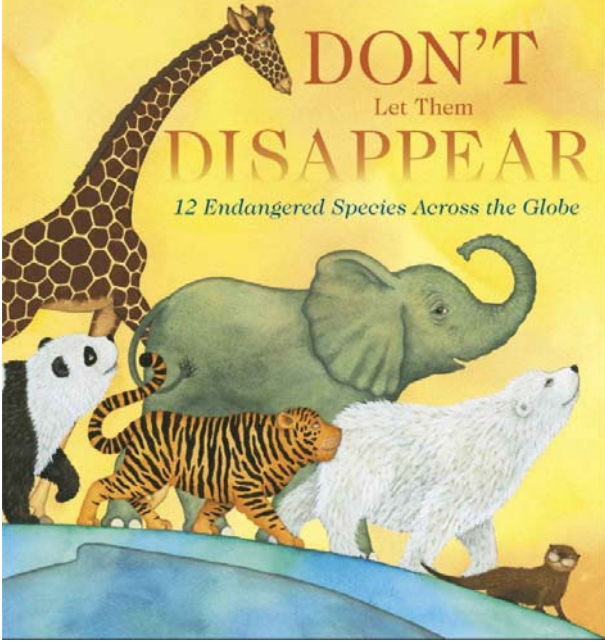


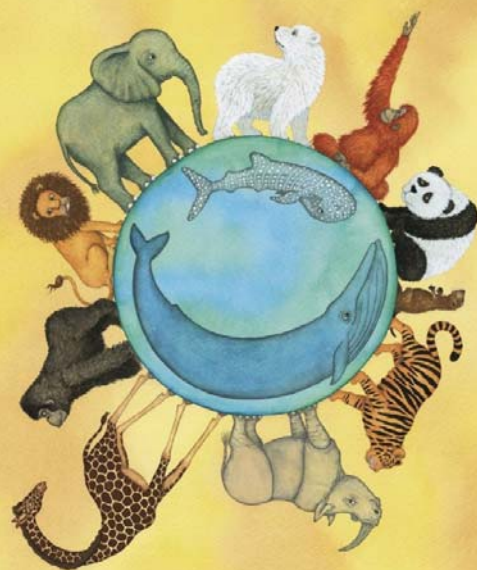
Written by  
*Chelsea Clinton*

Illustrated by  
*Gianna Marino*

# DON'T Let Them DISAPPEAR

*12 Endangered Species Across the Globe*





# DON'T Let Them DISAPPEAR

Written by  
*Chelsea Clinton*

Illustrated by  
*Gianna Marino*

  
PHILOMEL BOOKS



For Charlotte, Aidan and  
all children, who deserve  
to grow up in a world where  
no animal is endangered  
—C.C.

In loving memory of my  
father, who taught me to  
love all the animals  
—G.M.

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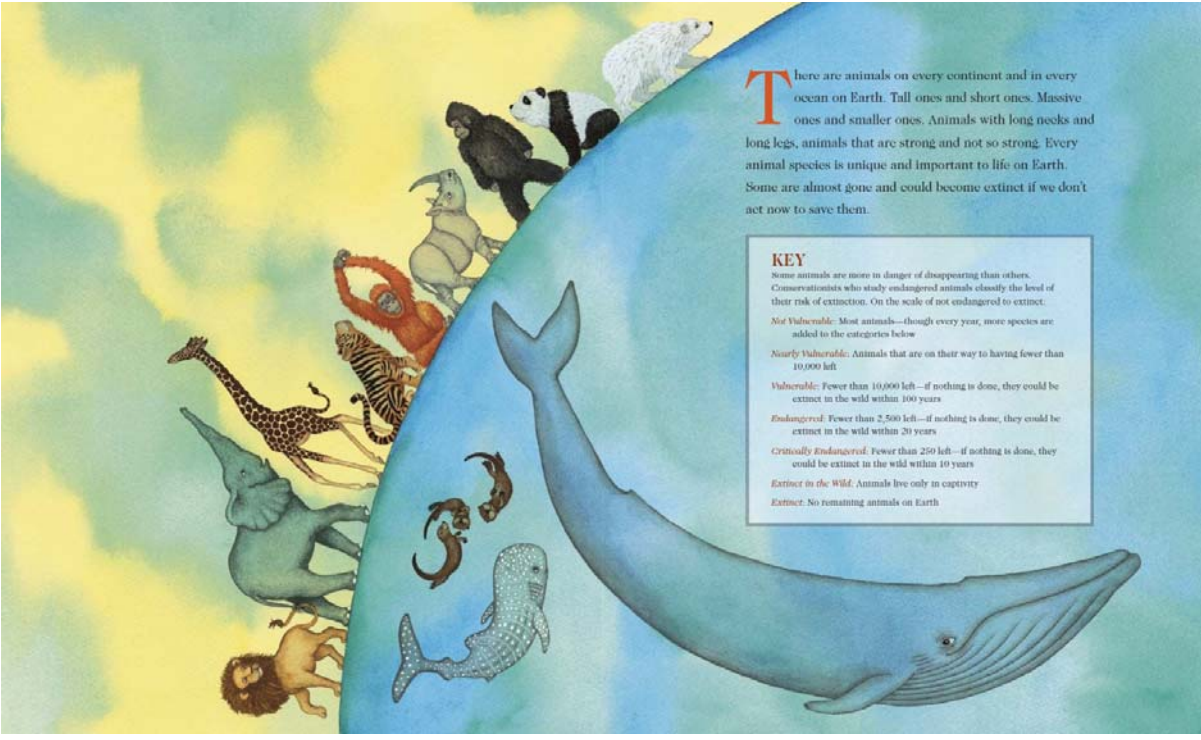
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**T**here are animals on every continent and in every ocean on Earth. Tall ones and short ones. Massive ones and smaller ones. Animals with long necks and long legs, animals that are strong and not so strong. Every animal species is unique and important to life on Earth. Some are almost gone and could become extinct if we don't act now to save them.

