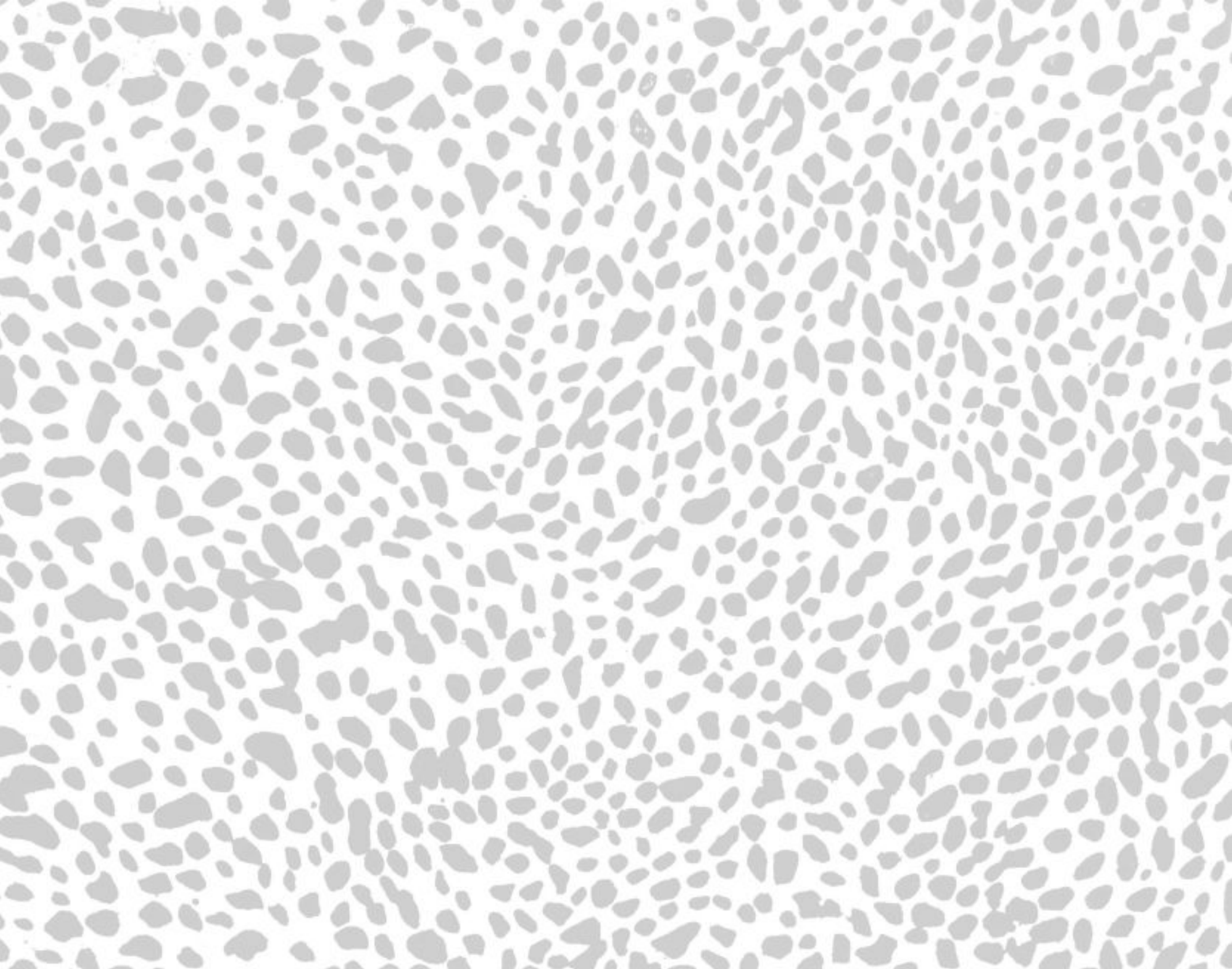


SAVE THE ANIMALS



Written by Robert E. Slavin and Richard Gifford





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Save the Animals

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INTRODUCTION

Do you want to live
in a world where there
are no lions or tigers?
No California condors?

