**Endangered species**

An **endangered species** is a population of organisms which is at risk of becoming [extinct](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinct) because it is either few in numbers, or threatened by changing environmental or predation parameters. This means that once they become extinct, they will never be seen on Earth again. Many animals and plants become endangered or extinct each year. Recently, however, the rate of them dying out increased dramatically. It is estimated that 27,000 species become extinct each year, about 3 an hour. Since 1996, scientists calculated that 124 types of amphibians, 1,108 types of birds, 734 types of fish, 1,096 types of mammals, and 253 types of reptiles became endangered. This statistics also apply to plants.

There are many reasons that can cause a species of animals or plants to become endangered, or even extinct. First of all, the human population has exploded since the last few decades. To accommodate the oversized human population more and more lands are taken away from these animals or plants. The natural habitats are snatched away from these species, leaving them only a small portion of the land, which they once roamed freely. With the little amount of land, the food source become scarce. They have to fight among themselves in order to remain alive. Sometimes animals or plants do not adapt to the limited space they now have, and die.

The [Siberian Tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberian_Tiger) is a subspecies of tiger that is critically endangered; three [subspecies of tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger#Subspecies) are already extinct



Animals and plants also become endangered because of the chemicals people use. When people use pesticides to kill off insects and other pests, they are also endangering the lives of other species around them. These chemicals may get into the river or other water sources. Fish live in the water. They consume it. Then when birds come along and prey on them, these birds are also contaminated with the dangerous chemicals. The eagle also experienced this deadly scenario. DDT, a type of pesticide, caused the eggshells to become fragile. When the female tries to incubate, sits on them, the shells just collapse. The population of eagles had gone down rapidly with the use of DDT. When scientists and environmentalists learn of this danger, they quickly ban the use of DDT. Now the eagle population is rebuilding.

Hunting and trading are other reasons that threaten the lives of many innocent living creatures on Earth. Thousands of years, people kill animals or plants just for the fun of it, or for trading. Many of them do it illegally, or poaching. People kill animals for their fur, oil, body parts, and many other things. The tiger has been overly hunted for its bone because some people think that the bone has some magical healing power. Now the worldwide population of tiger is not doing so well. Some exotic birds are dying out because of trading. They get shipped around the world. While they are being sent, some die. Others do not adjust to the new environment and also die.

[Philippine Eagle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine_Eagle)



Lastly, pollution is another huge factor causing these animals or plants to become endangered. By dirtying our environment, we do not only hurt ourselves, but other living creatures around us. They too need a clean habitat to survive. By innocently eating our garbage they might get poisoned or choked to death. Many incidences have been reported where birds got choked or entangled in plastic bags. Fish and birds get entangled in our fishing lines and die. Toxic waste in the water system also has caused a large number of fish to die out. By polluting our planet, other innocent creatures also suffer.

Luckily, there is still hope. You can help to keep these creatures alive and protect them from being endangered. First of all, try not to waste natural resources. Recycle, if you can, your garbage. By recycling, you are helping to save many trees from being cut down for paper. These trees then can remain homes for many animals and plants in the wild. Do not pollute the environment. Keep your neighborhood clean. This can prevent any accidental death of animals or plants. Do not buy anything like leather belt, fur coat, or any other products that come from animals. By buying these products you are supporting the hunters, manufacturers, and the idea of killing animals. If you can, contribute to organizations that help to protect wildlife. This is very important. With your contributions conservationists can get the necessary equipment and things to help save these animals and plants. Last, and the most important, learn about these creatures. Create an interest in them because they are so wonderful and you can get involved to save them. With your help, these creatures do not have to become endangered, or even extinct.



The most endangered asiatic top predator, the [dhole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhole) is on the edge of extinction

http://library.thinkquest.org/19689/data/esframe.html