**KEY**

Some animals are more in danger of disappearing than others. Conservationists who study endangered animals classify the level of their risk of extinction. On the scale of not endangered to extinct:

*Not Vulnerable:* Most animals—though every year, more species are added to the categories below

*Nearly Vulnerable:* Animals that are on their way to having fewer than 10,000 left

*Vulnerable:* Fewer than 10,000 left—if nothing is done, they could be extinct in the wild within 100 years

*Endangered:* Fewer than 2,500 left—if nothing is done, they could be extinct in the wild within 20 years

*Critically Endangered:* Fewer than 250 left—if nothing is done, they could be extinct in the wild within 10 years

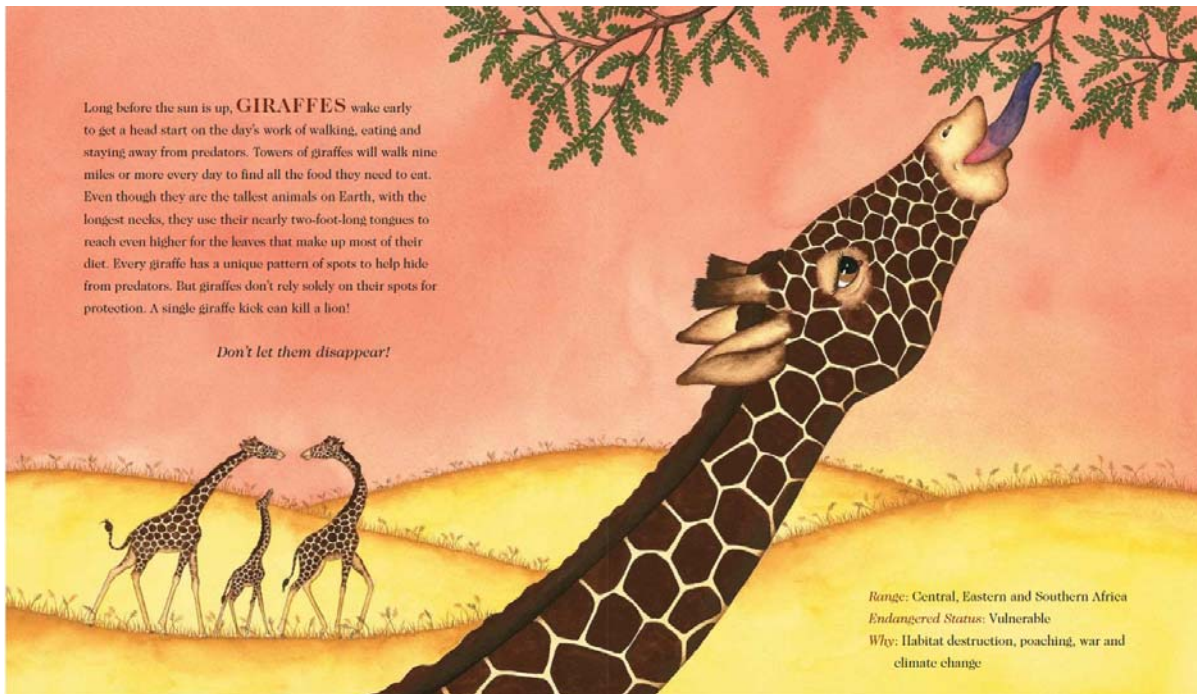
*Extinct in the Wild:* Animals live only in captivity

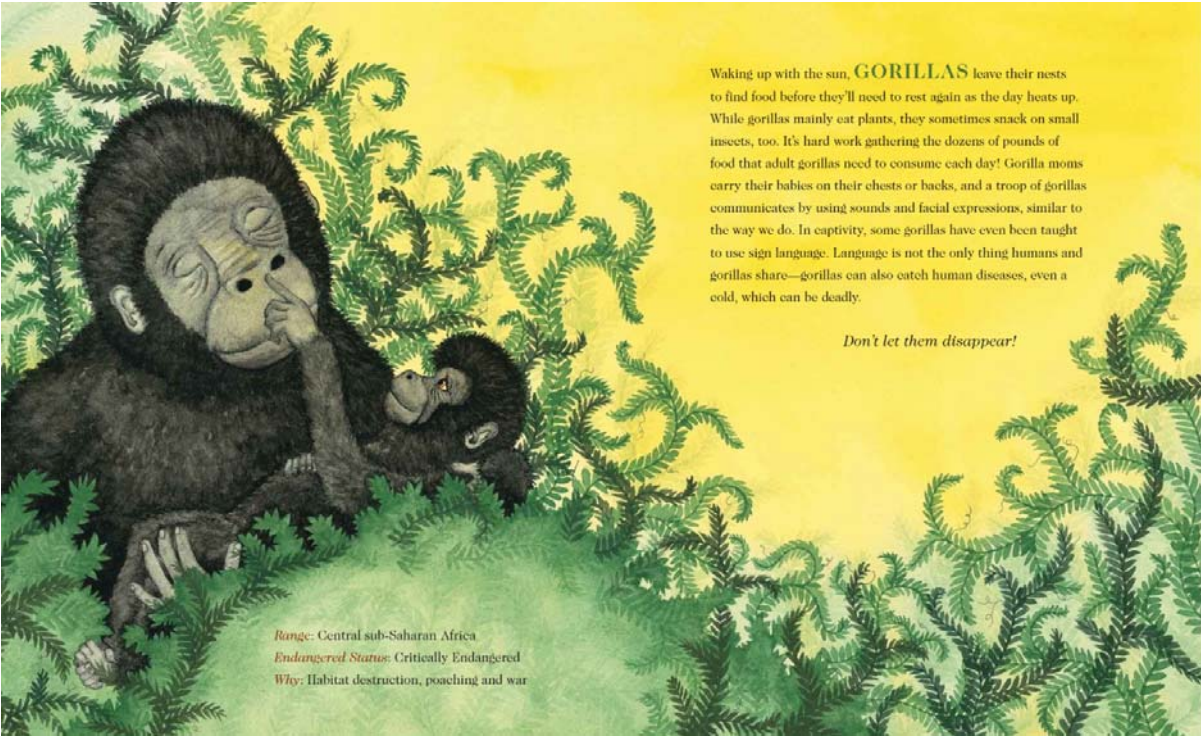
*Extinct:* No remaining animals on Earth

Long before the sun is up, **GIRAFFES** wake early to get a head start on the day's work of walking, eating and staying away from predators. Towers of giraffes will walk nine miles or more every day to find all the food they need to eat. Even though they are the tallest animals on Earth, with the longest necks, they use their nearly two-foot-long tongues to reach even higher for the leaves that make up most of their diet. Every giraffe has a unique pattern of spots to help hide from predators. But giraffes don't rely solely on their spots for protection. A single giraffe kick can kill a lion!

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Central, Eastern and Southern Africa  
*Endangered Status:* Vulnerable  
*Why:* Habitat destruction, poaching, war and climate change





Waking up with the sun, **GORILLAS** leave their nests to find food before they'll need to rest again as the day heats up. While gorillas mainly eat plants, they sometimes snack on small insects, too. It's hard work gathering the dozens of pounds of food that adult gorillas need to consume each day! Gorilla moms carry their babies on their chests or backs, and a troop of gorillas communicates by using sounds and facial expressions, similar to the way we do. In captivity, some gorillas have even been taught to use sign language. Language is not the only thing humans and gorillas share—gorillas can also catch human diseases, even a cold, which can be deadly.

