Endangered Species 1907

(Music)

Joan Cartan-Hansen, HOST: THE NEWS ABOUT ENDANGERED SPECIES IS NOT GOOD.

ONE IN FOUR MAMMALS,

ONE IN EIGHT BIRDS,

ONE THIRD OF ALL AMPHIBIANS

AND 70 PERCENT OF THE WORLD’S KNOWN PLANTS ARE IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION.

A SPECIES IS IN DANGER WHEN THE NUMBER OF THAT SPECIES DROPS BY MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OVER 10 YEARS

OR IF THERE AREN’T ENOUGH ADULTS TO REALLY INCREASE THE POPULATION,

OR IF THERE ISN’T ENOUGH HABITAT TO KEEP THE POPULATION ALIVE.

SCIENTISTS DEFINE THE LEVEL OF THREAT TO THE SURVIVAL OF A SPECIES IN FOUR WAYS.

VULNERABLE … A SPECIES IS DEFINED OR CLASSIFIED AS VULNERABLE WHEN IT FACES THE LOSS OF ITS HABITAT OR FROM THREATS LIKE POACHING.

ENDANGERED… A SPECIES IS CLASSIFIED AS ENDANGERED WHEN THE POPULATION OF THAT ANIMAL OR PLANT IS DANGEROUSLY LOW,

OR ALSO WHEN ITS HABITAT IS DISAPPEARING BECAUSE OF POLLUTION OR HUMAN ACTIVITY.

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED…

A SPECIES IS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED WHEN FEW OF THAT PLANT OR ANIMAL EXIST IN THE WILD,

WHEN THERE ARE SO FEW LEFT THAT THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO FIND A MATE OR PRODUCE YOUNG.

AND FINALLY, THERE IS EXTINCTION.

A SPECIES IS EXTINCT WHEN THERE ARE NO MORE LEFT, EITHER IN THE WILD OR IN CAPTIVITY.

IN THE LAST 500 YEARS, OVER 800 SPECIES HAVE GONE EXTINCT.

BUT NOW, WE ARE SEEING THE EXTICTION RATE INCREASING A THOUSAND TO TEN THOUSAND TIMES PAST RATES.

DOZENS OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS ARE GOING EXTINCT EVERY DAY.

BUT PLACES LIKE ZOO BOISE AND ITS STAFF ARE DOING THEIR PART TO SAVE ANIMALS.

Liz Littman, Acting Zoo Boise Director: We think it’s really important to NOT just protect the animals that we have here in the zoo and take really good care of them but to protect their counterparts out in the wild.

Cartan-Hansen: ZOO BOISE IS HOME TO MORE THAN 100 DIFFERENT ANIMALS.

24 ARE CLASSIFIED AS VULNERABLE, ENDANGERED OR CRITICALLY ENDANGERED.

Littman: These are Visayan Warty pigs. They are a native pig species to the Philippines. They are also critically endangered. At one point, they were native to six islands in the Philippines and have already gone extinct on four of them.

This is one of our Grevy’s zebra. They are a sub species of zebra native to Ethiopia and Kenya, Somalia. And they are also endangered AND THAT IS mostly due to habitat loss.

Grevy’s zebra YOU’LL SEE THEY have a different striped pattern than other zebras. Their belly is all white. Plain zebras and other sub species will have slightly different patterns. Zebra stripes are like our fingerprints. They are different for every individual animal. And we have Grevy’s zebras here at the zoo because they are the closest living RELATIVE to Idaho’s state fossil- the Hagerman horse.

SO This is Sarita and she is a cotton topped tamarin. And she is a critically endangered primate from South American, predominantly Columbia. And they are a favorite HERE at the zoo. They’re mostly threatened for habitat loss and people catching them for the pet trade and also FOR medical research.

These are black handed spider monkeys. This is Elvis and Sarah and they are found in Central and South America. And they are a really cool species because they have a prehensile tail, which means they can use their tail, kind of as another arm or leg AND THEY CAN USE IT to grab onto things WHEN they swing through the trees. And these guys are endangered as well, mostly through deforestation and habitat loss.

These are our red pandas and the two you are looking at are red panda cubs that were born here at the zoo this summer. So, we have Mom and Dad and these two boys. And they are a highly endangered species found in Asia, China, Nepal, India, high altitudes. They’re not related to pandas but they eat bamboo. So, that’s what panda means-bamboo eateR. They’re mostly threatened because of habitat loss, pet trade, and other human encroachments.

This is Tashee. He’s our male snow leopard HERE AT THE ZOO. We also have a female, Cabeta. Snow leopards are a really cool cat. They’re found in the high-altitude mountain ranges in Asia and it’s hard for scientists to know how many there are left in the wild because they are really hard to find.

SO They are critically endangered. There are probably less than 5000 of them left. And the two we have here are paired up as part of our species survival plan to hopefully mate here at the zoo and produce some cubs and HELP keep their species alive.

Cartan-Hansen: YOU CAN HELP SAVE THESE AND ALL THE OTHER ENDANGERED ANIMALS BY VISITING ZOO BOISE.

PART OF YOUR ENTRANCE FEE GOES TO CONSERVATION PROGRAMS SAVING ANIMALS IN THE WILD.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ENDANGERED SPECIES, CHECK OUT THE SCIENCE TREK WEBSITE.

YOU’LL FIND THAT AND LOTS OF OTHER SCIENCE TOPICS AT IDAHOPTV.ORG/SCIENCETREK

THANKS FOR JOINING US.

WE’LL SEE YOU NEXT TIME ON SCIENCE TREK.

(music)

Narrator: Presentation of Science Trek on Idaho Public Television is made possible through the generous support of the Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, committed to fulfilling the Moore and Bettis Family legacy of building the great state of Idaho; by the Idaho National Laboratory, mentoring talent and finding solutions for energy and security challenges; BY WALMART AND THE WALMART FOUNDATION, INCREASING ACCESS FOR IDAHO’S CHILDREN TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND SPARKING THEIR INTEREST IN CAREERS THAT SHAPE OUR WORLD; by the Friends of Idaho Public Television; and by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU, THANK YOU.