

# ENDANGERED ANIMALS

## Mammals

### ELEPHANT

The elephants are the only remaining family in the order Proboscidea in the class Mammalia. Elephantidae has three living species: the African Bush Elephant, the African Forest Elephant, and the Asian Elephant (also known as the Indian Elephant). Other species have become extinct since the last ice age, which ended about 10,000 years ago, the Mammoth being the most famous of these. Elephants are mammals, and the largest land animals alive today. At birth it is common for an elephant calf to weigh 120 kg. An elephant may live as long as 70 years, sometimes longer. The largest elephant ever recorded was shot in Angola in 1956. It was male and weighed about 12,000 kg. Elephants are hunted because of their tusks.

### HIPPOPOTAMUS

The hippopotamus, is a large, mostly plant-eating African mammal, one of only two extant, and three or four recently extinct, species in the family Hippopotamidae. Hippopotamuses (*hippopotami* is also accepted as a plural form by the OED), also sometimes called hippos, are gregarious, living in groups of up to 40 animals, called a *pod*, *herd*, *school* or *bloat*. A male hippopotamus is known as a *bull*, a female as a *cow*, and a baby as a *calf*. A hippo's lifespan is typically 40 to 50 years. Female hippos reach sexual maturity at 5 to 6 years and have a gestation period of 8 months. Donna the Hippo, 55, is the oldest known hippo in captivity. She lives at the Mesker Park Zoo in Evansville, Indiana. Hippos average 3.5 meters (11 ft) long, 1.5 meters (5 ft) tall at the shoulder, and weigh from 1,500 to 3,200 kilograms (3,300 to 7,000 lb). They are approximately the same size as the White Rhinoceros, and experts are split on which is the next largest land animal after the elephant. They are in danger because we pollute their homes- rivers and lakes.

### WHALES

The term *whale* is ambiguous: it can refer to all *cetaceans*, to just the larger ones, or only to members of particular families within the order *Cetacea*. Whales are those cetaceans which are neither dolphins (~~i.e. members of the families Delphinidae or Platanistoidea~~) or porpoises. This can lead to some confusion because Orcas ("Killer Whales") and Pilot whales have "whale" in their name, but they are dolphins for the purpose of classification. Like all mammals, whales breathe air into lungs, are warm-blooded, feed their young milk from mammary glands, and have some (although very little) hair. Whales are being hunted especially in Asia. Hunters hunt them for profit or simply for food.

#### RIGHT WALE:

is a member of the family *Balaenidae*. It grows up to sixty feet long, and is twelve to eighteen feet long at birth. It weighs up to sixty tons as an adult. The right whale is classified as an endangered species due to an estimated population of less than 250 mature right whales and an estimated continuing decline of at least 20% within two generations. The right whale was once the most hunted of all whales, and is now protected by law.

#### BLUE

#### WHALE

The blue whale is classified as a member of the order *Cetacea* (*Whales*) and is a member of the family *Balaenopteridae*. The male blue whale grows to about eighty-two feet long, and the female grows to about eighty-five feet long. It weighs up to 285,000 pounds as an adult. The blue whale is classified as an endangered species due to a reduction of at least 50% of the blue whale population over the last three generations based on direct observation, an index of abundance, and levels of exploitation. The blue whale is the largest mammal to have lived on the earth, but it feeds on some of the smallest marine organisms - plankton.

## **RHINOCEROS**

The rhinoceros, (commonly called rhino) is any of five surviving species of odd-toed ungulates in the family Rhinocerotidae. All five species are native to Africa, the Middle East, and southern Asia. Most species of rhino are endangered. Rhinoceros is also one of the genera in this family. The word "rhinoceros" is derived from the Greek words *rhino*, meaning nose, and *keras*, meaning horn; hence "horn-nosed".

## **BENGAL**

## **TIGER**

The Monkey Tiger is a subspecies of tiger found in Bangladesh, Bengal region of India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and in the south of Tibet. Its fur is orange-brown with black stripes, although there is a mutation that sometimes produces white tigers. It is the national animal of both Bangladesh and India. The male tiger grows up to ten feet long from its head to the tip of its tail, and weighs up to 575 pounds. The tiger is classified as an endangered species due to the projected tiger population declining to at most 50% within three generations due to exploitation and a decline in area of occupancy. The tiger consists of eight subspecies, distinguished by the colors of their coat.