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Central sub-Saharan Africa  
*Endangered Status:* Critically Endangered  
*Why:* Habitat destruction, poaching and war

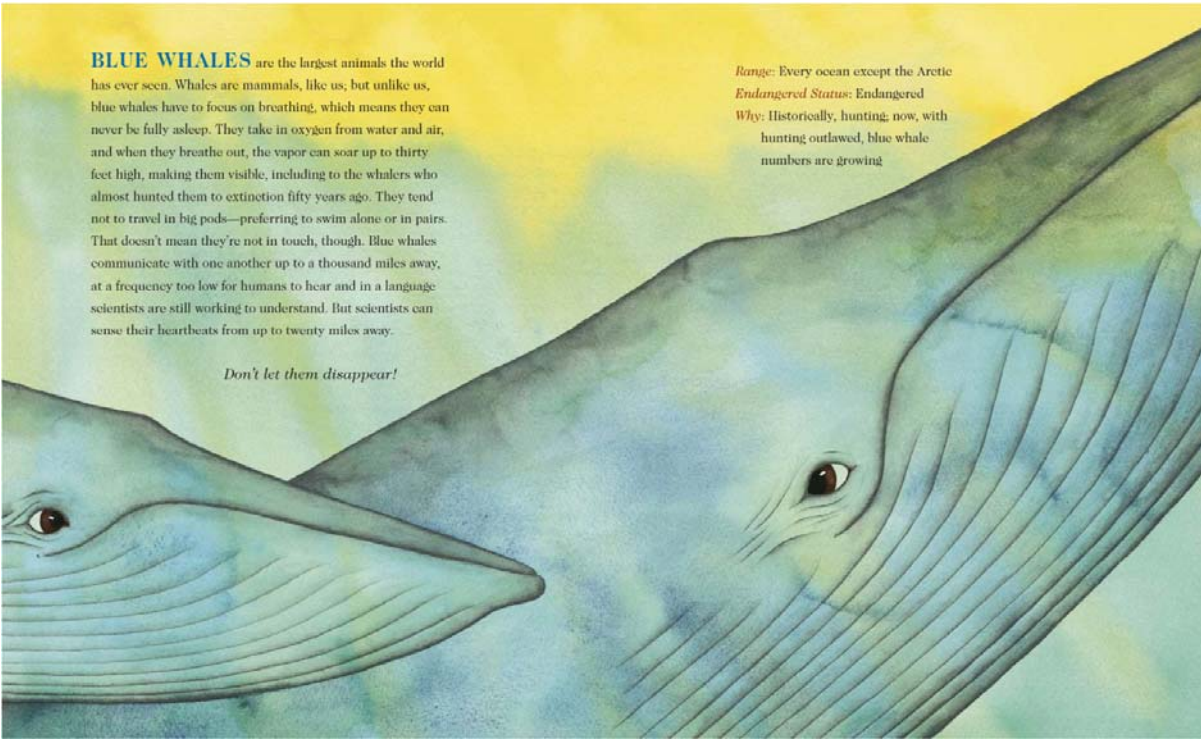
**BLUE WHALES** are the largest animals the world has ever seen. Whales are mammals, like us; but unlike us, blue whales have to focus on breathing, which means they can never be fully asleep. They take in oxygen from water and air, and when they breathe out, the vapor can soar up to thirty feet high, making them visible, including to the whalers who almost hunted them to extinction fifty years ago. They tend not to travel in big pods—preferring to swim alone or in pairs. That doesn't mean they're not in touch, though. Blue whales communicate with one another up to a thousand miles away, at a frequency too low for humans to hear and in a language scientists are still working to understand. But scientists can sense their heartbeats from up to twenty miles away.

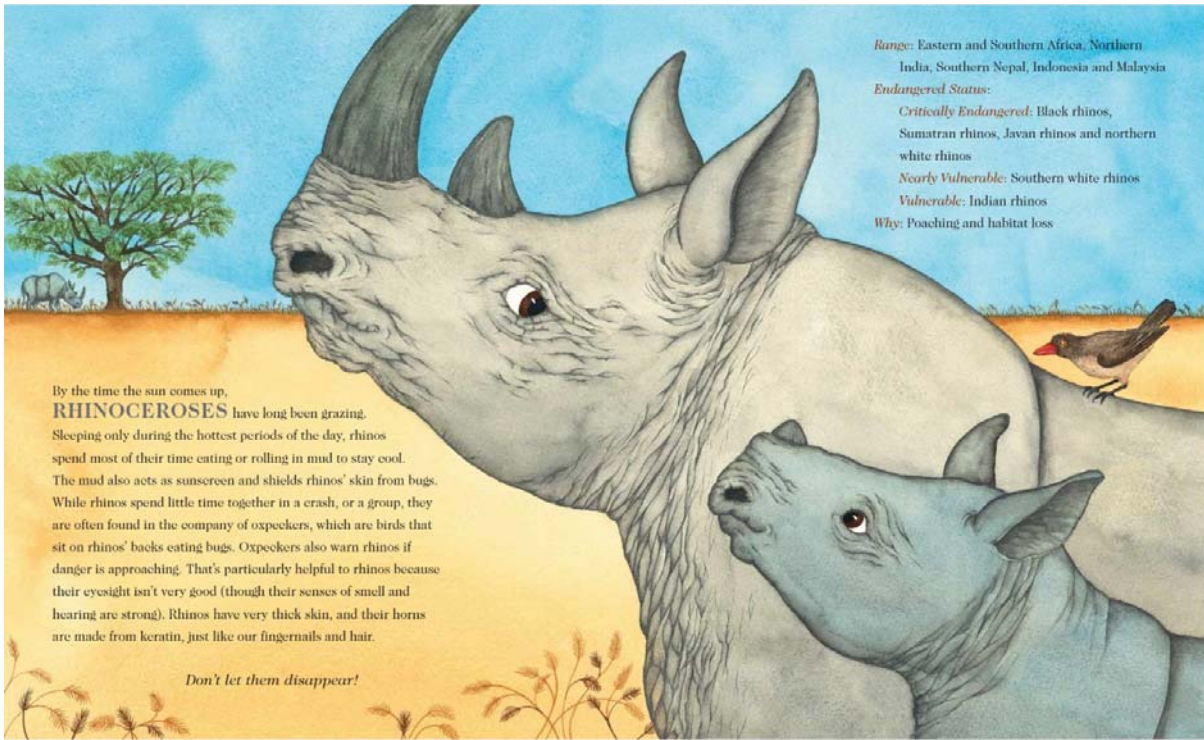
*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Every ocean except the Arctic

