

# Endangered Animals at a Glance

## Back to the Wild

Not all the news is bad about **endangered**<sup>1</sup> animals. In the United States, dozens of endangered animals have been making a comeback. A few of them are:

**Gray Wolf:** By the 1970s, the gray wolf had all but vanished from Yellowstone National Park. In 1995 and 1996, federal biologists brought 66 wolves from Canada and set them free in the wilderness areas of the park and central Idaho. Today, about 285 gray wolves live in central Idaho, and 271 more roam Yellowstone.

**Bald Eagle:** Before Europeans came to North America, the sky was teeming with bald eagles. As settlers moved west, they destroyed the eagles' natural habitat. Egg collectors and pesticides almost wiped out the bald eagle population. However, about 30 years ago the federal government passed laws to protect the eagles. Today, more than 7,678 pairs of bald eagles live in the lower United States.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Grizzly Bear*

<sup>1</sup> **endangered:** threatened with extinction

**Grizzly Bear:** In the 1800s, an estimated 50,000 grizzly bears roamed the West. Today, the bears are making a comeback in several Western areas, including Yellowstone Park.

## Can Zoos Help Save Endangered Animals?

Emi is a crowd-pleasing Sumatran rhinoceros at the Cincinnati Zoo. Why is she so popular? In 2004, Emi gave birth to Suci, a healthy, wide-eyed female calf.



sxc.hu

*Sumatran rhinoceros*

Although most visitors to the zoo enjoy gazing at Emi and Suci, scientists are happy for another reason. Suci's arrival brings scientists a step closer to pulling the Sumatran rhinoceros back from the edge of extinction.

As the populations of wild animals dwindle, **conservationists**<sup>2</sup> are hoping that they can **breed**<sup>3</sup> animals in zoos and later release them into the wild.

Scientists have reintroduced at least 19 species to the wild from captivity. For example, by 1985 only nine wild California condors were living in that state. Biologists captured all nine and began a captive breeding program. As of May 2012, the number of condors increased to 405, with about 226 living in the wild.

<sup>2</sup> **conservationist:** a person who is in favor of protecting natural resources such as animals and forests

<sup>3</sup> **breed:** to produce and raise

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The passage explains why some endangered animals, including gray wolves and bald eagles may

- A be getting killed at increasing rates
- B be making a comeback
- C be living in zoos
- D be hard to find

2. The big problem described in the passage is that many animals at one time were in danger of extinction. The passage also describes the efforts that contributed to solving this problem which include

- A importing animals from other countries and feeding them special food
- B arresting hunters and importing animals from other countries
- C federal laws and breeding animals in captivity
- D breeding animals in captivity and allowing animals to roam freely

3. Which of the following conclusions are supported by the passage?

- A People have been able to find ways to save endangered animals.
- B Endangered animals may no longer survive.
- C Scientists do not want to breed animals in zoos.
- D Zoos should not help endangered animals.

4. Read the following sentence: "As the populations of wild animals dwindle, conservationists are hoping that they can breed animals in zoos and later release them into the wild."

In this sentence the word **dwindle** means

- A sickly
- B decline
- C raise
- D missing

5. Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?

- A Endangered animals need our help.
- B Scientists are trying to find a way to help animals to find safe places to live.
- C Some endangered animals are increasing in number.
- D People are harming endangered animals.

6. When the gray wolf had nearly vanished, what did people do to help prevent it from becoming extinct?

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7. Why might conservationists want to breed animals in captivity?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

At one time only nine wild California condors were living in that state. \_\_\_\_\_ May 2012, that number has increased to 405 with about 226 living in the wild.

- A Next
- B Since
- C Now
- D When

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Scientists and conservationists are working to help endangered animals in the United States survive and thrive in the wild by protecting them and helping them to breed in captivity.

Who? scientists and conservationists

(are doing) What? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Vocabulary Word:** breed: to produce and raise.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Teacher Guide and Answers

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 980

**Featured Text Structure:** Problem/Solution – the writer poses a problem and suggests possible solutions

**Passage Summary:** Some endangered animals have been making a comeback increasing in number. The articles discuss how the gray wolf, bald eagle, grizzly bear, and rhinoceros were close to extinction, but due to a variety of efforts their numbers are increasing.

- The passage explains why some endangered animals, including gray wolves and bald eagles may
  - be getting killed at increasing rates
  - be making a comeback**
  - be living in zoos
  - be hard to find
- The big problem described in the passage is that many animals at one time were in danger of extinction. The passage also describes the efforts that contributed to solving this problem which include
  - importing animals from other countries and feeding them special food
  - arresting hunters and importing animals from other countries
  - federal laws and breeding animals in captivity**
  - breeding animals in captivity and allowing animals to roam freely
- Which of the following conclusions are supported by the passage?
  - People have been able to find ways to save endangered animals.**
  - Endangered animals may no longer survive.
  - Scientists do not want to breed animals in zoos.
  - Zoos should not help endangered animals.
- Read the following sentence: "As the populations of wild animals dwindle, conservationists are hoping that they can breed animals in zoos and later release them into the wild."

In this sentence the word **dwindle** means

  - sickly
  - decline**
  - raise
  - missing
- Which statement best describes the main idea of this passage?
  - Endangered animals need our help.
  - Scientists are trying to find a way to help animals to find safe places to live.
  - Some endangered animals are increasing in number.**
  - People are harming endangered animals.
- When the gray wolf had nearly vanished, what did people do to help prevent it from becoming extinct?

**Suggested answer:**

In 1995 and 1996, federal biologists brought 66 wolves from Canada and set them free in the wilderness areas of the park and central Idaho. [paragraph 2]

7. Why might conservationists want to breed animals in captivity?

**Suggested answer:**

Breeding animals in captivity would protect the few endangered animals that are still alive from being hurt or from dying if they were in the wild. It would also keep the newborn animals safe and help them survive because doctors would be able to observe the animals in captivity and the animals wouldn't be hurt by other animals in the wild. [paragraphs 7,8]

8. The question below includes an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

At one time only nine wild California condors were living in that state. \_\_\_\_\_ May 2012, that number has increased to 405 with about 226 living in the wild.

- A Next
- B Since**
- C Now
- D When

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Scientists and conservationists are working to help endangered animals in the United States survive and thrive in the wild by protecting them and helping them to breed in captivity.

Who? scientists and conservationists

(are doing) What? **working to help endangered animals**

Where? **in the United States**

How? **by protecting them and helping them to breed**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** breed: to produce and raise.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.