

## Endangered Species Means There's Still Time

# Glossary

**Adaptation:** A physical or behavioral characteristic that has evolved over time to help a species survive in the environment where it lives.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of all life on earth reflected in the variety of genes (DNA), species, and ecosystems.

**Biologist:** A person who studies living organisms.

**Clean Water Act:** A law passed to maintain water quality that will support both healthy wildlife populations and recreational use by people.

**Clean Air Act:** A law passed to protect the nation's air quality for the environment and public health. The 1990 amendments to law focus on acid rain, urban air pollution, and toxic air emissions.

**Conservation Agreements:** A formal agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and one or more parties to help conserve species so they do not become endangered or threatened.

**Captive Breeding:** Endangered species are taken from their native habitat and bred in a safe place. The young are then placed back into their native habitat. This is an effort to increase the numbers of a species in their natural habitat so they are no longer endangered.

**Ecosystem:** All living and nonliving things, in any size area, connected by nutrient flow and fueled by the sun.

**Endangered:** A species that is in danger of extinction in the near future throughout all or most of its range.

**Endangered Species Act (ESA):** A law passed to ensure the survival of endangered and threatened species by protecting the species and the ecosystem they depend upon.

**Environment:** The conditions (physical and biological) surrounding an organism that influences its existence.

**Extinct:** A species that is no longer living on earth.

**Genes:** A segment of DNA that includes the coded information in an organism's cells that makes each species and individual unique.

**Habitat:** The place where an animal or plant lives that includes the essential elements it needs to survive including water, food, shelter, and space.

**Habitat Conservation Plans:** This is a plan developed between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a land owner(s) that allows development to proceed while still protecting threatened and endangered species.

**Illegal killing:** Killing a game species outside the legal hunting season or killing a species protected by law.

**Native species:** A species that naturally occurs in an ecosystem.

**Non-native species:** A species that has been introduced into an ecosystem that it does not naturally occur in.

**Over-collection:** Collecting too many of a plant or animal species for educational or scientific purposes that may affect the species overall survival.

**Refuge:** A place providing protection or shelter.

**Recovery Plans:** A blueprint for how a species will be recovered so that it now longer needs protection under the Endangered Species Act.

**Reintroduction:** The process of introducing a plant or animal back into it's native habitat.

**Restoration:** The process of putting back an area into it's original condition.

**Species:** A population of individuals that are alike and able to breed and reproduce fertile offspring.

**Stewardship:** Responsible management and care of the environment.

**Threatened:** A species that may become endangered in the near future throughout all or most of its range.

*Sources:*

Environmental Protection Agency. [http://www.epa.gov/air/oaq\\_caa.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/oaq_caa.html).

Project Wild: K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide. Council for Environmental Education.2001.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, <http://endangered.fws.gov>

Windows on the Wild: An Educator's Guide to Exploring the Web of Life. World Wildlife Fund. Published by Acorn Naturalists. 1999.