



Wildlife & Conservation Statistics

Extinction of Species

- Every 20 minutes, the world adds another 3,500 human lives but loses one or more entire species of animal or plant life - at least 27,000 species per year. (Source: PBS)
- At the present rates of extinction, as many as 20% of the world's 7-15 million species could be gone in the next 30 years. This rate of extinction has been unprecedented since the disappearance of dinosaurs 65 million years ago (Source: WWF).

Habitat Destruction (Source: Animal Alliance, unless stated otherwise)

- Human population reached 1 billion by 1800. Over 6 billion by 2000. Conservative estimates predict that our population will reach 9 billion people by 2050 (Source: Population Reference Bureau).
- The hourly destruction of an estimated 240 acres of natural habitat is directly attributable to the growth in human populations.
- 80% of the decline in biological diversity is caused by habitat destruction.

Plight of Rhinos (Source: International Rhino Foundation)

- Of the dozens of species of rhino that once roamed the earth, only 5 now exist.
- Where there were once over 100,000 black rhinos on the plains of Africa, there are now only 2,707 on the entire continent.
- The staggering decimation of the rhino population is due to poaching, to satisfy the demand for the horn for use in Eastern traditional medicines and as dagger handles.
- Prices up to US\$40,000 a kilo have been recorded for the much prized rhino horn - more than 5 times the price of gold.

The African Elephant (Source: CITES)

- 5 -10 million African elephants existed in 1930. Less than 1% of that number (approximately 600,000) remained when they were added to the international list of the most endangered species in 1989.
- Demand for ivory combined with loss of habitat from human settlement led to these huge declines in population.

African Wild Dog (Source: American Museum of Natural History)

- Listed as one of the world's most endangered canids, and the most endangered predator in Africa, there are now only between 4,000-5,000 African wild dogs in the wild.
- A century ago, African wild dog packs numbering a hundred or more animals could be seen roaming the Serengeti Plains. Today, pack size averages about 10, and the total population on the Serengeti is probably less than 60 dogs.
- Due to their large home ranges, African wild dogs are particularly vulnerable to habitat destruction.
- They are widely regarded as pests, and poisoned, shot, trapped and snared in many areas.
- Their most serious threat, though, is introduced diseases. Burgeoning human populations have brought the African wild dogs into frequent contact with domestic dogs, many of which carry canine distemper and rabies.

The African Lion (Source: Enkosini Wildlife Sanctuary)

- The African lions' numbers are diminishing rapidly due to habitat destruction, persecution by livestock farmers outside of protected areas, and human greed. 10,000-15,000 free-roaming African lions remain, down from 50,000 a decade ago.
- The willingness of Asians and Westerners to pay handsomely for lion head trophies combined with the urgent need for revenue among African locals means that these great predators are increasingly hunted for sport.
- Trophy hunting not only depletes the population of the African lion, but threatens its gene pool as well. Killing the dominant male of a pride (normally the target of a trophy hunt) sets off a chain of instinctive behavior in which the subsequent dominant male kills all the young of the previous male (6-8 estimated deaths result from each male shot).

Cheetahs (Source: The Cheetah Spot)

- In 1900 there were about 100,000 cheetah worldwide - present estimates place their number at 10,000 -15,000 with about one tenth of those living in captivity.
- Throughout recorded history a cheetah pelt was a badge of wealth for its human owner. The animal was killed for its skin by some and captured for its hunting skills by others. More recently, increasing human populations have squeezed cheetahs and their prey from their natural habitats.

Definitions

- **Poaching** is the illegal hunting, capture, or collecting of wildlife. Snaring is a common form of subsistence poaching and can lead to the maiming of many animals not intended for consumption. (Source: Bagheera: Glossary of terms)
- **Canned hunts** are commercial hunts, which take place on private land under circumstances that virtually assure the hunter of success. The animal is often fenced in, or has been habituated to eating at a feeding station at the same time every day. Canned hunts are prevalent in the United States and South Africa. (Source: Animalunderworld.com)