*Endangered Status:* Endangered

*Why:* Historically, hunting; now, with hunting outlawed, blue whale numbers are growing





*Range:* Eastern and Southern Africa, Northern India, Southern Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia

*Endangered Status:*

*Critically Endangered:* Black rhinos, Sumatran rhinos, Javan rhinos and northern white rhinos

*Nearly Vulnerable:* Southern white rhinos

*Vulnerable:* Indian rhinos

*Why:* Poaching and habitat loss

By the time the sun comes up,

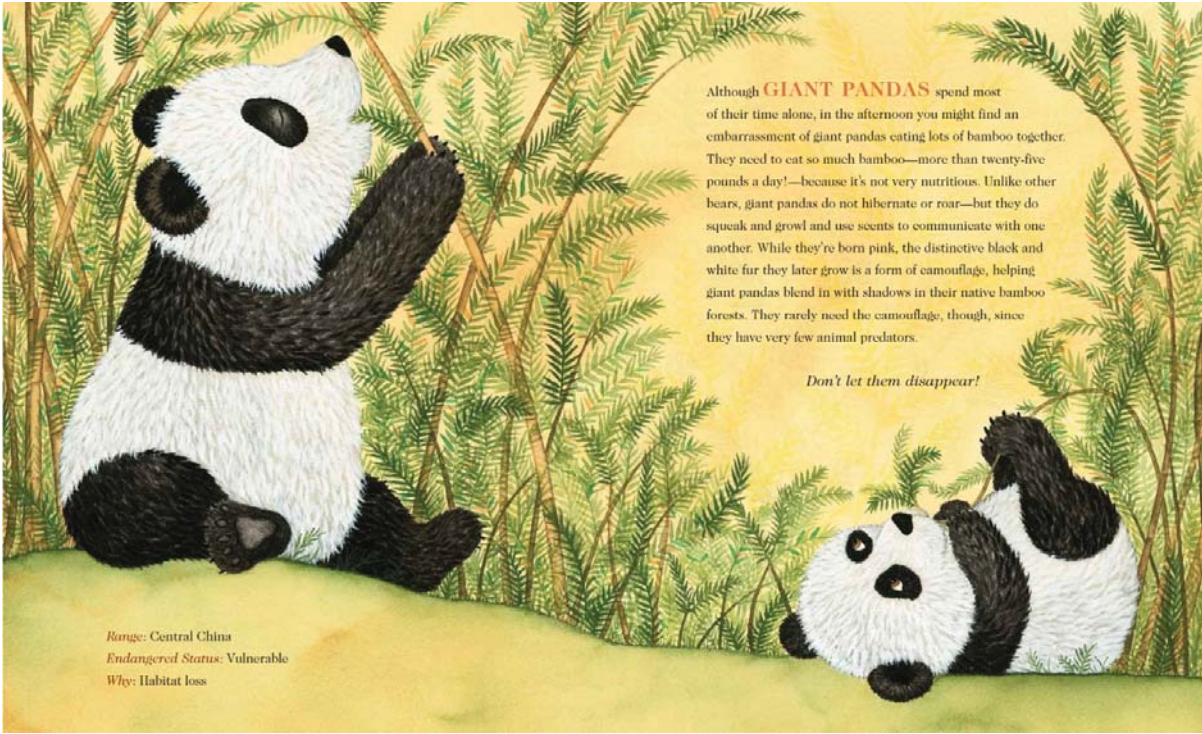
**RHINOCEROSSES** have long been grazing.

Sleeping only during the hottest periods of the day, rhinos spend most of their time eating or rolling in mud to stay cool.

The mud also acts as sunscreen and shields rhinos' skin from bugs.

While rhinos spend little time together in a crash, or a group, they are often found in the company of oxpeckers, which are birds that sit on rhinos' backs eating bugs. Oxpeckers also warn rhinos if danger is approaching. That's particularly helpful to rhinos because their eyesight isn't very good (though their senses of smell and hearing are strong). Rhinos have very thick skin, and their horns are made from keratin, just like our fingernails and hair.

*Don't let them disappear!*



Although **GIANT PANDAS** spend most of their time alone, in the afternoon you might find an embarrassment of giant pandas eating lots of bamboo together. They need to eat so much bamboo—more than twenty-five pounds a day!—because it's not very nutritious. Unlike other bears, giant pandas do not hibernate or roar—but they do squeak and growl and use scents to communicate with one another. While they're born pink, the distinctive black and white fur they later grow is a form of camouflage, helping giant pandas blend in with shadows in their native bamboo forests. They rarely need the camouflage, though, since they have very few animal predators.

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Central China  
*Endangered Status:* Vulnerable  
*Why:* Habitat loss

