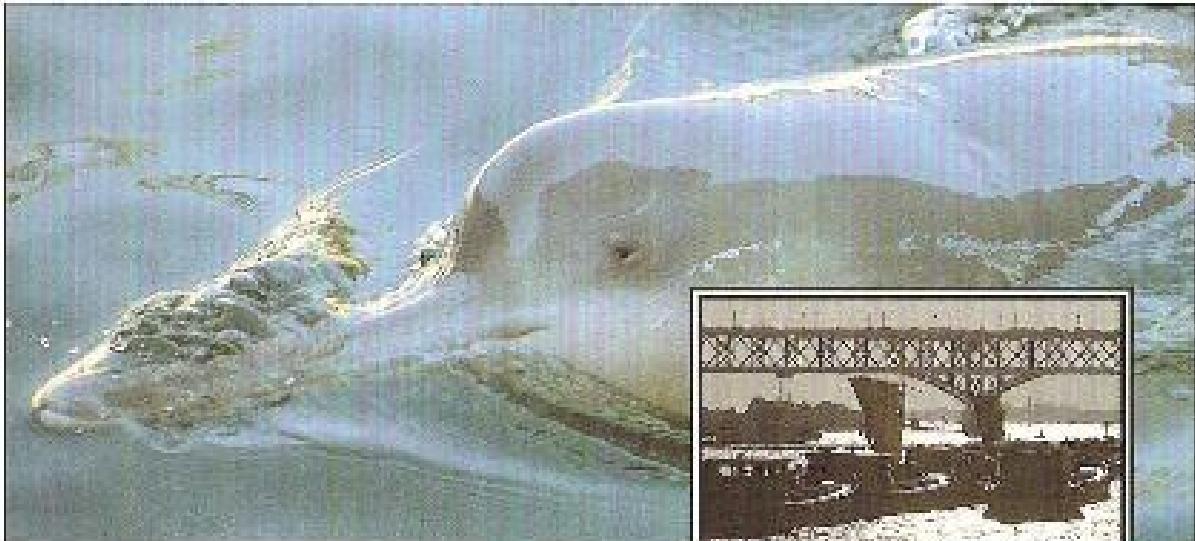


*Penguins in the zoo*

they stayed in a national park in Zaire. The Zaireans were right; the rhinos do not have babies easily in zoos. Now, at last, hunters cannot get near the rhinos because there are more than two hundred workers in the park to protect them. But there are only twenty-five rhinos. People helped them in the end, but they were very slow about it.



## 5 In the water



*A baiji dolphin*

Some dolphins live in rivers and some live in the sea. The Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River runs across China from west to east. For millions of years the river did not change, but now it is full of ships, noise and pollution. Baiji dolphins live in the water, but they did not change their behaviour after the big ships came and the river got dirty.

Baiji dolphins have eyes on top of their heads, but now they cannot see well, because there is

nothing to see in the dirty water. They can usually hear very well and they make noises to 'talk' to other dolphins, but there is a lot of other noise in the river. In past times they listened to small ships and went under them. These days baijis hit their heads on the big ships.

In 2,000 kilometres of river there are not more than two hundred dolphins, and they are all in danger. Now the Chinese are

building a home for them in the river. It is very expensive, and the Chinese are getting some of the money in an interesting way. People can buy the baiji name, so in China there are Baiji drinks, Baiji shoes and a Baiji Hotel. Some money from these things goes to help the dolphins.

River dolphins in the Ganges River (in India and Bangladesh) are also in danger. The meat of sea dolphins is an important food for people in many countries, and we kill hundreds of thousands of them every year.

Whales are also in danger from hunting. In past times the Inuit people of Alaska hunted whales

but they did not kill many. Then other hunters came from other countries in bigger ships and killed thousands.