No blue whales?
No chimpanzees?
No rhinos?
No polar bears?

These and thousands
of other **species** are
endangered. That
means that there are

few of them today,
and they could be
gone tomorrow. Once
they are **extinct**, they
cannot be brought back.



Most people understand how important it is to keep species living in the wild. Studying endangered animals helps us understand our environment and how humans affect the world. This book is about

endangered species and how people around the world are trying to **conserve**, or save, them. But it is also about how helping endangered animals to survive may help our own species survive.

POLAR BEAR

CONDOR

CHIMPANZEE



Species Spotlight: Blue Whale

Blue whales are the biggest animals on Earth. In fact, scientists think they are bigger than the biggest dinosaurs.

Blue whales grow to be more than 100 feet long and weigh more than 200 tons. Their hearts alone can weigh more than a car.

These huge mammals are found in all the oceans of the globe.

They swim alone, in pairs, and sometimes in small groups. They may live to be more than 100 years old.

Blue whales are noisy animals. They make vocalizations or sounds that scientists believe can be heard by other whales hundreds of miles away. These sounds may be used for communication.





Like bats, blue whales may also use sound to **navigate** in deep, dark ocean waters.

Blue whales were almost hunted to extinction in the 1900s. More than 300,000 whales were killed for their oil. They are also hurt or killed by collisions with ships, getting

tangled in fishing gear, and pollution.

In 1966, hunting blue whales was banned by international law. Since then, researchers think that the blue whale population has made a small comeback. Today it is estimated that between 10,000 and 25,000 blue whales still survive.



WHY ARE SPECIES ENDANGERED?

All endangered species have been on Earth for millions of years, so why are they endangered today?

Hunting and Fishing

Some species are endangered, or have become extinct, due to overhunting or fishing. One example is the passenger pigeon.

When Europeans first came to America, there were billions of passenger pigeons. They were cheap food because there were so many, and they were so easy to catch or shoot. In the 1800s, you could buy a passenger pigeon to eat for two cents. Hunters killed every passenger pigeon in America. The last one on Earth died in a zoo in 1914.





ELEPHANT

Hunting is also a problem in Africa. In most countries, it is against the law to hunt endangered animals.

However, **poachers** kill many animals. For example, elephants are killed for their ivory tusks, and rhinos are hunted for their horns.



RHINO



Many kinds of fish that were once common have been fished to near extinction. For example, caviar (salted sturgeon eggs) is a very expensive food. In the Caspian Sea, these fish are almost

extinct as a result of overfishing and pollution. Atlantic bluefin tuna are also in trouble. It is estimated that the bluefin tuna population has declined by nearly 90 percent since the 1970s.



STURGEON



BLUEFIN TUNA



Species Spotlight: Siberian Tiger

The Siberian Tiger is the largest tiger in the world. It lives in the mountains of Russia. These tigers used to live in China and Korea as well, but they are now extinct there.

Poaching and the loss of habitat have reduced the number of Siberian tigers to around 350. The fur from these tigers is so valuable that poaching continues, even though it is illegal.



Loss of Habitat

An animal's home is called its **habitat**.

A habitat includes all the things that an animal needs to live. For example, polar bears need to live in the Arctic. They **thrive** in the cold temperatures of this region. The animals that they eat, such as seals, also live there. Most monkeys need to live in a rainforest. They need tall trees and lots of fruit to eat. Alligators and crocodiles need swamps full of fish.

Many animals lose their habitat when people move into the area looking for land. In the Florida Everglades, farmers drained a lot of swamps to use the land for growing crops. This left many alligators, fish, birds, and other animals without homes. Luckily, the state of Florida decided to save the rest of the Everglades. There is still a lot of swamp for the animals that need this habitat. However, there are far fewer animals than there were before.