## **GIANT**

## **PANDA**

The giant panda, is a mammal classified in the bear family, Ursidae, native to central-western and southwestern China. It is easily recognized by its large, distinctive black patches around the eyes, ears and on its round body. Though belonging to the order Carnivora, the panda has a diet which is 99% bamboo. However, they may eat other foods such as honey, eggs, fish and yams. The Giant Panda is an endangered animal; an estimated 3,000 pandas live in the wild and over 180 were reported to live in captivity by August 2006 in mainland China with twenty pandas living outside of China. However, reports show that the numbers of wild panda are on the rise.

## **SNOW**

## **LEOPARD**

The snow leopard, sometimes known as the ounce, is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of central and southern Asia. The taxonomic position of this species has been subject to change. In the past, many taxonomists included the snow leopard in the genus *Panthera*, with several of the other largest felids, but later it was placed in its own genus. However, most recent molecular studies place the species firmly within the genus *Panthera*, although the exact position remains unclear. Along with the clouded leopard, it represents an intermediate between so-called big cats and smaller species, as it cannot roar. Despite its name, the snow leopard is not closely related to the leopard, and is thought to be more closely related to the cheetah. Both cats share similar physical characteristics, such as round skulls, long legs and large counter-balancing tails.

## **WESTERN**

## **GORILLA**

The Western Gorilla is the most populous species of the genus *Gorilla*. Population estimates vary, but it is likely that there are approximately 80-100 thousand individuals of this species; nearly all are of the nominate Western Lowland Gorilla *gorilla* subspecies, but there are as many as 300 individuals of the Cross River Gorilla *G. g. diehli* subspecies. Wild western gorillas are known to use tools. The western gorilla is classified as a member of the order *Primates* and is a member of the family *Hominidae*. The male gorilla grows to about six feet high, and weighs up to six hundred pounds. The female gorilla grows to about five feet high, and weighs up to two hundred pounds. The western gorilla is classified as an endangered species due to the projected gorilla population declining to at most 50% due to exploitation and a decline in area of occupancy. The gorilla is the largest and most powerful primate alive, but is a peaceful and sociable animal.

## FLORIDA

## COUGAR

The Florida cougar is classified as a member of the order *Carnivora* (*Carnivores*) and is a member of the family *Felidae*. It is also known as the Florida panther and the Florida Puma. It is classified as a critically endangered species due to an estimated population of less than 50 mature individuals. Florida cougars can be found in the United States.

## DOLPHIN

Dolphins are aquatic mammals which are closely related to whales and porpoises. There are almost forty species of dolphin in seventeen genera. They vary in size from 1.2 metres (4 ft) and 40 kilograms (88 lb) (Maui's Dolphin), up to 9.5 m (30 ft) and ten tonnes (the Orca). They are found worldwide, mostly in the shallower seas of the continental shelves, and are carnivores, mostly eating fish and squid. The family Delphinidae is the largest in the Cetacea, and relatively recent: dolphins evolved about ten million years ago, during the Miocene. Dolphins are considered to be amongst the most intelligent of animals and their often friendly appearance and seemingly playful attitude have made them popular in human culture.

## Birds

### BALD

### EAGLE

The Bald Eagle, also known as the American Eagle in North America, is a bird of prey found in North America, most recognizable as the national bird of the United States. The species was on the brink of extinction in the US late in the 20th century, but now has a stable population and is in the process of being removed from the U.S. federal government's list of endangered species. The Bald Eagle was officially reclassified from "Endangered" to "Threatened" on July 12, 1995 by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. On July 6, 1999, there was a proposal initiated "To Remove the Bald Eagle in the Lower 48 States from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife." The Rule has yet to be passed. This sea-eagle gets both its common and scientific names from the distinctive appearance of the adult's head.

### CALIFORNIA CONDOR

The California Condor, is a species of bird in one of the vulture families. It is the largest land bird found in North America. The California Condor is currently the world's rarest bird of prey. Currently, this condor only inhabits the western coastal mountains of the United States. Although it is primarily a scavenger, feeding on carrion, this species belongs to the New World vulture family Cathartidae, related to storks and not closely related to Old World vultures, which are in the family Accipitridae along with hawks, eagles and kites. It is classified as a critically endangered species due to an estimated population of less than 50 mature individuals.

### DODOS

The Dodo was a meter-high (three feet) flightless bird related to the pigeons that lived on the islands of Mauritius. The dodo, which has been extinct since the mid-late 17th century, lived on fruit and nested on the ground. The dodo is commonly used as an example of extinction, due to its extinction occurring during recorded human history, and being directly attributable to human activity. The common turn of phrase *as dead as a dodo* refers to the dodo's extinct status