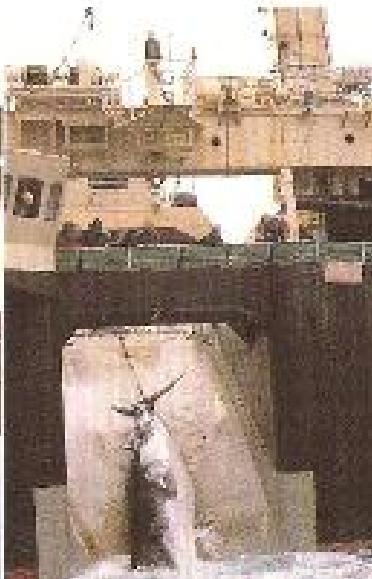
Antarctica was also a good place for whales. About 250,000 blue whales, the biggest animals in the world, lived there. But in one year, 1930–1931, hunters killed 30,000, and now there are under a thousand.

Other whales are disappearing from Antarctica too. Most countries stopped this killing a number of years ago, but it is difficult to watch ships and protect animals at sea, far away from land.

*An Inuit hunting whales*



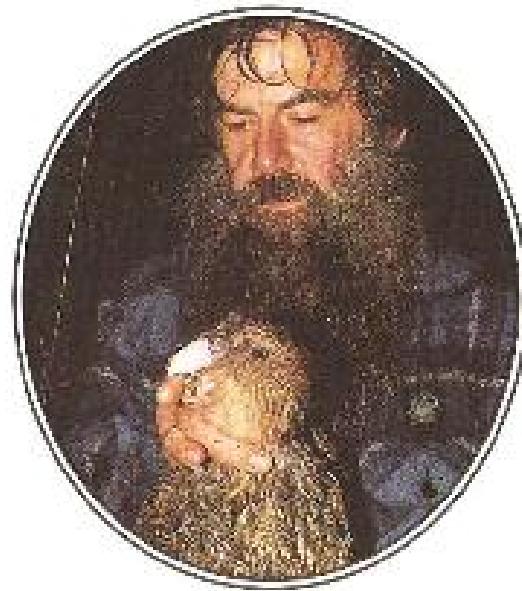
*Hunting whales today*



## 6 In the sky



A kakapo



Protecting kakapos

We know about nine thousand different birds but many of those are not in danger in the 1990s because they are all dead. More than a thousand other birds are in danger now.

Kakapos are also called Old Night Birds because they move at night. They are green and yellow, large and fat.

In a quiet place, kakapos can live for sixty years. But there are only about forty in the world, all of them in New Zealand, because

they cannot live with people or other animals and they do not have many babies. They are different from most birds because they cannot fly.

Kakapos are now in danger from other animals, so New Zealanders want to take them to one of two quiet places and protect them there. Finding the birds is difficult, but they look for them with hunting dogs. In these quiet places, kakapos can make new homes and live freely.

Without this help, all the kakapos are going to die.

The bald ibis lived in Europe for thousands of years. Now there are no bald ibis in Europe. The last ibis visited there in 1989.  
Why did they stop coming?

Many birds fly a long way in a year. They leave their homes and stop in places for the winter or for a shorter time on the journey. Often these stopping places change because people are taking water or trees from the land. Then the birds have nowhere to go.



*Bald ibis*

Happily, we can see the bald ibis, in small numbers, in Morocco and Turkey.

*Flying south for winter*



## 7 What can countries do?

Scientists often meet and talk about ways of helping animals, and politicians in many countries are beginning to talk about this too. They ask a lot of questions, and sometimes the politicians listen to the scientists.

Who can hunt dolphins and whales? How many can those people kill each year? Who can kill elephants? Is it right to buy ivory? Which animals are disappearing fastest? How can we all work to protect them? Where is the money going to come from? These are some of their questions.

Countries can – and do – open national parks, big and usually very beautiful places without buildings. These are homes for animals living freely, but also for birds, trees and flowers. Visitors can go there but they cannot hunt or take things away.

The first national parks opened more than a hundred years ago. One of the first was Gran Paradiso National Park in Italy. Yosemite and Yellowstone are old and very famous North American parks. These days you can find parks in most countries. They are

*Denali National Park, Alaska*



very important because they protect animals.

Politicians can think of ways of stopping hunting; they can look for ways of stopping pollution too. All over the world people are asking, 'How can we stop the smoke and dirt from cars, planes and factories? Let's change. Let's begin to think of new ways of living and working. Let's make our world a nicer place for all living things.'