Humans are also moving into animal habitats in other parts of the world. Some of the animals that live in these habitats are endangered.

Logging is another major cause of habitat loss. In some places, forests are cut down to make way for farms and ranches. In Brazil, more than 200,000 square miles have been cleared to raise crops and cattle. This has done serious damage to the rainforest. Many animals, such as jaguars and spider monkeys, depend on the rainforest. In Africa, people are also cutting down trees to start farms. This has endangered elephants, lions, hippos, and other species.

Trees are also logged to make lumber for building. In Oregon and Wisconsin, forests were cut down to make lumber. This hurt species such as the northern spotted owl. In the 1990s, the U.S. government limited logging in this region to help protect the spotted owl.

Loss of habitat is also a problem in China. It affects pandas and many other animals. Pandas live in a particular kind of mountain habitat. They only eat a specific kind of bamboo. Much of their habitat has been destroyed for farming and human settlement. This has led to the starvation of many pandas.



Jane Goodall: Champion of the Chimpanzees

Jane Goodall is a wildlife **biologist** famous for her study of chimpanzees. However, Goodall doesn't just study chimpanzees. She also works to help them and other animals. Goodall saw that the destruction of African forests was hurting the chimpanzees.

She started working to save their habitat. Goodall began a program to find homes for chimpanzees whose parents had been killed by poachers. She also founded Roots and Shoots. This program works with kids around the world on projects that help animals and the environment.

Goodall's love of chimpanzees began when her father gave her a toy chimpanzee when she was a little girl. She loved the little monkey so much that it still sits on her dresser many years later.



As a young woman, Goodall was hired to study chimpanzees in Africa. She went on to make very important discoveries about these **primates**.

Goodall learned that chimpanzees make tools. They would pick stalks of grass and stick them into termite mounds. Then they would pull out the stalks and eat the termites. The chimpanzees were “fishing” for termites.

Before Goodall, most scientists thought that only humans made or used tools. She also discovered that chimpanzees have many behaviors in common with humans. They hug. They kiss. They even pat each other on the back. Goodall believes that these behaviors show that chimpanzees care for each other like humans do.



Pollution

Pollution is a serious problem for many species. For example, DDT is a chemical pollutant. For many years, it was used to kill insects such as gnats. However, DDT had harmful effects on some bird species as well.

It made their eggshells thinner. This made the eggs easier to break. Even the parents sitting on the eggs could break them. Fewer baby birds hatched. DDT almost caused the extinction of bald eagles, ospreys, and other bird species.

