

## Endangerment and Extinction

### Man's favourite

Humanity is a species cursed with intelligence. As a species part of the animal kingdom ourselves we don't seem to respect our bond with nature but rather abuse it and destroy it. It has been confirmed that humanity has driven 777 species to extinction but in reality, this number can be as high as 130,000 to 260,000 species extinct and a total of 30,000 species per year or 3 species per hour. We have completely broken our bond with nature and are so focused on moving forward technologically that we have forgotten the roots through which we came from. Issues such as overhunting, pollution, habitat loss, climate change etc don't make the situation better and if we don't do something now then there might be no saving at all.



Figure 1: Hunter killing an elephant in Africa

Source: <https://static.independent.co.uk/s3fs-public/thumbnails/image/2016/08/20/15/elephant-deadian-evans-ian-.jpg>

Poaching/Overhunting is a very big problem that is leading to mass extinction, this process has caused animals such as the Dodo, Caribbean monk seal and the passenger pigeon to go extinct. On the other hand, animals like Elephants, Siberian tigers and Rhinos are endangered due to

this. These are all endangered or extinct due to different means of overhunting. Animals like Elephants, rhinos and the Siberian tiger are all on this list due to high demand for their fur, tusks and horns which are used for medicines or jewellery. Animals like the passenger pigeon were once one of the most common birds in America but were driven to extinction due to the fact that people viewed them as pests, a creature which once had a population of over 3 billion was driven to extinction for good. The Dodo and the Caribbean monk seal were all driven to extinction due to a high demand for their meat which was a common source of food.

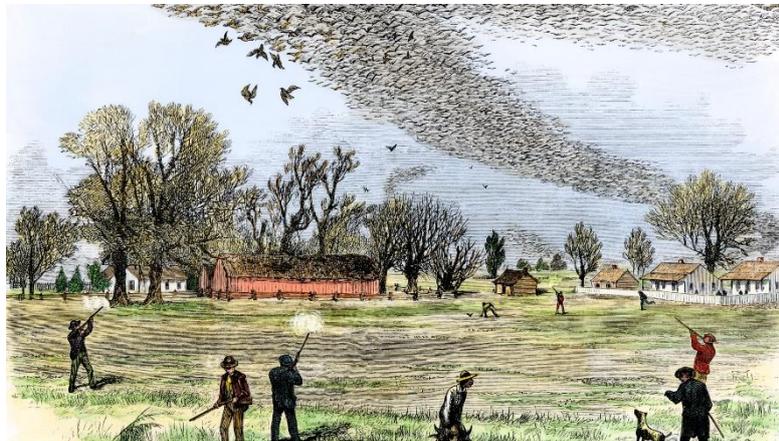


Figure 2: Shooting of the passenger pigeon

Source: [https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRAXQfRzV2F4\\_7o0IN6uTcrGyAqcqfbD7qoDg&s](https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRAXQfRzV2F4_7o0IN6uTcrGyAqcqfbD7qoDg&s)

Pollution, the poster child of endangerment is a process that if not stopped soon it will increase and get worse. Animals like whales, sea turtles, seabirds, seals and polar birds have all become victims of pollution. They are on this list because of littering, for example, polar bears and turtles by mistake are eating non-appropriate food that is killing them slowly. Animals like seabirds and whales are on this list due to oil spills which can not only make it hard for birds to fly but also cover the blowhole of whales causing them to suffocate. Finally, animals like seals, seabirds, sea turtles

get plastic stuck on them which can make it hard for them to breathe which apart from suffocation can also cause defects.



Figure 4: a turtle with a deformed shell

Source: [https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSwwP55cSOYLp2IJB2TXUM4B9IYF1c3Yn\\_KPg&s](https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSwwP55cSOYLp2IJB2TXUM4B9IYF1c3Yn_KPg&s)

Figure 5: polar bear scavenging in plastic and a pelican covered in oil

Source: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/article.53240/full/sn-seabirdsh-1644954231940.jpg> and <https://static.tnn.in/thumb/msid-93024356,thumbsize-171784,width-1280,height-720,resizemode-75/93024356.jpg>

Habitat loss is basically the way of taking away the home of an animal, this can be seen clearly due to the high increase in human population causing for more houses to be built. This process caused animals such as the Zanzibar leopard, Baiji and the Tasmanian tiger to become extinct and animals such as Red Pandas, Koalas and Orangutans to become

endangered. Animals such as the red panda, Tasmanian tiger, baiji and Zanzibar leopard extinct/endangered because of the increase in human population, thus in turn causes more cities to be built thus more habitat loss, leading to extinction/endangerment. Animals such as the koala and the orangutan are on the endangered list due to deforestation, the process of cutting down trees in a forest in which these animals live in. Indonesia is a country that is driven by money and have cut down over 230,000 hectors of their rainforest to plant more palm trees in order to make products out of palm oil like chocolate, ice cream and Nutella.



Figure 5: a wounded orangutan

Source: <https://cloudfront-us-east-1.images.arcpublishing.com/opb/X72JEL3TW2J5EB3DVPQKMIGJHA.jpg>

Climate change is one of the biggest issues the world is facing. Animals such as polar bears, monarch butterflies and snow leopards are all endangered due to climate change, the increase in temperature is causing much more ice to melt than usual, which in turn is decreasing the habitat for polar bears and snow leopards. Climate change also disrupts the migration of the monarch butterfly making it harder for them to travel from the USA to Mexico, to which they are an important pollinator, making

ecosystems thrive all due to this one insect that we are killing of one by one.



Figure 6: a polar bear searching for land

Source: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQ8uKPoeUdop4YxM1A2w6K3s7FdgtGZFIPJAg&s>

In Malta this all of these can be seen clearly as we pollute the floor which ends up in the ocean killing sea life and during migration season Maltese poachers are illegally hunting many birds and are illegally selling songbirds we have also cut down nearly every single tree in Malta just to build more houses which is making it hard for local animals to find shelter plus we keep on using fossil fuels for energy which is changing our climate drastically as a matter of fact if we go on like this we will be a semi dessert. Malta has completely ruined nature and if we don't stop now then all species in Malta won't last.

There are multiple things that we can do in order to prevent this and to point out some examples: overhunting can be solved by creating more nature reserves. For pollution we can use the 3 'r's reduce reuse recycle. For habitat loss you can avoid buying products that use palm oil and

climate change can be solved by using renewable energy sources and by taking the bus or using a bike rather than a car.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that it is not too late for these animals as an intelligent species we should be able to learn from all of these animals that we made go extinct and try our best to prevent it in the future. We live at a point in time where our doings can be reversed, we should snatch this opportunity as soon as possible for our future generation.

Reference list:

[https://www.livescience.com/animals/how-many-animal-species-have-humans-driven-to-extinction#:~:text=A%20total%20of%20777%20animals,Nature%20\(IUCN\)%20Red%20List.](https://www.livescience.com/animals/how-many-animal-species-have-humans-driven-to-extinction#:~:text=A%20total%20of%20777%20animals,Nature%20(IUCN)%20Red%20List.)