The number of people in the world is getting bigger all the time. In 1850 there were one billion people in the world. In 1986 there were nearly five billion, and the last billion were

born in the fifteen years before that. Can politicians slow this down? In many countries families are not getting smaller, but in China most people cannot have more than one child. In other places politicians are also calling for change.

*Badlands National Park, South Dakota*



*A WWF meeting*

## 8 What can I do?

Can we do anything to stop animals dying? Can one man or woman make things different? Or do we leave the answers to politicians and scientists? Here are some people talking.



'Why are we making new roads all the time? They're going to begin



work on a road in a beautiful place near here. It's a stopping place for birds on their way to Africa, and that's more important. I want politicians to stop and think, so I'm writing to them about it. Some of my friends are going to sit down there and stop them.'



'I'm an animal lover, so I don't eat meat. Those animals aren't in danger, but they don't live naturally and they die young for meat eaters.'

'My mother doesn't wear her leopard-skin coat now.

Ten years ago she loved it. Times are changing and she feels differently about it. A coat from a dead animal isn't beautiful today.'



'We've got a big garden. We

work in half of it and make it nice, but we leave the trees and flowers in the other half.

They are natural homes for small animals and birds.'



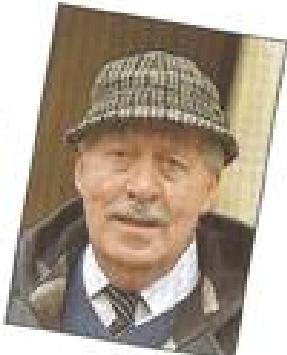
'Everyone can do something in a small way. We protect animals by protecting the natural world. I always walk or go by bicycle. People can do something about pollution from cars. They can leave them at home.'



'I love children but we can't have more than one or two these days. I think it's wrong to have a big family.'



'We buy everyday things from all over the world. They come to us by plane and ship. This makes me angry. Why don't we all buy food from places near us?'



'I give money to protect dolphins. There are some dolphins in the zoo here. I don't like it because I don't think they're happy. Zoos are not natural places for any animals.'



## 9 Do zoos help?

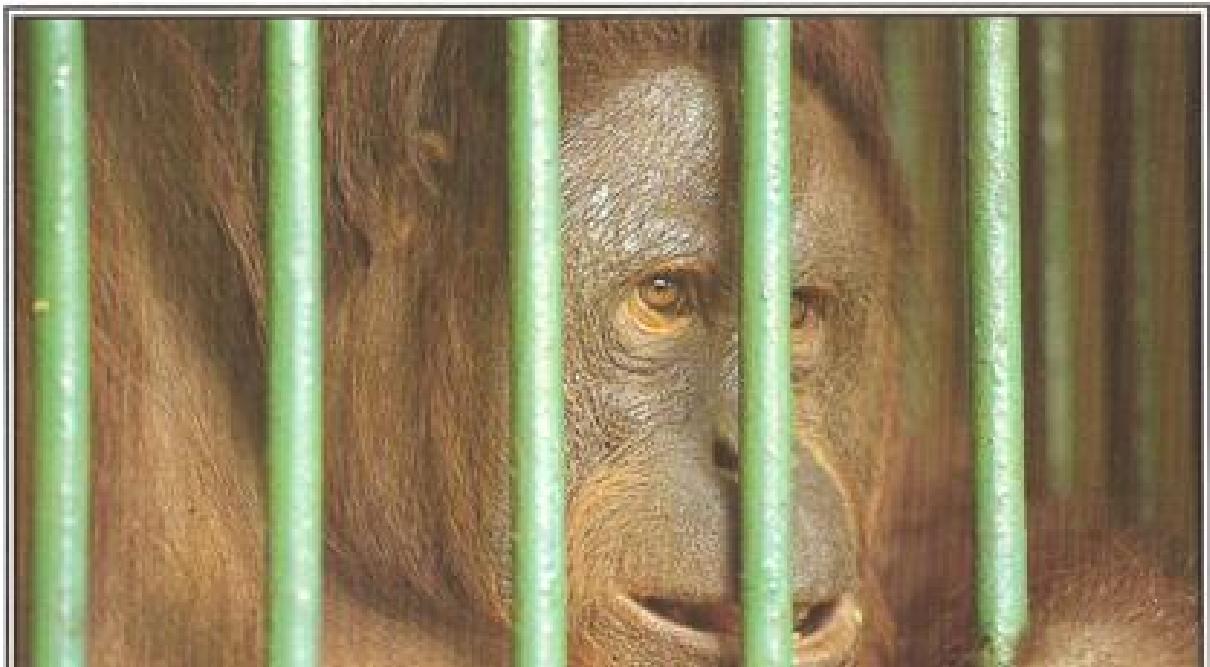
There are of course good zoos and bad zoos. Bad zoos are often in cities. They are old and dirty and there is not much room for the animals. Animals and birds live in small cages, so their behaviour is not natural. Visitors stand in front of them all day and watch them, but the animals have nothing to do and nowhere to go. They can only wait for their food, and many get ill or die.