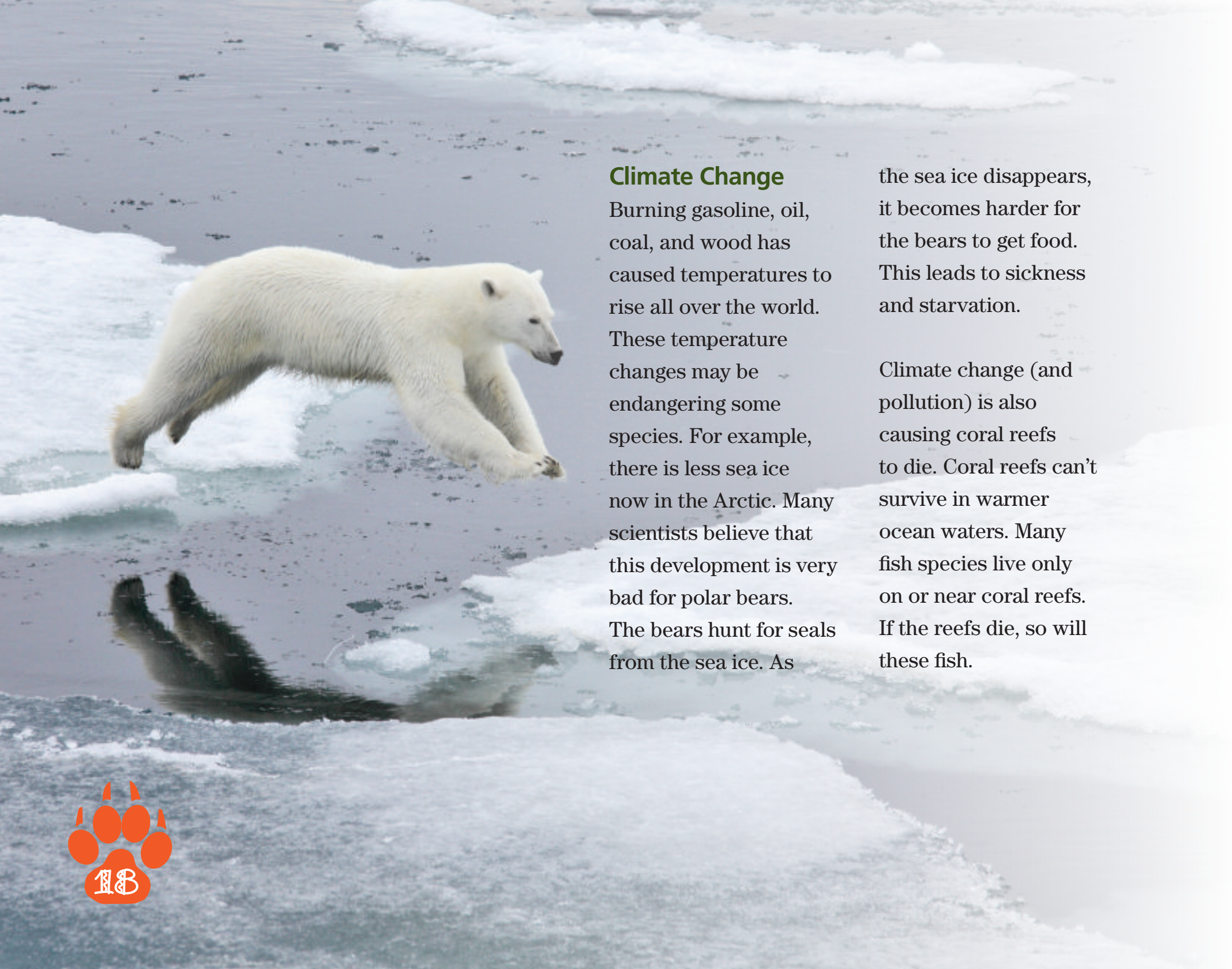
In 1972, DDT was banned in the United States. Since then, these bird populations have started to recover.



Pollution is also very harmful for fish and other sea animals. The Great Lakes used to be full of blue walleye. These fish are now extinct. Scientists believe that pollution is one of the major causes of their extinction. Humans are harmed by the same pollution that harms fish. Poisons, such as mercury, are produced by energy plants that burn coal.

The mercury gets into the ocean and is absorbed by algae. Small fish eat the algae. Larger fish eat the small fish. Mercury stays in these larger fish. Then humans catch the fish and eat them. Over time, mercury can build up in a person's body. If enough mercury builds up, it can cause problems like high blood pressure, weak muscles, and loss of hair and teeth.





Climate Change

Burning gasoline, oil, coal, and wood has caused temperatures to rise all over the world.

These temperature changes may be endangering some species. For example, there is less sea ice now in the Arctic. Many scientists believe that this development is very bad for polar bears.

The bears hunt for seals from the sea ice. As

the sea ice disappears, it becomes harder for the bears to get food. This leads to sickness and starvation.

Climate change (and pollution) is also causing coral reefs to die. Coral reefs can't survive in warmer ocean waters. Many fish species live only on or near coral reefs. If the reefs die, so will these fish.