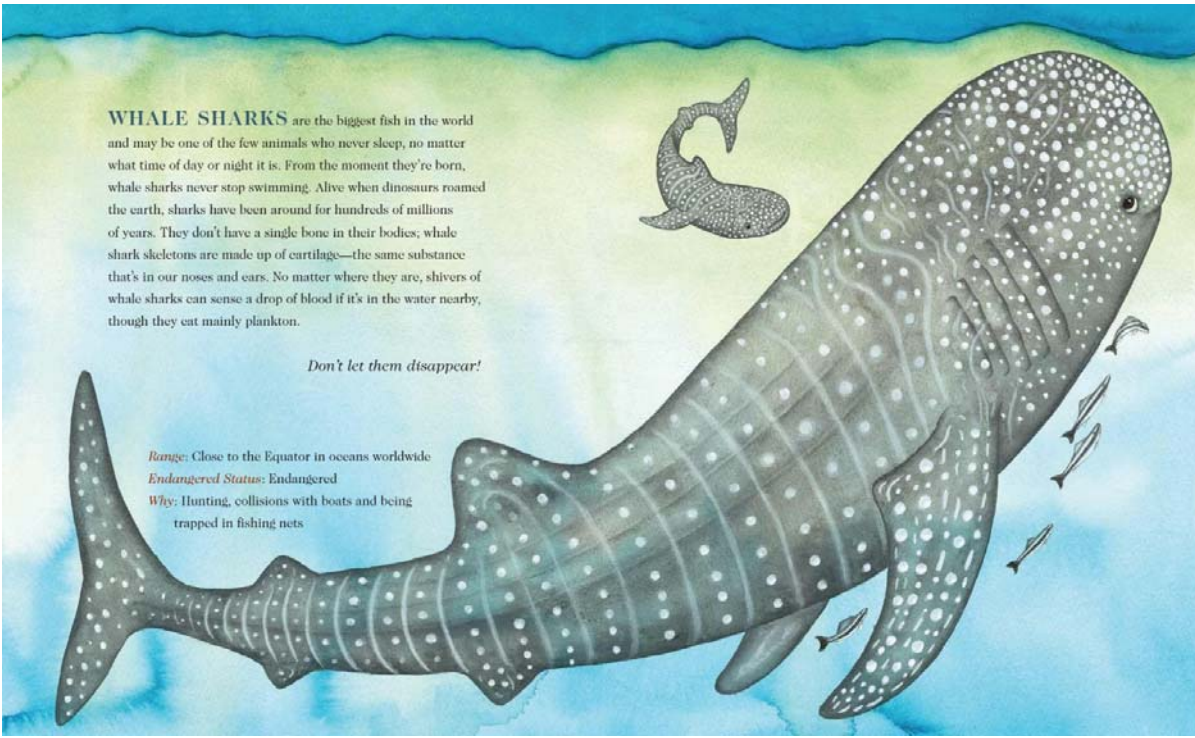
**WHALE SHARKS** are the biggest fish in the world and may be one of the few animals who never sleep, no matter what time of day or night it is. From the moment they're born, whale sharks never stop swimming. Alive when dinosaurs roamed the earth, sharks have been around for hundreds of millions of years. They don't have a single bone in their bodies; whale shark skeletons are made up of cartilage—the same substance that's in our noses and ears. No matter where they are, shivers of whale sharks can sense a drop of blood if it's in the water nearby, though they eat mainly plankton.

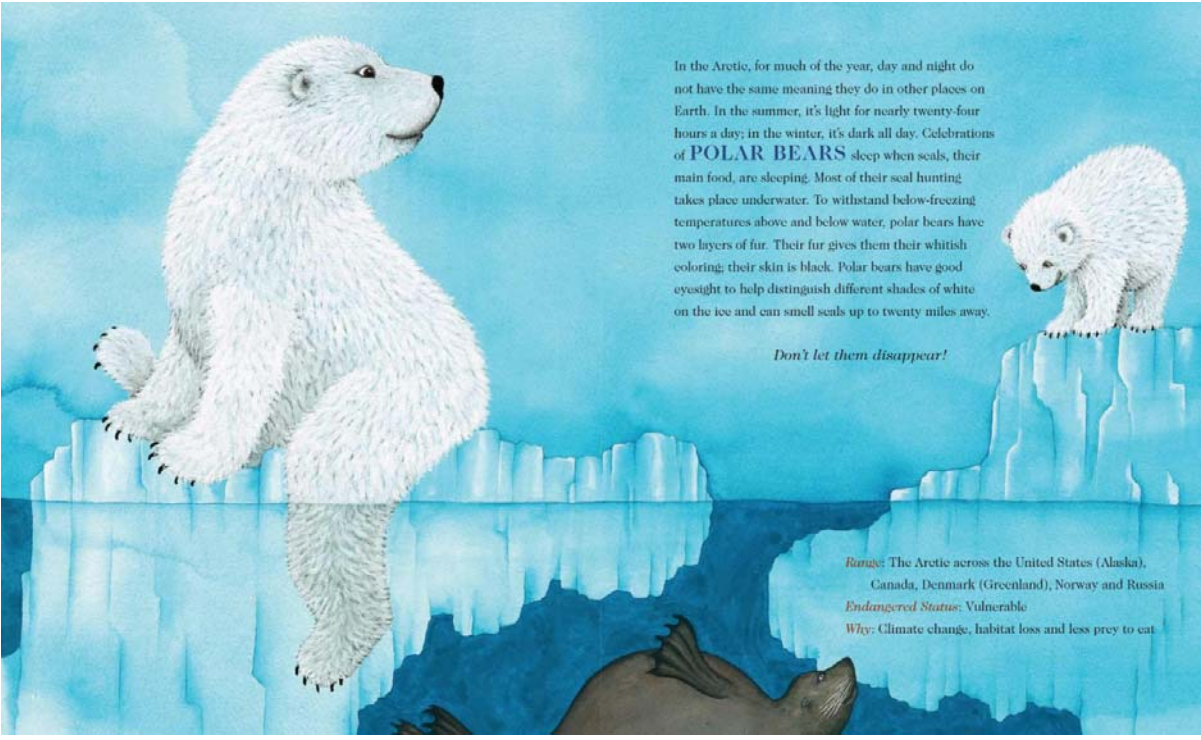
*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Close to the Equator in oceans worldwide

*Endangered Status:* Endangered

*Why:* Hunting, collisions with boats and being trapped in fishing nets





In the Arctic, for much of the year, day and night do not have the same meaning they do in other places on Earth. In the summer, it's light for nearly twenty-four hours a day; in the winter, it's dark all day. Celebrations of **POLAR BEARS** sleep when seals, their main food, are sleeping. Most of their seal hunting takes place underwater. To withstand below-freezing temperatures above and below water, polar bears have two layers of fur. Their fur gives them their whitish coloring; their skin is black. Polar bears have good eyesight to help distinguish different shades of white on the ice and can smell seals up to twenty miles away.

*Don't let them disappear!*

**Range:** The Arctic across the United States (Alaska), Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway and Russia  
**Endangered Status:** Vulnerable  
**Why:** Climate change, habitat loss and less prey to eat

