

# Extinction

one million species of plants and animals were at risk of extinction

## Extinction:

A species becomes extinct when there are no more living members of that species.

## Conservation:

An act of protecting ecosystems and environments to prevent species from going extinct.

### Extinct

**EX**

**The dodo** was a flightless bird found on the island of Mauritius. It became extinct in the 17th century because of human activities. The dodo was slow and was incredibly easy to catch due to the fact it had no fear of humans. They were not only hunted by the soldiers but the dodo eggs were hunted by the pigs, dogs and rats that the soldiers brought to the island.

**Saint Helena Olive tree** disappeared from the wild in 1994 and became extinct in 2003 when the cultivated seedlings and cuttings succumbed to fungal infections.

### Extinct in wild

**EW**

**The northern white rhino** is critically endangered and extinct in wild. There are only two females of this subspecies have remained and both are in captivity. After the last male northern white rhino died, the only females aren't capable of breeding. Their near extinction was caused by decades of poaching for rhino horn.

They live in Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya and are protected by armed guards twenty-four hours a day. Scientists are trying to produce more embryos to save this subspecies.



Threatened

**CR**

Hawksbill sea turtle, Sumatran rhinoceros

**EN**

Brown spider monkey, Siamese crocodile

**VU**

Nilgiri Marten, Nicobar Flying Fox

**NT**

### Near threatened

Gentoo Penguin, European Otter

**LC**

### Least concern

Poison Dart Frog, Snowy Owl

## Causes of extinction:

- **loss of habitat** (conversion of native plant habitat to cities, farms, roads; Human settlement has also changed plant habitats through fire suppression, introduction of aggressive weeds, and natural resource extraction)
- **climate change** (e.g. as temperatures get warmer, the loss of sea ice affects polar bears' ability to find food)
- **a new disease**
- **hunting and fishing** (illegal poaching caused many species declined suddenly)
- **a new predator**
- **spread of invasive species** (the non-native species use resources that the other species depend on. Once the competition gets too great, the fittest species will survive, others will die out)
- **Pollution** (e.g. fish, frogs, marine mammals, and many invertebrates are affected by water pollution. The water is polluted by run-off of fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other chemicals)

**Natural factors usually occur at a slower rate than human factors and therefore cause a lower extinction rate. Human activities occur at a faster rate and cause higher extinction rates.**

## What can you do?

- avoid buying products that are harmful to the environment.
- do not buy products made from endangered species, products made from things like ivory, tortoise shell and coral.
- buy local food
- recycle and buy sustainable products
- volunteer at a local wildlife refuge
- vote for political candidates who support the environment
- join an organisation and help to raise public awareness

## Conservation

### Captive breeding

a process of breeding rare or endangered species in human controlled environments with restricted settings, such as wildlife reserves, zoos, and other conservation facilities.

### Private farming

Keeping the endangered animal secure away from poaching. It has increased the populations of some species.

## organisation

**IFAW(International Fund for Animal Welfare)** works across the globe to save and rescue individual animals, reduce human-wildlife conflict and preserve essential and important wildlife habitats. **WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature)** has made a huge impact to endangered species on the planet and is constantly developing policies and programs to impact global habitats and wildlife positively.