WHAT ARE PEOPLE DOING TO SAVE ENDANGERED ANIMALS?

People are doing a lot to try to save endangered species. Countries all over the world have passed laws to protect these animals. In most places, it is illegal to hunt or harm them. People are also trying to reduce pollution. A cleaner environment is good for all animals, including humans.

Many countries have set aside parks or reserves to protect animals and

their habitats. In the United States, there are many national wildlife refuges. California has several refuges specifically for the California condor. Uganda has a special park to protect gorillas. Costa Rica has many wildlife parks that protect the rainforest. These parks are home to monkeys, birds, lizards, and other animals.



Species Spotlight: California Condor

Thousands of years ago, California condors could be found all across North America, from coast to coast. Indians in the western states considered condors sacred. They are also the largest flying birds in North America.

They can grow more than four feet tall, their wingspan can be ten feet wide. In the wild, condors sometimes live to be more than fifty years old.

Condors are a type of vulture. They are scavengers, which means that they eat animals that have already died. Condors usually eat large mammals, such as dead cows and deer.



The California condor came very close to extinction in the 1970s. At this time, there were only around 30 of these birds still alive. The exact causes of this decline are still not known. Scientists believe there were probably multiple reasons.

Condors suffered from poaching and loss of habitat. Like other birds, they were also harmed by DDT. Baby condors often die from eating trash fed to them by their parents.

Many condors are also killed when they fly into power lines. These birds don't lay very many eggs. This makes it hard for condors to increase their numbers.



When the number of condors dropped to a few dozen, scientists decided an emergency rescue plan was needed. Every wild condor was captured. Then scientists began

to breed them. In the wild, condors usually only lay one egg every two years. However, scientists found that if they removed the egg, the mother condor would often

lay another one. In this way, scientists doubled the number of eggs being produced and increased the number of hatchlings. The chick that hatches

from the egg that the scientists removed is raised and fed with hand puppets that look like adult condors.



After the number of condors grew, scientists began to release them back into the wild. The condor population slowly grew.

Today there are about 220 condors living in the wild. However, the California condor is still one of the rarest birds in the world.



It is important for people to protect endangered species. Governments are showing people how helping animals helps them. Some countries set up trips for **tourists** to visit exciting animals and beautiful places. Tourists then understand the importance of the animals, and the local

people make money as drivers and guides for the visitors. The local people no longer have to earn money by killing the animals. These trips also make more people aware of the problem. This is called **ecotourism**. When the ecotourists go home, they are more likely to help the animals that they've seen.