*Range:* Sub-Saharan Africa, India

*Endangered Status:*

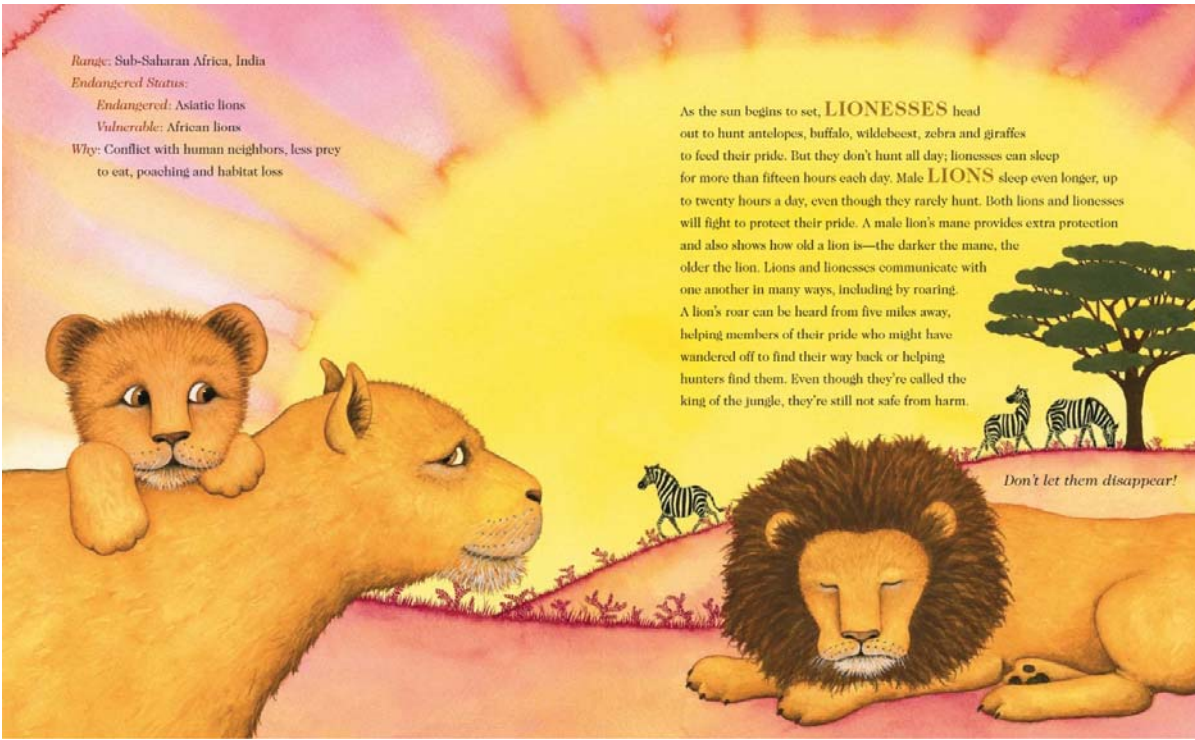
*Endangered:* Asiatic lions

*Vulnerable:* African lions

*Why:* Conflict with human neighbors, less prey to eat, poaching and habitat loss

As the sun begins to set, **LIONESSES** head out to hunt antelopes, buffalo, wildebeest, zebra and giraffes to feed their pride. But they don't hunt all day; lionesses can sleep for more than fifteen hours each day. Male **LIONS** sleep even longer, up to twenty hours a day, even though they rarely hunt. Both lions and lionesses will fight to protect their pride. A male lion's mane provides extra protection and also shows how old a lion is—the darker the mane, the older the lion. Lions and lionesses communicate with one another in many ways, including by roaring. A lion's roar can be heard from five miles away, helping members of their pride who might have wandered off to find their way back or helping hunters find them. Even though they're called the king of the jungle, they're still not safe from harm.

*Don't let them disappear!*



An illustration of sea otters in their natural habitat. In the upper right, a group of four otters is curled up together, sleeping on their backs. They are surrounded by green kelp with large, round, green bladders. In the lower left, another otter is shown swimming or floating, also surrounded by kelp. The background is a soft, light blue and purple gradient, suggesting an underwater or twilight environment.

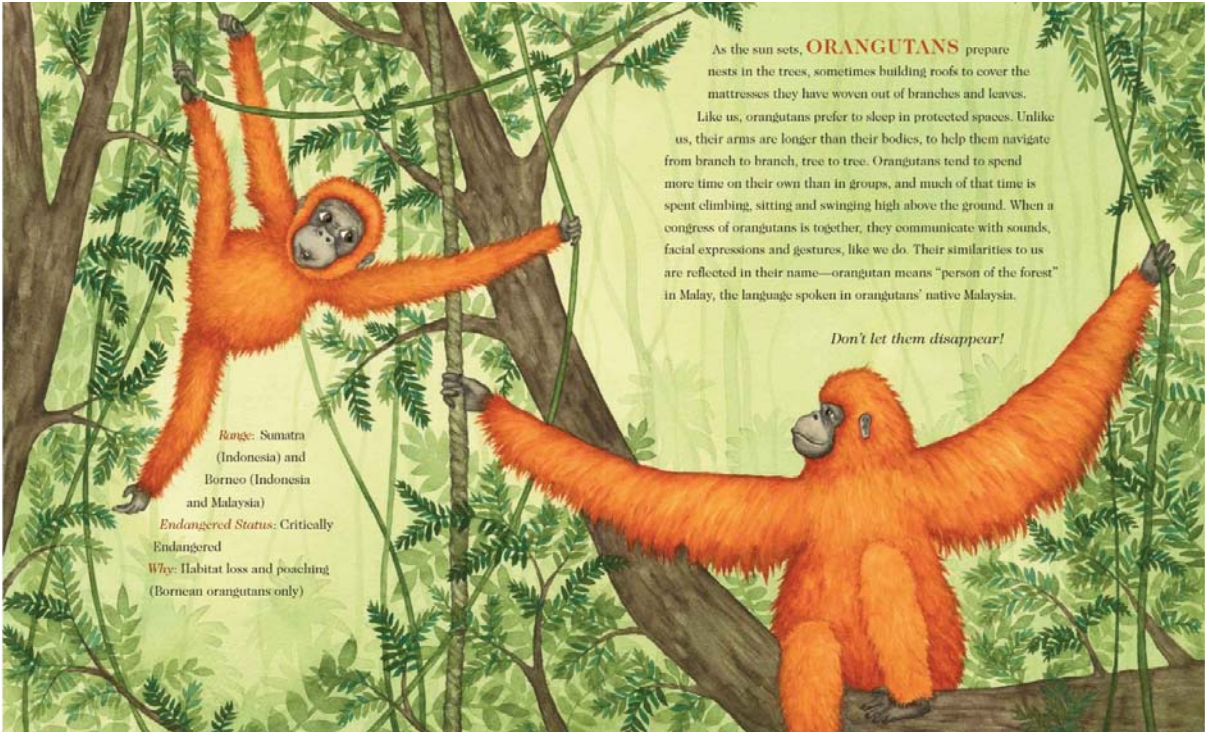
A romp of **SEA OTTERS** settles down to sleep by lying on their backs and wrapping themselves in kelp so they don't have to worry about floating out to sea. If there's no kelp nearby, and sometimes even if there is, otters will join together, making a raft for stability and security. Sea otters use rocks to crack open the clams and other shellfish they like to eat. If a sea otter finds a particularly useful rock, it will travel with it and use it over and over again. After every meal, sea otters wash their paws and fur, no easy task given that they have more hair on a small patch of skin than we have on our heads!

