

Scout C wanted to share this awesome website with our K8 students at UTVA:

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/>

“So in the upper right corner, you'll see 2 button's that say, adopt and donate, and right by those buttons is a search button. Search for an animal, and it will give you this whole thing on that animal!

Fun fact: NEW SPECIES OF ORANGUTAN ANNOUNCED THIS MONTH!”

Here is some of the information that Scout found from the articles on this website:

The Giant Panda

Giant pandas are amazing creatures. They eat lots of bamboo, and they are so cute. They spend most of their time, sleeping, eating, and playing.

Despite their exalted status and relative lack of natural predators, pandas are still at risk. Severe threats from humans have left just over 1,800 pandas in the wild. This peaceful creature with a distinctive black and white coat is adored by the world and considered a national treasure in China. The panda also has a special significance for WWF,(A endangered animal site) because it has been WWF's logo since their founding in 1961.

Pandas live mainly in bamboo forests high in the mountains of western China, where they subsist almost entirely on bamboo. They must eat from 26 to 84 pounds of it every day, a formidable task for which they use their enlarged wrist bones that function as opposable thumbs.

A newborn panda is about the size of a stick of butter—about 1/900th the size of its mother—but can grow to up to 330 pounds as an adult. These bears are excellent tree climbers despite their bulk.

Population
1,864 in the wild
Scientific Name
<i>Ailuropoda melanoleuca</i>
Height
Adults can grow to more than four feet
Weight
220–330 pounds
Habitats
Temperate broadleaf and mixed forests of southwest China

Wild panda numbers are finally rebounding after years of decline. The International Union for Conservation of Nature announced that pandas have been upgraded from “endangered” to “vulnerable.”

Pandas play a crucial role in the bamboo forests where they roam by spreading seeds and facilitating growth of vegetation. In the Yangtze Basin where pandas live, the forests are home to a stunning array of wildlife such as dwarf blue sheep, multicolored pheasants and other endangered species, including the golden monkey, takin and crested ibis.

The panda’s habitat is at the geographic and economic heart of China, home to millions of people. By making this area more sustainable, we are also helping to increase the quality of life of local populations. Pandas bring huge economic benefits to local communities through ecotourism.

Population 1,864 in the wild

Extinction Risk Vulnerable

China’s Yangtze Basin region, which holds the panda’s primary habitat, is the geographic and economic heart of this booming country. Roads and railroads are increasingly fragmenting the forest, which isolates panda populations and prevents mating.

Forest destruction also reduces pandas’ access to the bamboo they need to survive. The Chinese government has established more than 50 panda reserves, but only around 61% of the country’s panda population is protected by these reserves.

Hunting remains an ever-present threat. Poaching the animals for their fur has declined due to strict laws and greater public awareness of the panda’s protected status. But hunters seeking other animals in panda habitats continue to kill pandas accidentally.

Lots of people are trying to save panda’s, and so far, its working. Wild panda numbers are finally rebounding after years of decline. The International Union for Conservation of Nature announced that pandas have been upgraded from “endangered” to “vulnerable.”

I hope you liked learning about this amazing animal, The Giant Panda.

The Snow Leopard

Snow leopards have evolved to live in some of the harshest conditions on Earth. Their white-gray coat spotted with large black rosettes blends in perfectly with the steep and rocky mountains of Central Asia.

The snow leopard's powerful build allows it to scale great steep slopes with ease. Its hind legs give the snow leopard the ability to leap six times the length of its body. A long tail provides balance and agility and wraps around the resting snow leopard as protection from the cold.

For millennia, this magnificent cat was the king of the mountains. The mountains were rich with their prey such as blue sheep, Argali wild sheep, ibex, marmots, pikas and hares. Snow leopards are found in 12 countries—including China, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, and Mongolia—but their population is dropping.

Status
Vulnerable
Population
total estimated 4,080-6,590
Scientific Name
<i>Panthera uncia</i>
Length
2-5 ft.
Habitats
cold high mountains

Snow leopards play a key role as both top predator and as an indicator of the health of their high-altitude habitat. If snow leopards thrive, so will countless other species.

Population total estimated 4,080-6,590

Extinction Risk Vulnerable

The sole predator of snow leopards? Humans. Hunting, habitat loss and retaliatory killings are the main reasons this big cat is under threat.

Snow leopards are often killed by local farmers because they prey on livestock such as sheep, goats, horses, and yak calves. The animals which snow leopards would typically hunt—such as the Argali sheep—are also hunted by local communities. As their

natural prey becomes harder to find, snow leopards are forced to kill livestock for survival.

The snow leopard habitat range continues to decline from human settlement and increased use of grazing space. This development increasingly fragments the historic range of the species.

Climate change poses perhaps the greatest long-term threat to snow leopards. Impacts from climate change could result in a loss of up to 30 percent of the snow leopard habitat in the Himalayas alone.

The Asian Elephant

Elephants are an important cultural icon in Asia. According to Hindu mythology, the gods (*deva*) and the demons (*asura*) churned the oceans in a search for the elixir of life so that they would become immortal. As they did so, nine jewels surfaced, one of which was the elephant. In Hinduism, the powerful deity honored before all sacred rituals is the elephant-headed Lord Ganesha, who is also called the Remover of Obstacles.

Asian elephants are extremely sociable, forming groups of six to seven related females that are led by the oldest female, the matriarch. Like African elephants, these groups occasionally join others to form herds, although these associations are relatively transient.