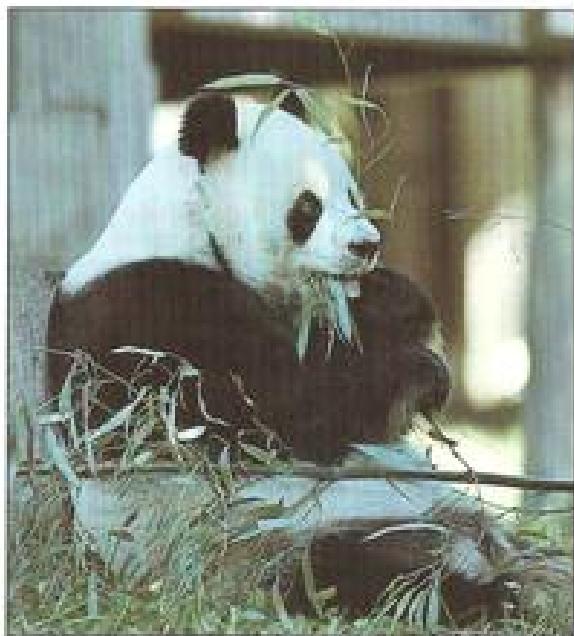
Things are different in a good modern zoo. People think about the animals and want them to be

happy. Some animals like living with or near other animals; some do not. Some animals love seeing visitors and playing games, but a lot of animals like to sleep quietly by day. Most animals want to look for food; they do not want someone to give it to them. Many animals want a lot of land, trees, and a high place to see from.

Good zoos make the right home for every animal. There are sometimes more of one species in zoos than there are in that species' natural home.

*An unhappy orang-utan in a small cage*





*A panda in a modern zoo*

A good zoo is sometimes the only place for animals in danger. They can live there and scientists can learn about them. The animals can have babies in the zoo and one day perhaps the babies can go back to their natural home and be free again. But animals in zoos often forget their natural behaviour, so this is difficult.

One of the scientists' jobs is to teach natural behaviour. Scientists watch free animals and then watch animals in zoos. Often their behaviour is very different.



*Returning a gharial to its natural home*

Zoo animals sit for a long time in an empty cage and wait all day for food. They walk for hour after hour with nowhere to go. So scientists teach them about looking for good food and leaving bad food, moving in trees, finding or making homes, and running from danger. Then the animals are ready to go back to their countries and live freely. Unhappily, this does not happen very often.

## 10 What is the good news?



An okapi

We know about a lot of animals, but not about all of them. We often hear about 'new' species.

Perhaps one of the most interesting of these new species is the okapi. People in the Congo (now Zaire) talked about them a long time ago, but Europeans did not know about them before 1901. Okapi have wonderful coats and they are different in a number of ways from other big animals, so they were soon very

famous. People from Europe wanted to hunt and kill okapi, but not all of them died. A number of okapi now live in zoos. Three or four thousand live in the forests of east Zaire.

Every year we learn about important animals for the first time. In 1992, visiting scientists in Nepal learned about a new elephant. It is about three and a half metres tall, bigger than all the other Asian elephants. Its head is also very different.

Sometimes species disappear and then, after a long time, somebody sees them again. This is very exciting for animal lovers.

A lot of children in Britain have golden hamsters at home. The hamsters are small and golden brown. They eat, sleep and play in cages.

