Activity 2
EXPLORING ENDANGERED ANIMALS

Our world is so diverse that scientists have named more than 2 million species, with more being discovered every day. But ecological threats like climate change and the loss of ecosystems such as forests and rivers mean that many living things are in danger of extinction — as many as 1 million of the estimated 7 to 18 million species on Earth are in danger! And because all living things on Earth are interconnected, the loss of these species will have a huge impact on our biodiversity.

PART 1.

Test your smarts about endangered animals at risk of extinction. Use the words in the boxes to match each animal's name with the benefit(s) it brings to its ecosystem and the threat(s) that are causing its decline. Most animals are under the burden of several of the listed threats.

Endangered Animal	Benefit(s) to Ecosystem	Threat(s)
African Rhinoceros		
European Lynx		
Coral		
Dugong (sea cow)		
Monarch Butterfly		
Hawaiian Ākohekohe		

Benefit to Ecosystem
- pollination
- grassland grazer
- insect control
- maintains marine environment
- apex predator
- provides habitat for other species

Threat
- climate change
- poaching/illegal trade/hunting
- food loss
- pollution
- non-native invasive species
- habitat loss or degradation

PART 2.

It's time to dig deeper into the dangers of animal extinction. Choose one animal from the list above and research it. Use the prompts on the right to help you identify details about the animal's plight. Then use the information you discover to create a presentation about the animal and what can be done to protect it.

My animal: _____
- What type of ecosystem does the animal live in?
- What are the benefits of this animal to the ecosystem? What would happen in its absence?
- What are the main threats to the animal?
- How can this animal be protected? What steps can we take to help save the animal?

Find out why biodiversity is crucial to our planet's survival and see how you can help!
https://nap.nationalacademies.org/resource/26384/interactive

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