Gorillas and Tourists

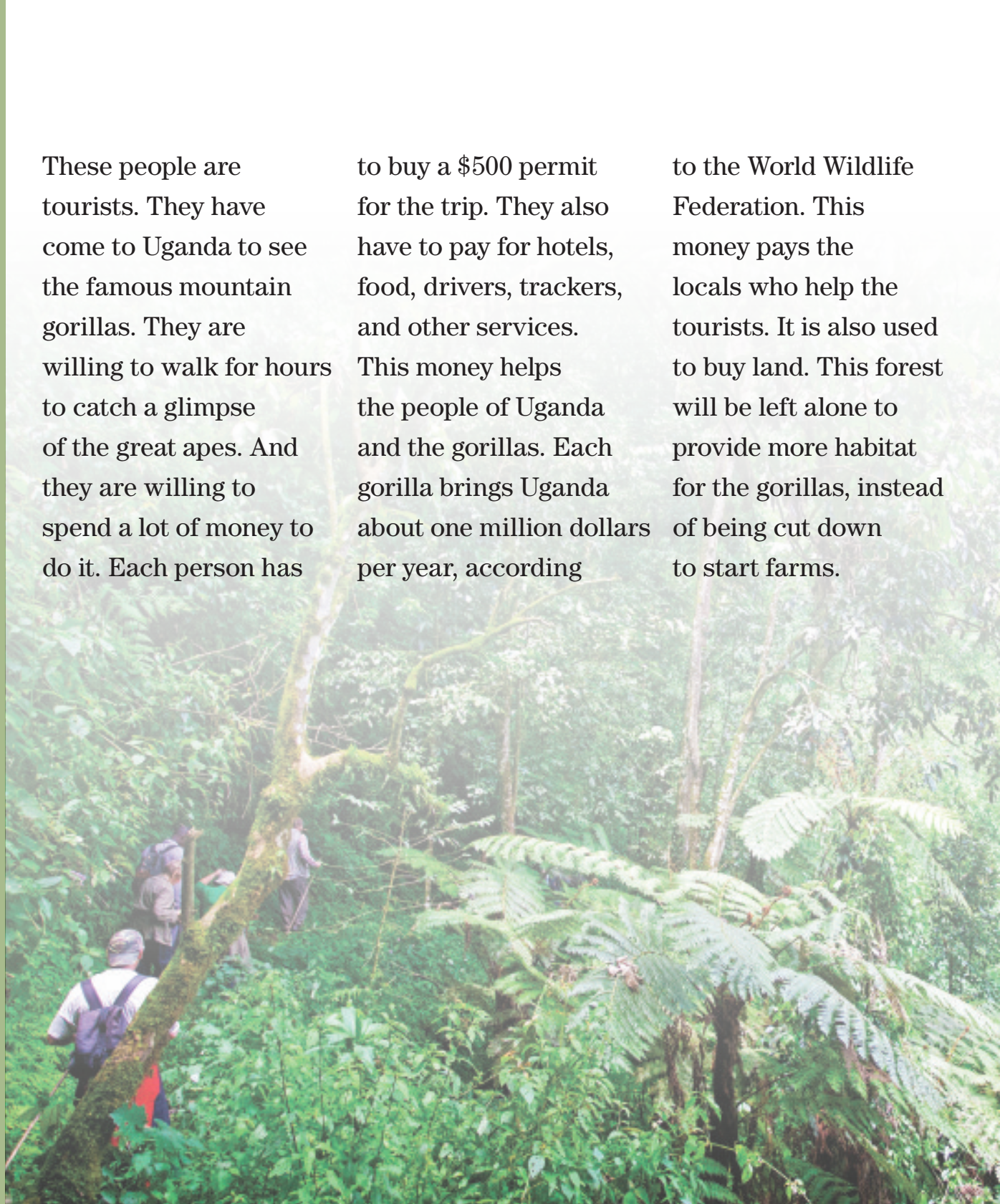
The early morning mist still clings to the hills as the group begins their journey. For the next several hours, they trek through thick forests. They walk along slippery paths. Sweat soaks their clothes as the heat rises with the sun. Does this sound like a vacation?

These people are tourists. They have come to Uganda to see the famous mountain gorillas. They are willing to walk for hours to catch a glimpse of the great apes. And they are willing to spend a lot of money to do it. Each person has

to buy a \$500 permit for the trip. They also have to pay for hotels, food, drivers, trackers, and other services.

This money helps the people of Uganda and the gorillas. Each gorilla brings Uganda about one million dollars per year, according

to the World Wildlife Federation. This money pays the locals who help the tourists. It is also used to buy land. This forest will be left alone to provide more habitat for the gorillas, instead of being cut down to start farms.





A huge gorilla rests on his back in the sun. He is eating ginger and ignoring the clicking noise that comes from the small group of strange hairless apes off in the distance.

He knows nothing of the high price they have paid for the privilege of taking his picture. He just knows it's good to lie in the sun and eat ginger.



WHAT CONSERVATION MEANS FOR HUMANS

Conservation of endangered species is important because we care about animals. It is also important because we care about people.

Many of the things that harm animals also harm humans. The same chemicals that poison animals

also poison us. Polluted air is bad for both animals and humans. Dirty water makes fish and people sick. Climate change leads to flooding, loss of habitat, and crop damage. Humans and animals are hurt by these changes to the environment.