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Across the North Pacific Ocean (from Japan and Russia to the United States and Canada, possibly as far south as Mexico)

*Endangered Status:* Endangered

*Why:* Pollution, less prey to eat, habitat loss and poaching



As the sun sets, **ORANGUTANS** prepare nests in the trees, sometimes building roofs to cover the mattresses they have woven out of branches and leaves.

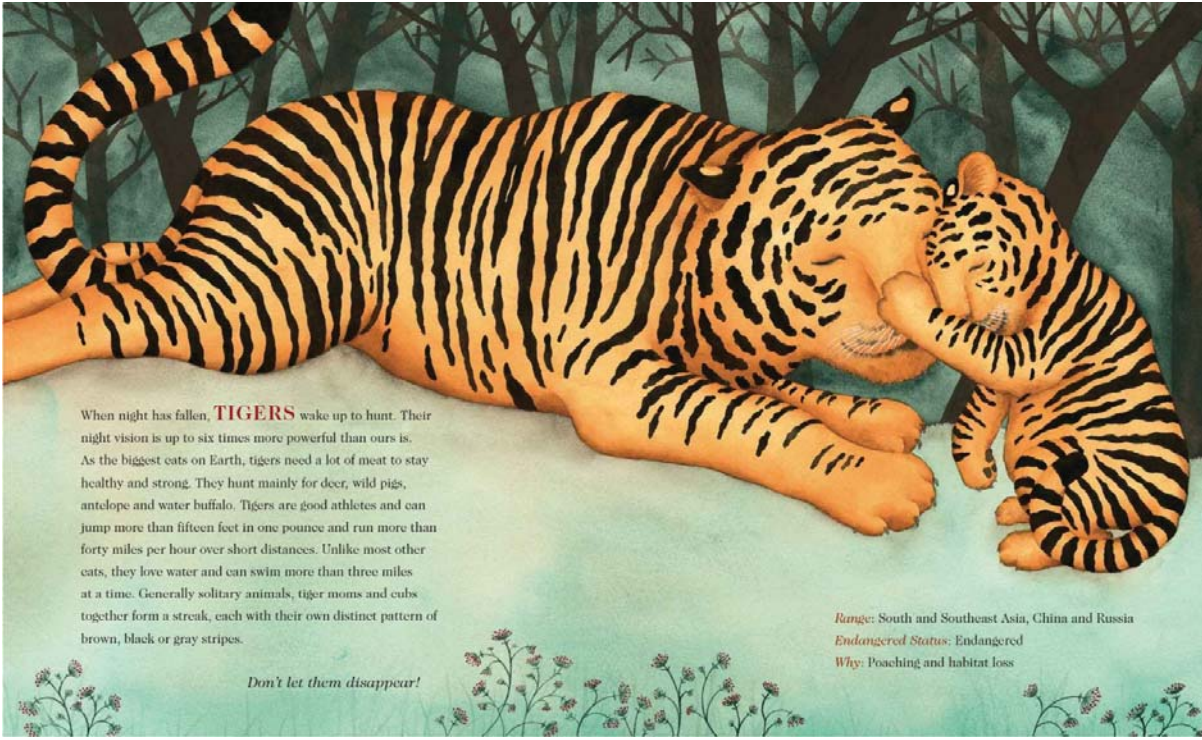
Like us, orangutans prefer to sleep in protected spaces. Unlike us, their arms are longer than their bodies, to help them navigate from branch to branch, tree to tree. Orangutans tend to spend more time on their own than in groups, and much of that time is spent climbing, sitting and swinging high above the ground. When a congress of orangutans is together, they communicate with sounds, facial expressions and gestures, like we do. Their similarities to us are reflected in their name—orangutan means “person of the forest” in Malay, the language spoken in orangutans’ native Malaysia.

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Sumatra (Indonesia) and Borneo (Indonesia and Malaysia)

*Endangered Status:* Critically Endangered

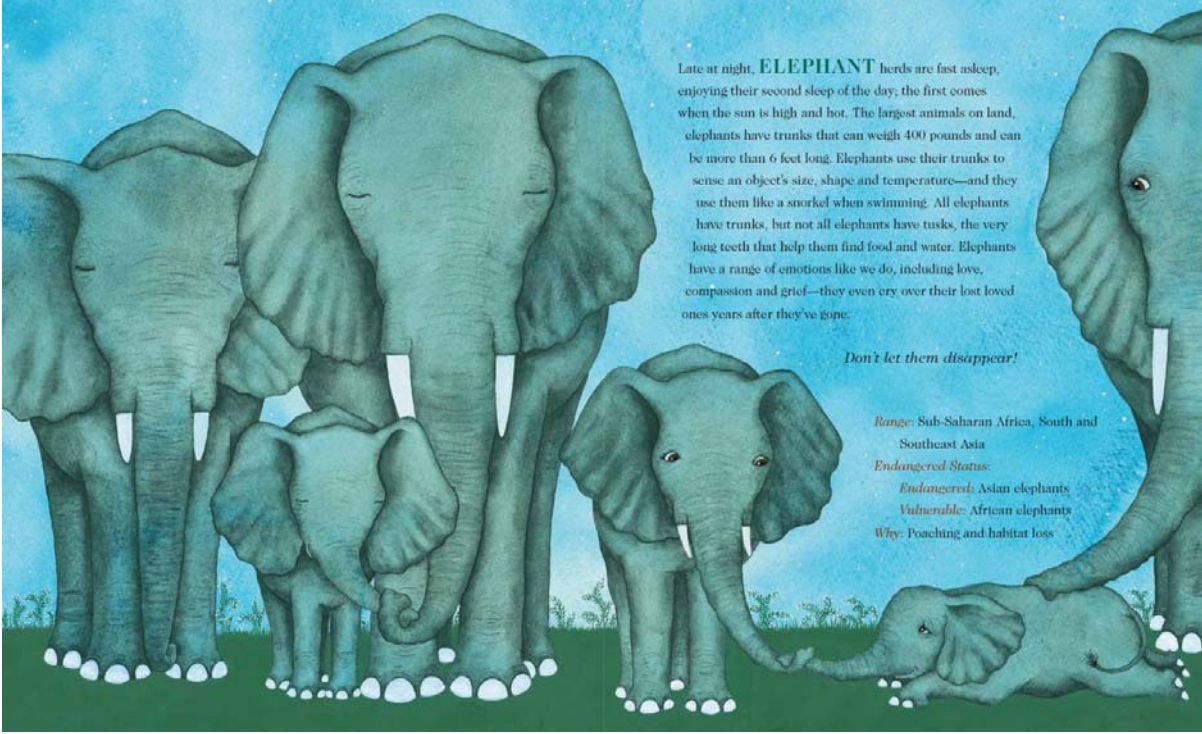
*Why:* Habitat loss and poaching (Bornean orangutans only)



When night has fallen, **TIGERS** wake up to hunt. Their night vision is up to six times more powerful than ours is. As the biggest cats on Earth, tigers need a lot of meat to stay healthy and strong. They hunt mainly for deer, wild pigs, antelope and water buffalo. Tigers are good athletes and can jump more than fifteen feet in one pounce and run more than forty miles per hour over short distances. Unlike most other cats, they love water and can swim more than three miles at a time. Generally solitary animals, tiger moms and cubs together form a streak, each with their own distinct pattern of brown, black or gray stripes.

