

Name _____

Threatened, Endangered, Extinct



There are no dinosaurs alive today. There are no mastodons or saber-toothed cats. These animals are extinct. Extinct means that none of these animals are still alive. These animals died out of natural causes. They couldn't find enough food, the climate changed, or they were eaten by predators.

Some characteristics make some species more likely to become extinct. Animals that have few babies have a harder time surviving than other animals that have many babies. The same is true of animals whose babies take a long time to grow up. Animals that eat only one kind of food are in danger if that food is scarce.

Not long ago only natural causes made animal species die out. Now many species are in danger because of the way people behave. One of the most serious problems people make for animals is the destruction of their homes and habitats. More and more people need more and more food and other things. They build farms and cities where wild animals used to live. The animals have less and less natural habitat.

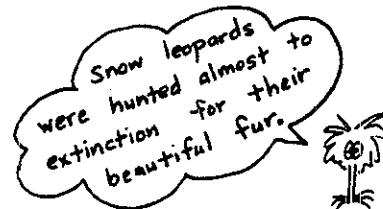
People also hunt and catch wild animals for many uses. Animals are killed for food, trophies, or simply for fun. Many animals are killed for their fur. Some are killed for their teeth or horns. Animals are trapped for pets, zoos, and private collectors. Many animals die for every live one taken from the wild. Wild animals also have to compete with domestic animals for food.

Many animal species are losing the battle for survival. Some—like the American black bear, the red kangaroo, and the desert tortoise—are threatened. Threatened means that if their populations get any smaller, these species will be in danger of becoming extinct. The Asian elephant, the humpback whale, and the orangutan are endangered. Endangered means that they are so rare that they need help if they are to survive.

Many people are working to save the endangered animals. In 1941 there were only 23 whooping cranes in the world. Zoologists began raising whooping crane chicks. The crane's habitat was protected. Today there are more than 200 whooping cranes. They are coming back from the very edge of extinction. Other species can be saved as well.



Use this article to help you complete the next page.



Name _____

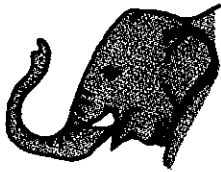
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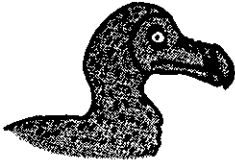
Tell what each of these words mean. Use as much detail as you can.



THREATENED: _____



ENDANGERED: _____



EXTINCT: _____



What are some of the reasons that animal species are becoming extinct? _____



Tell how people can help animals that are threatened or endangered. If you need more space, use the back of this sheet. _____