Protecting the environment is one of the best ways to protect animals and humans. Trees **absorb** the **carbon dioxide** that is made by burning fuels, so the more trees, the better. This will make our air cleaner. If you want to help, research local organizations that plant trees in your area. A good place to start is **www.arbordaynow.org**.

Limiting construction around streams, rivers, lakes, and oceans also helps. When grass, trees, bushes, and other plants grow near bodies of water, they act as filters. Polluted water gets cleaned as it flows through the dirt that these plants grow in. By the time the water reaches a river, lake, or ocean, it is much cleaner.



Using less energy and producing less trash is also good for animals and people. When we use less energy, fewer fuels like oil and coal need to be burned. When we produce less trash, fewer animals are harmed by eating it or getting

caught in it. Recycle and conserve energy by turning off lights, games, televisions, and other electronic appliances when you're not using them.

If we want to protect animals and people, we have to protect the earth!

Species Spotlight: Pandas

Everyone loves giant pandas. Yet they are still endangered in the mountains where they live in China. Farmers and loggers have cleared many of the areas where pandas once lived. Their remaining habitat is now protected, and scientists think that there are about 1,600 pandas in the wild, plus 266 in zoos.





WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SAVE ANIMALS?

1 The best thing you can do to help save endangered species is to learn about them. Visit zoos, nature parks, and aquariums, and ask a lot of questions. Read books, and look on websites. Then you'll know what you're talking about when you say that conservation is important.

Check www.aza.org to find a zoo near you, www.nps.gov for parks, and www.fws.gov/refuges for wildlife refuges.

2 Many zoos have summer volunteer or education programs for kids to learn about animals. See if a zoo near you has such a program, and see if you can participate.

3 You can help make your own home wildlife friendly. If birds run into your windows, put decals on them.

4 Avoid pesticides in your family's garden and lawn. For alternatives to pesticides, see www.beyondpesticides.org.

5 Avoid products made from endangered species, such as tortoise shells, ivory, and coral.



6 Join a conservation organization.

8 Take all trash home with you from the beach, lake, or river.

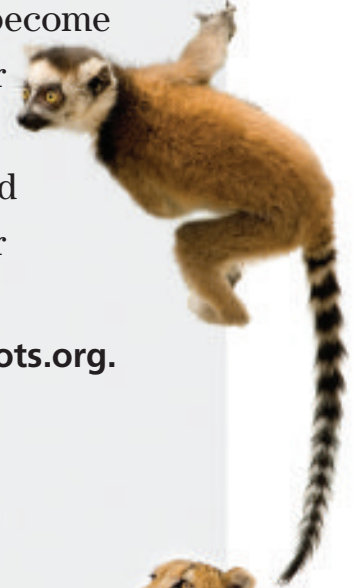
10 You can become a member of Jane

7 If you live near water, never throw anything in the water that might harm sea animals. This includes anything made from plastic, which animals may swallow, or fishing line or hooks.

9 Endangered Species Day is held on the third Friday in May.

Goodall's Roots and Shoots program for young people at www.rootsandshoots.org.

You can go to events in your area to learn more about endangered species. Check out www.fws.gov/endangered/index.html.





GLOSSARY



absorb: To soak up.

biologist: Person who studies living things.

carbon dioxide: Colorless, odorless gas in Earth's atmosphere.

conserve: To protect something.

ecotourism: Tourism that attempts to help the environment and animals.

endangered: To be at risk.

extinct: No longer living.

habitat: Area in which an animal or plant naturally lives.

logging: Cutting down trees.

navigate: To find a route through a place.

poachers: People who hunt illegally.

primates: Species of mammal with a large brain and complex hands and feet.

species: Group of animals with the same characteristics.

thrive: Grow and live well.

tourists: People who travel for fun.