More than two thirds of an elephant's day may be spent feeding on grasses, but large amounts of tree bark, roots, leaves and small stems are also eaten. Cultivated crops such as bananas, rice and sugarcane are favorite foods. Elephants are always close to a source of fresh water because they need to drink at least once a day.

Status
Endangered
Population
Fewer than 50,000
Scientific Name
<i>Elephas maximus indicus</i>
Height
6.5– 11.5 feet
Weight
around 11,000 pounds

Even where suitable habitat exists, poaching remains a threat to elephants in many areas. In 1989, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) banned the international trade in ivory. However, there are still some thriving but unregulated domestic ivory markets in a number of countries which fuel an illegal international trade. Although most of this ivory comes from poaching of African elephants, Asian elephants are also illegally hunted for their ivory, as well as for their skin. In some countries, political unrest is disrupting antipoaching activities.

Conservationists are concerned that a loss of male big tuskers due to poaching could lead to inbreeding and eventually to high juvenile mortality and overall low breeding success. The loss of tuskers also reduces the probability that these longer-living lone males will mate and exchange genes with females of different sub-populations.

The capture of wild elephants for domestic use has become a threat to some wild populations, seriously reducing some numbers. India, Vietnam and Myanmar have banned capture in order to conserve their wild herds, but in Myanmar elephants are still caught each year for the timber and tourist industries or illegal wildlife trade. Crude capture methods often result in elephant deaths. Efforts are being made not only to improve safety, but also to encourage captive breeding rather than taking from the wild. With nearly 30 percent of the remaining Asian elephants in captivity, attention needs to be paid to improve care and targeted breeding programs.

The main threat facing Indian elephants, like all Asian elephants is loss of habitat, which then results in human-elephant conflict. In South Asia, an ever-increasing human population has led to many illegal encroachments in elephant habitat. Many infrastructure developments like roads and railway tracks also fragment habitat. Elephants become confined to "islands" as their ancient migratory routes are cut off. Unable to mix with other herds, they run the risk of inbreeding.

The Orangutan

The name orangutan means "man of the forest" in the Malay language. In the lowland forests in which they reside, orangutans live solitary existences. They feast on wild fruits like lychees, mangosteens, and figs, and slurp water from holes in trees. They make nests in trees of vegetation to sleep at night and rest during the day. Adult male orangutans can weigh up to 200 pounds. Flanged males have prominent cheek pads called flanges and a throat sac used to make loud verbalizations called long calls. An unflanged male looks like an adult female. In a biological phenomenon unique among primates, an unflanged male can change to a flanged male for reasons that are not yet fully understood.

Bornean and Sumatran orangutans differ a little in appearance and behavior. While both have shaggy reddish fur, Sumatran orangutans have longer facial hair. Sumatran orangutans are reported to have closer social bonds than their Bornean cousins. Bornean orangutans are more likely to descend from the trees to move around on the ground. Both species have experienced sharp population declines. A century ago there were probably more than 230,000 orangutans in total, but the Bornean orangutan is now estimated at about 104,700 based on updated geographic range (Endangered) and the Sumatran about 7,500 (Critically Endangered).

A third species of orangutan was announced in November 2017. With no more than 800 individuals, the Tapanuli orangutan is the most endangered of all great apes with no more than 800 individuals in existence.

A new great ape species—the **Tapanuli orangutan**—was officially announced by an international team of scientists today. With no more than 800 individuals, the Tapanuli orangutan is the most endangered of all great apes.

Status
Critically Endangered
Population
about 104,700 (Bornean), 14,613 (Sumatran), 800 (Tapanuli)
Scientific Name
<i>Pongo abelii</i> , <i>Pongo pygmaeus</i>
Weight
up to 200 pounds

Orangutans are "gardeners" of the forest, playing a vital role in seed dispersal in their habitats. They live in tropical forests and prefer forest in river valleys and floodplains of their respective islands. Orangutans' extremely low reproductive rate makes their populations highly vulnerable. Females give birth to one infant at a time about every 3-5 years, so these species can take a long time to recover from population declines. With human pressure only increasing, orangutans face an increasing risk of extinction.

📊 **Population** about 104,700 (Bornean), 14,613 (Sumatran), 800 (Tapanuli)

Extinction Risk Critically Endangered

Orangutans are an easy target for hunters because they're large and slow targets. They are killed for food or in retaliation when they move into agricultural areas and destroy crops. This usually occurs when orangutans can't find the food they need in the forest.

The Arctic Fox

The Arctic fox is primarily a carnivore that lives inland, away from the coasts. They are dependent on the presence of smaller animals (most often lemmings) to survive. Arctic foxes also hunt for sea birds, fish, and other marine life. Smaller rodent populations waver between times of abundance and scarcity, which leaves the Arctic fox vulnerable when these creatures are low in numbers.

The protection of the Arctic fox ensures the safety of a variety of other wildlife in the Arctic region.

Population Several hundred thousand

Extinction Risk Least Concern

Status
Least Concern
Population
Several hundred thousand
Scientific Name
<i>Vulpes lagopus</i>
Height
11 inches
Weight
3 to 20 pounds
Length
18 to 27 inches
Habitats
Tundra

The Arctic fox was impacted tremendously by the fur trade because of its extremely high quality pelt. It's still hunted now for its fur, particularly by native populations who live in close proximity to them. The fur trade has decreased dramatically and the Arctic fox is not as vulnerable to overexploitation as it once was. The Arctic fox was impacted tremendously by the fur trade because of its extremely high quality pelt. It's still hunted now for its fur, particularly by native populations who live in close proximity to them. The fur trade has decreased dramatically and the Arctic fox is not as vulnerable to overexploitation as it once