# Where Did All of Our Animals Go?



Scientists from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) study animals and plants all around the world. They report that 935 species are already extinct, 81 species are extinct in the wild, and more than 48,600 species are threatened with extinction.

As the human population grows and the climate changes, many animals are losing their natural homes. Forests are cut down, land is built on, and weather patterns change. When animals cannot find food, water, or safe places to live, they may become endangered or disappear forever.

Animals play an important role in keeping ecosystems healthy. They help plants grow, spread seeds, and keep food chains in balance. Ecosystems provide people with food, clean air, medicine, and healthy soil. When animals disappear, ecosystems change, and that can affect humans, too.

Zoos help protect animals and teach people how to care for wildlife. But zoo visitors need clear, kid-friendly information to understand why animals are disappearing and how people can help.

If scientists warn us that animals are at risk, what responsibility do we have? How can you and your friends help a local zoo educate visitors about why animals are disappearing and what people can do to protect them?

You will research an endangered animal and find out why it is at risk. You will collaborate with your classmates to create educational materials for visitors to a local zoo, such as signs, mini-guides, or fact cards. Your goal is to help zoo visitors learn about endangered animals and encourage them to take action to help preserve our planet.



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## Where Did All of Our Animals Go? *Rubric*

| | **Novice** | **Apprentice** | ***Practitioner*** | **Expert** |
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| **Animal Research** | skims through 2–3 sources and takes notes to share:<br>○ the species of endangered animal<br>○ characteristics of the endangered animal<br>○ reasons the animal is important to human beings | reads 2–3 credible sources to note:<br>○ the species and characteristics of endangered animal<br>○ the animal's biome<br>○ the animal's position on the food chain or web<br>○ ways that the animal species helps human beings | reads and explains credible sources to show:<br>○ the species and characteristics of the endangered animal<br>○ features of the animal's adaptations<br>○ the specific location of the animal's biome<br>○ the animal's position on the food chain<br>○ the animal's position on the food web<br>○ how the animal's presence in the ecosystem supports human beings<br>○ how the animals extinction from the ecosystem would affect human beings | all of *Practitioner* plus: explains how nonfiction text features helped in the research and fact collection process |
| **Animal Extinction Research** | skims through 2–3 sources to:<br>○ list the major causes/threats of decline in animal population<br>○ define indirect and direct destruction<br>○ list changes in adaptations as a result of change of habitat | reads 2–3 credible sources and takes notes describing:<br>○ major causes/threats of decline in animal population<br>○ indirect and direct destruction<br>○ type of destruction that has caused changes in habitat<br>○ changes in adaptations as a result of change of habitat | reads and explains credible sources to explain:<br>○ reasons for major causes/threats of decline in animal population<br>○ indirect and direct destruction<br>○ type of destruction occurring in animal's habitat<br>○ how destruction is affecting the habitat and animals<br>○ changes in adaptations as a result of change of habitat | all of *Practitioner* plus: explanation of other animals affected by both types of destruction |



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| **Extinction Prevention Plan** | skims through 2–3 sources and graphed data to tell how humans can keep this animal species alive | reads and creates notes and from 2–3 sources to show:<br>○ what people can tell one another about saving an animal species<br>○ what people can do to save an animal species<br>○ ways people can raise money to save an animal species | cites 2–3 sources to explain:<br>○ the main idea behind animal conservation efforts<br>○ advice for saving an animal species<br>○ specific actions people can participate in to save an animal species<br>○ ways people can contribute to animal conservation funds | all of *Practitioner* plus: explains how saving one animal affects the lives of other plants/animals in the ecosystem |
| **Educational Resource** | visual representation shows:<br>○ what endangered animal you are trying to save<br>○ why this animal should be saved<br>○ pictures that help the viewer understand what animal you want to save | visual representation shares:<br>○ an opinion about saving an endangered species of animals<br>○ pictures, captions, textboxes, maps, and graphs that support your opinion<br>○ citations to show where the information was found | visual representation illustrates:<br>○ information about the endangered species<br>○ an opinion statement about the importance of saving the endangered species<br>○ extinction prevention plan including facts that support the opinion<br>○ pictures and captions that support the opinion and relate to the endangered species or extinction prevention plan<br>○ maps that support the opinion and provide viewers' information about the extinction prevention plan<br>○ citations to show where information was found | all of *Practitioner* plus: creates a digital presentation and attaches a cover letter to share with peers and/or the community |



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# Where Did All the Animals Go? *Scaffold for Learning*