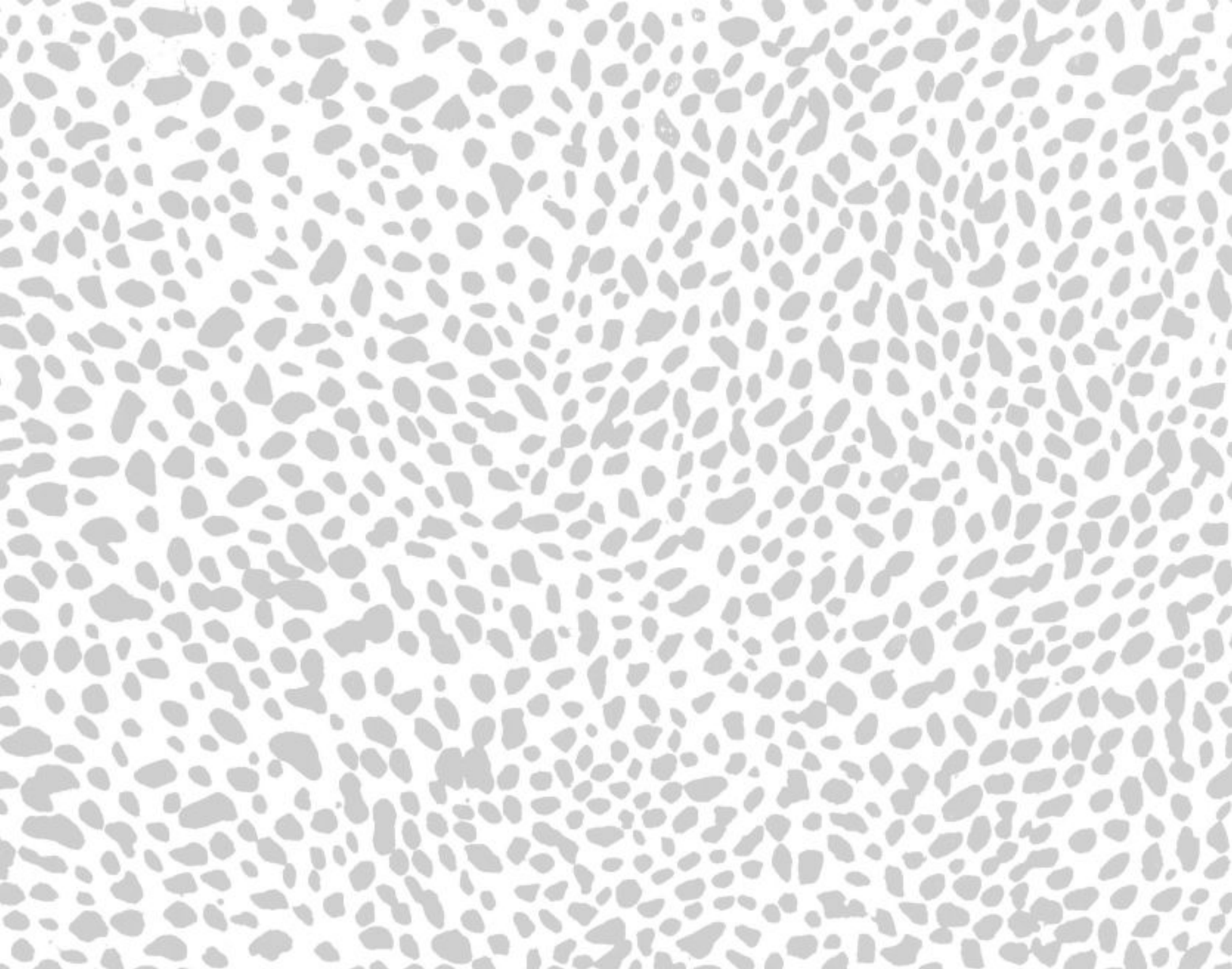


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