Golden hamsters come from Syria, but many years ago they all disappeared. Then in 1930 a scientist looked for them and

found fifteen. Some of them died, but some of them had babies. The scientist moved most of the young hamsters to zoos in different countries and now there are millions. They did not find golden hamsters in Syria again before 1971.

Human beings and animals live in one world. We know a lot about this world, it is true, but we

do not know everything. We look for new and interesting animals because we can learn from them.

We are finding them, but at the same time we are losing many more. We change things in our world quickly, but animals change very slowly. They are all going to disappear soon – or we can help them. Our home is their home too; we cannot forget this.

*Golden hamsters in Britain ... and in Syria*



## Exercises

### A Checking your understanding

Pages 1–3 *Which of the answers are answers to this question? Why are animals important?*

- 1 Because we can give names to one million animals.
- 2 Because the world is a better place with animals in it.
- 3 Because we can learn about people by watching animals.
- 4 Because animals sometimes die from accidents.

Pages 4–7 *Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?*

- 1 We are losing animal species faster than before.
- 2 You can see dodos in some zoos.
- 3 Young tapirs leave their mothers after they are born.
- 4 People kill rhinos because their meat is good to eat.

Pages 8–11 *Which of these animals can fly?*

- 1 a blue whale    2 a kakapo    3 a bald ibis    4 a Baiji dolphin

Pages 12–15 *Which of these help animals?*

- 1 national parks    2 pollution    3 hunting    4 new roads

Pages 16–19 *Which of these things do free animals do? Which do they do in a bad zoo?*

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 They run from danger. | 3 They live in cages.      |
| 2 They look for food.   | 4 They find or make homes. |

### B Working with language

1 Use these words to join the sentences together.

and    but    because    so

- 1 Most people eat meat, . . . animals are important to them.

- 2 We cannot change the weather, . . . we can stop making new roads.
- 3 We want clean water . . . animals want it too.
- 4 Animals die . . . the rivers are very dirty.

2 Complete these sentences with information from the book.

- 1 Most big Australian animals died after . . .
- 2 There were dodos in Mauritius before . . .
- 3 First the hunters kill the rhinoceros. Then . . .
- 4 Baiji dolphins can hear very well, but . . .
- 5 Animals live more freely in national parks than . . .

### C Activities

1 Are these true for you? Why (not)? Write your answer.

- 1 'Animals make the world a richer place . . .'
- 2 'A coat from a dead animal isn't beautiful today.'
- 3 'I think it's wrong to have a big family.'

2 Can you answer these questions? (The answers are not in this book.)

- 1 Where are the Galapagos Islands?
- 2 Is Mauritius a country?
- 3 Give the name of a city in Zaire.
- 4 In which country is Alaska?
- 5 Which countries are next to Nepal?
- 6 How long is the Yangtze River?

### D Project work

Find information about an animal in danger in your country and write about it. What is it called? Where does it live? How many were there before? How many are there now? Why is the animal in danger? How can people protect it?

## Glossary

**behaviour** way of doing things

**danger** something making you feel afraid because it can hurt or kill you

**disappear** to die, or to go away and not come back

**fly** (*v*) to move through the sky like a bird

**food** things to eat

**hunt** to go after an animal and catch it, dead or alive

**island** land with water all round it

**kill** to make something die

**land** home of animals, people and trees; not sky or sea

**national park** animals live freely in a national park, but people cannot kill them there

**natural** something that happens without learning

**place** (*n*) a building, town, country etc. My house, my garden, Oxford and England are all places

**politician** a man or woman working for their country or their government

**pollution** something making land, water or sky dirty

**protect** to watch and help an animal or a young child

**scientist** a man or woman who asks and answers questions about animals and the natural world

**species** all the animals in one big-family

**world** all the countries and seas; the home of all people and animals



## ANIMALS IN DANGER

Every year some species of animal disappear – we never see them again. Every year cities, factories and pollution eat up more land – land that animals need. Every year hunters kill more elephants, rhinoceros and tigers. Animals everywhere are in danger – what can the world do to save them?

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OXFORD BOOKWORMS FACTFILES give important and interesting information to the reader, moving enjoyably towards real reading in English. Each book has been carefully graded to help the learner.

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