

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Wildlife conservation is the practice of protecting plant and animal species and their habitats. As part of the world's ecosystems, wildlife provides balance and stability to nature's processes. The goal of wildlife conservation is to ensure the survival of these species, and to educate people on living sustainably with other species.

The human population has grown exponentially over the past 200 years, to more than seven billion people today, and it continues to rapidly grow. This means natural resources are being consumed faster than ever by the billions of people on the planet. This growth and development also endangers the habitats and existence of various types of wildlife around the world, particularly animals and plants that may be displaced for land development, or used for food or other human purposes. Other threats to wildlife include the introduction of invasive species from other parts of the world, climate change, pollution, hunting, fishing, and poaching.

National and international organizations like the World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the United Nations work to support global animal and habitat conservation efforts on many different fronts. They work with the government to establish and protect public lands, like national parks and wildlife refuges. They help write legislation, such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 in the United States, to protect various species. They work with law enforcement to prosecute wildlife crimes, like wildlife trafficking and illegal hunting (poaching). They also promote biodiversity to support the growing human population while preserving existing species and habitats.

National Geographic Explorers, like conservation are working to slow the extinction of global species and to protect global biodiversity and habitats. Environmental filmmakers and photographers are essential to conservation efforts as well, documenting and bringing attention to endangered wildlife all over the world.