**Benchmark Video and Discussions**
- Threats, Destruction, and Extinction
- Habitats
- Conservation

**Instructional Activities: Learning**

**Instructional Activities: Additional**

| Instructional Texts (I/P) | Instructional Videos (I) | How-to Sheets (I) | Practice (I) |
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| • Nonfiction texts on extinct or endangered animals<br>• Fiction texts on extinct or endangered animals<br>• Animal profiles<br>• Local zoo<br>• Conservation | • Making a Food Web<br>• Citing Credible Sources (IV)<br>• Facts vs. Opinions<br>• Ask and Answer Questions Using an Informational Text<br>• Compare and Contrast | • Making a Food Web<br>• Identify Features of a Nonfiction Text<br>• Identifying a Credible Source<br>• Find the Main Idea<br>• Identify Key Details in an Informational Text | • Asking and Answering Questions About an Informational Text<br>• Using Text Features to Locate Information<br>• Interpreting Images to Support Understanding of a Text |
| | | | **Application**<br>• Research an endangered animal (I/P)<br>• Cause-and-effects of animal endangerment (I)<br>• Comparing information across two texts (I)<br>• Creating educational materials (P/SG) |
| **Interactive Websites (I/HW)** | **Learning Centers (P/SG)** | **Small-Group Mini-Lessons (SG)** | **Assessment (I)** |
| • World Wildlife Organization<br>• Icunredlist.org<br>• Flocabulary<br>• National Geographic<br>• Discovery Education | • Matching Animals to Habitats<br>• Food Chain Game<br>• Facts vs. Opinions<br>• Ask and Answer Questions Using an Informational Text<br>• Identify Key Details in an Informational Text | • Citing Credible Sources<br>• Writing an Introduction in an Informative Essay<br>• Writing a Conclusion in an Informative Essay<br>• Ask and Answer Questions Using an Informational Text | • Rubric self-assessment<br>• Difference between facts and opinions<br>• Check for understanding: Key details |
| | | | **Reflection**<br>• What was challenging about this unit? (I)<br>• How did my work help others to understand how to protect animals? (I)<br>• Group reflection on collaboration (SG) |

**Key**: Individual **(I)**, Pairs **(P)**, Small Groups **(SG)**, Activities suitable for homework **(HW)**, Insights Video **(IV)**



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## **Where Did All of Our Animals Go?** *Content Facilitation Grid*

| Student | Identifies the different animal groups | Recognizes groups to which specific animals belong | Recognizes the different habitats in which different animals live | Defines *extinction* | Explains what regions are | Identifies the different regions where habitats are found | Defines *extinction* and which animals are endangered | Explains the different causes and threats to animals and their habitats | Explains the causes and effects of extinction | Describes the type of destruction that causes changes in habitats | Defines direct and indirect destruction | Identifies features of a nonfiction text | Introduces topic of book | States opinion with reasons using linking words | Uses facts and definitions to develop points | Provides a concluding sentence | Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage | Demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling |
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## **Where Did All of Our Animals Go?** *Content Facilitation Questions*

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| **COMPREHENSION**: *Ask questions that ensure students understand content and skills needed to solve the problem.* | • What do animals need to survive?<br>• What is extinction?<br>• What is direct and indirect destruction?<br>• What are some causes and threats to the wildlife?<br>• What role do animals play in keeping ecosystems healthy, and why does this matter to people?<br>• Why are some animals losing their habitats? |
| **APPLICATION**: *Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to new situations.* | • How do you think people would respond to your idea of protecting wildlife?<br>• What can a person do if they see an animal in danger of being harmed?<br>• What are the reasons that this issue has become a major problem?<br>• If a zoo visitor has never heard the word *endangered*, how would you explain it using your own words and an example?<br>• How would you choose the most important facts to include in your materials? |
| **CONNECTION**: *Ask questions that ensure the ability of students to apply learning to their lives.* | • How would humans be affected by the decline of the wildlife population?<br>• How does this issue affect you personally?<br>• Where have you seen animals living near people in your community, and how do our actions affect them?<br>• What is one thing you or your friends do that helps protect animals or the environment?<br>• Why do you think it matters that kids learn about protecting animals, not just adults? |
| **SYNTHESIS**: *Ask questions that encourage students to create new information from existing data.* | • What predictions can you make if this issue does not change over the next 20 years?<br>• How can we create a society that prevents animals from becoming extinct?<br>• How can raising awareness about the extinction of animals encourage people or the government to take action?<br>• What would you do or say to someone who was threatening or harming an animal or its habitat?<br>• What are some ways people can get involved to prevent this ongoing problem? |
| **METACOGNITION:** *Ask questions that prompt students to think about their own thinking process.* | • What are some other ways we could address this problem?<br>• What were some challenges you faced while doing this task?<br>• If you had to do this all over again, what would you do differently? What would you have done the same?<br>• What did you do when you came to a word or idea you did not understand while reading?<br>• What helped you understand your animal better: the words, pictures, or both? Why? |



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## Where Did All of Our Animals Go? *Teacher Notes*

**Unit Overview**

"Where Did All of Our Animals Go?" is a 3rd-grade science and literacy unit that helps students understand how human behavior and environmental changes impact animals and their habitats. Using real-world data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), students explore why animals become endangered and why protecting ecosystems matters to both wildlife and people.

Throughout the unit, students build informational reading, research, and writing skills by analyzing nonfiction texts, identifying key details and main ideas, interpreting text features and images, and explaining cause-and-effect relationships. Students apply their learning by creating informational materials for visitors at a local zoo, using accurate facts and clear explanations to raise awareness and encourage conservation.

**Common Core State Standards Addressed**

**3rd-Grade ELA:**

- **RI.3.1.** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RI.3.2.** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- **RI.3.3.** Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
- **RI.3.4.** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.
- **RI.3.5.** Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- **RI.3.6.** Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
- **RI.3.7.** Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- **RI.3.9.** Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
- **W.3.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
    - Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
    - Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
    - Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
    - Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **W.3.7.** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
- **W.3.8.** Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

| **Enduring Understandings** | **Essential Questions** |
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| • Humans are part of the global community.<br>• Human actions affect all living species.<br>• Actions have consequences.<br>• Adaptation allows animals to survive.<br>• Facts and figures support an opinion. | • Can actions have unintended consequences?<br>• How do organisms survive in a changing environment?<br>• How do effective writers convince their audience? |

**21st Century Skills Addressed**

**Core Content and Interdisciplinary Themes**

- Subject-Area Mastery
- Global Awareness
- Environmental Literacy

**Learning and Innovation**

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Creativity and Innovation
- Communication and Collaboration

**Information and Media Literacy**

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Information and Communication Technology

**Life and Career**

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility



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