

Endangered Species: Global Conservation Efforts and Challenges

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Assignment Due Date

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An endangered species refers to a plant or animal that is in danger of extinction. Many animals are listed either as vulnerable or endangered. An animal classified as vulnerable means that it can be saved if conservation efforts are undertaken in time. Once a species is classified as endangered, it will go extinct if remedial action is not taken (Foulis, 2018). To understand the conservation efforts carried out worldwide, we must first examine the reasons for species endangerment.

The most significant reason for species endangerment is the loss of habitat. When animals lose their home, they lose their ability to feed, reproduce, and grow their population. This causes them to shrink in numbers and eventually disappear. The reasons for habitat loss include natural and man-made disasters, such as climate shifts and construction projects (Chandler, 2019). Species invasion is another reason for endangerment. When a species invades a new ecosystem, it may fail to adapt and hence die. On the other hand, it may use the ecosystem's resources, causing other species to become vulnerable. Overexploitation of natural resources by humans is another significant factor. For instance, overfishing in a specific area leads to a reduced population of fish species in the area (Chandler, 2019). The introduction of pathogens and disease by the arrival of domestic animals is also a cause of species endangerment. Local animal populations may not develop resistance to the new diseases fast enough, leading to a decline in their numbers.

There are several ways of conserving endangered species. One way of protecting vulnerable species and avoiding the endangerment of others is by enacting legislation. This method is not new; it dates to medieval times. Kings of European countries would enforce laws that prevented their subjects from farming or hunting certain animals on protected land (Doub,

2016). For endangered animals, there are different ways of conservation. Ex-situ conservation is a type of conservation where a species is protected outside its natural habitat. Examples of such methods are zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens (Gundu & Adia, 2014). For endangered plants, seeds are stored in seed banks. They are kept for long periods, maintaining their fertility. Gene banks are used to store sperms, embryos, and eggs of endangered animals for future reproduction. Gundu and Andia (2014) defined in-situ conservation as a way to protect endangered animals inside their habitats. Examples of in-situ conservations are game reserves and national parks.

Despite efforts put into conservation, endangered species face many challenges. Global climate change continues to derail conservation efforts. With rising temperatures, forest fires, flooding, and deforestation, habitats are destroyed, making more species endangered. Politics is a big challenge to conservation efforts. Many world leaders do not consider conservation a priority. This makes access to funds difficult hence slowing down global efforts. Plastic waste is also proving to be a big problem. Plastics dumped in oceans endanger various sea life. There is the presence of microplastics in the bodies of sea turtles and other marine animals. Several emerging diseases are threatening various species. Poaching is another growing concern among conservationists. Illegal trade in endangered animal parts continues to grow. Species such as rhinos, tigers, and leopards face extinction as they are hunted for horns and skin, respectively (Platt, 2019).

In conclusion, the conservation of endangered species, despite its many challenges, can be a success. With a united global campaign, most of the challenges can be overcome. Efforts already in place are helping to save many species from extinction. However, more effort needs to be made.

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