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* South and Southeast Asia, China and Russia  
*Endangered Status:* Endangered  
*Why:* Poaching and habitat loss



Late at night, **ELEPHANT** herds are fast asleep, enjoying their second sleep of the day; the first comes when the sun is high and hot. The largest animals on land, elephants have trunks that can weigh 400 pounds and can be more than 6 feet long. Elephants use their trunks to sense an object's size, shape and temperature—and they use them like a snorkel when swimming. All elephants have trunks, but not all elephants have tusks, the very long teeth that help them find food and water. Elephants have a range of emotions like we do, including love, compassion and grief—they even cry over their lost loved ones years after they've gone.

*Don't let them disappear!*

*Range:* Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia

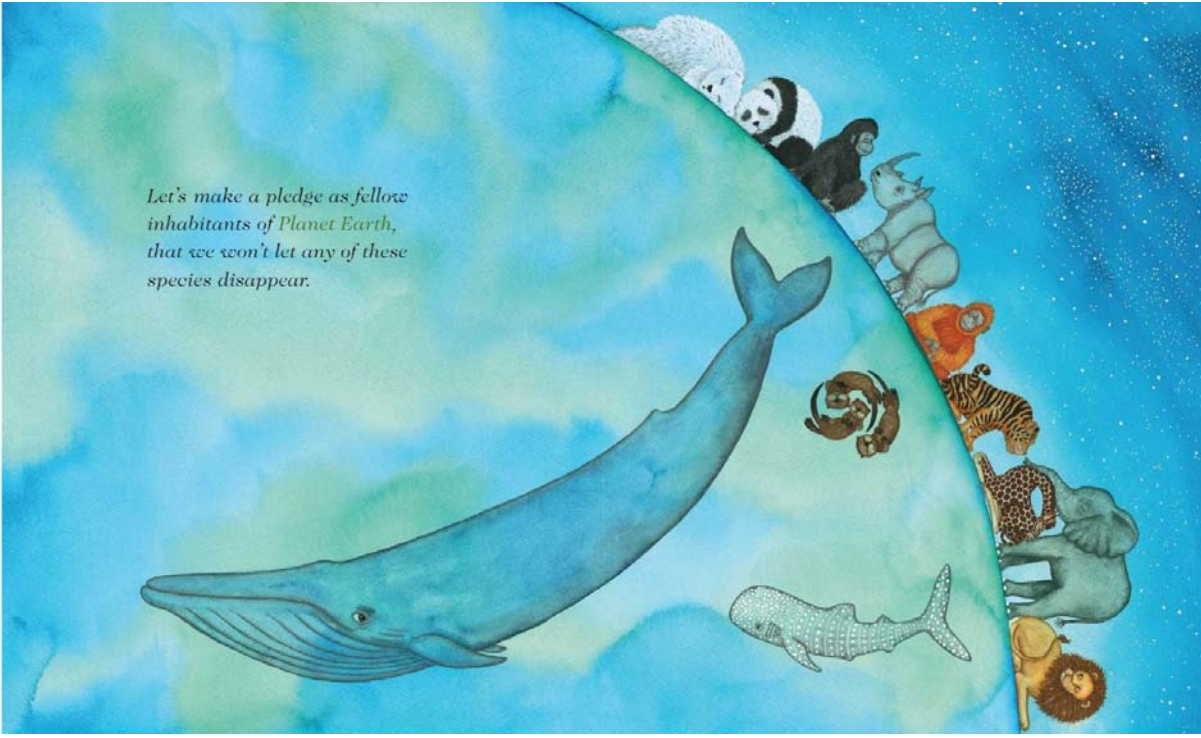
*Endangered Status:*

*Endangered:* Asian elephants

*Vulnerable:* African elephants

*Why:* Poaching and habitat loss

*Let's make a pledge as fellow  
inhabitants of Planet Earth,  
that we won't let any of these  
species disappear.*



## WHY ARE THEY ENDANGERED?

There are many reasons the animals in this book are endangered, which have been highlighted on each page. Here's a bit more information about some of the main ones:

- Global warming leads to warmer oceans and less sea ice, which is a particular challenge for polar bears.
- Water pollution makes it harder for sea otters to find the food they need.
- Overfishing of krill is a challenge for blue whales because there is less of their main source of food.
- Poaching, which is hunting that's against the law, is a threat to all animals that some people think are worth more dead than alive. This includes tigers (whose teeth, eyes and bones are wrongly believed to have magical powers), elephants (whose tusks are prized for their ivory), rhinos (whose horns some people wrongly think have medicinal properties) and mountain gorillas (for their meat).
- Legal hunting is a problem for animals in some places, including whale sharks (which are killed to make shark fin soup) as well as giraffes and lions (which are killed because some people think their heads and tails make great trophies).
- Clearing land for farming and development is shrinking many animals' habitats, including orangutans (whose tree-top homes are being cut down for palm oil plantations) and giant pandas (whose bamboo forest homes are being cut down for buildings, homes and roads).

All these things can be changed, though, and if we all work together to make those changes, eventually these animals won't be endangered anymore.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you and your family want to help animals like the ones in this book, here are some things you can do:

- Talk to your friends about the animals in this book and why they're so special.
- Support zoos and visit the animals there.
- Tell your family they shouldn't buy jewelry, trophies or anything else made from endangered animals.
- Recycle whenever you can to help fight global warming.
- Never throw trash in the ocean or anywhere but a recycling bin or trash can.
- Help plant trees in your community to fight climate change.
- Celebrate animals on their special days!



February 27, International Polar Bear Day



March 16, National Panda Day



May 18, Endangered Species Day



Last Wednesday in May, World Otter Day



June 21, World Giraffe Day



July 14, Shark Awareness Day



July 29, International Tiger Day



August 10, World Lion Day



August 12, World Elephant Day



August 19, World Orangutan Day



September 22, World Rhino Day



September 24, World Gorilla Day

We can work together to change the future.

