

FLEXITEEK

WORLD LAND TRUST: ANIMAL PROFILES



Flexiteek is proud to work with the World Land Trust! Despite supporting their 'Plant A Tree' programme, trees are not the only wildlife supported. As well as having a positive impact on the environment, the planted trees expand fragmented habitats for birds, reptiles and mammals that have been forced into increasingly smaller areas. This wider range of connected habitat provides the space for increased biodiversity, less competition for food and lowers the chances animal-human conflict.

Existing blogs have highlighted the locations that this programme supports. Such as the Atlantic Forest, the D'ering-Dibru Saikhowa Elephant Corridor, and the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge. These blogs explore the threats to these areas, the support they receive and the benefits to local communities.

However, this blog will take a closer look at the animals that reside in these incredible places. Many of these animals are classified as Endangered and Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (ICUN).

These animals range from the iconic Bengal Tigers to the lesser known, Golden-Tailed Parrotlets. Regardless of their classification, status, or publicity, Flexiteek is proud to work alongside World Land Trust to support each and every one of these animals!



ATLANTIC FOREST - BRAZIL

- Southern Woolly Spider Monkey

This Endangered primate is often referred to as the largest in all the Americas. This fleecy mammal has a patch of skin on its tail, acting as a gripping pad for climbs along the treetops. Most of its diet consists of leaves and fruits. Spider monkeys tend to live in groups of twenty-five individuals of related males, with young females joining other groups. There are only about 1,300 individuals remaining due to widespread habitat destruction and hunting.

- Lowland Tapir

The Vulnerable Lowland Tapir was reintroduced to the Atlantic Forest by WLT and their local partner REGUA, after 100 years of being absent. With an average height of 30-43 inches, it is a surprise to learn that lowland tapirs are in the same family as the much larger Rhinos. Although typically land animals, lowland tapirs are strong swimmers, able to stay submerged in deep water to avoid predators. Numbers of the Lowland Tapir are threatened by deforestation, hunting and competition with domestic livestock.

- Crowned Solitary Eagle

The Crowned Solitary Eagle, has been classified as Endangered since 2016. These birds have an extraordinary call,, a long high-pitched whistle, that can be heard from 2km away! Their diet consists of other birds, small mammals, reptiles, and fish, they still-hunt from a perch where they will track their prey. The Crowned Solitary Eagle, faces many threats, including habitat destruction and direct persecution.

- Golden-Tailed Parrotlet

This species of Parrot have been deemed as Vulnerable. Parrotlets are the smallest parrot species with their wingspan averaging as 16cm and weighing only 60-70g. They usually have a green and yellow mix of feathers. Their call is reminiscent of a flock of seagulls however, unlike seagulls, they are silent when perched, only becoming vocal when in flight.

- Brazilian Snake-Necked Turtle

Following the theme of small animals. The Vulnerable Brazilian Snake-Necked Turtle is considered the smallest of freshwater turtles, measuring on average at 20cm. They tend to live in cold-water upland streams using gaps in forest cover to bask in the sun. However, they are threatened by commercial logging operations causing habitat loss and water pollution.



D'ering-Dibru Saikhowa Elephant

- Bengal Florican

These rare birds are classified as Critically Endangered, with less than 1,000 in the wild in 2017. Often known for their elaborate courtship where within the space of a few of months between March and May, males will perform a competitive display in groups of at least 7. However, due to the invasion of competing species and loss of habitat often through conversion to agricultural land and plantations, their numbers continue to decline. The Atlantic Forest is a recognised breeding ground for these intricate birds, highlighting the need to protect them.

- Bengal Tiger

These fierce Endangered animals are the largest of all the big cat species, with adults measuring up to 3 metres long, they can weigh over 250kg sustained by eating 10-25 lbs of meat a day! As carnivorous creatures, they use the stalk and ambush method. The biggest threats to their survival are poaching and habitat loss. With all sub-species of tiger living in just 7% of their original historical habitat.



- Western Hoolock Gibbon

One of Asia's most endangered primates is the Western Hoolock Gibbon. They are identified from other apes due to their long arms and dense hair. These musical animals are also known for their loud calls, often in unison, as part of duet calls used to mark their territory. They tend to have alternating high and low notes that call rapidly, and get quicker with ever call, resulting in a hypnotising-sounding melody.



- Indian Leopard

The Indian Leopard, deemed Vulnerable, have unique large rosettes decorating their body. They are solitary animals, and hunt opportunistically, however, the leopards themselves are often hunted and poached. Over 16 years, more than 3,000 leopards were poached in India alone. They feel the negative effects of habitat loss more than other species too due to their reliance of trees for climbing and cover. The Indian Leopard has recently been put up for review by the IUCN due to reports of less than 10,000 mature adults in the wild.

- Asian Elephant

With fewer than 50,000 Asian Elephants in the wild, they are deemed Endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). They are often thought to be more closely linked to the Extinct Woolly Mammoth than their closer relatives, African elephants. Asian elephants tend to be much smaller than the African sub-species but still spend nineteen hours a day eating grass, roots, and bark. Elephants are often heralded as ecosystem engineers by clearing large areas of vegetation, creating room for growth. Their biggest threat alongside habitat loss is human-animal conflict often being driven into populated areas due to smaller habitats resulting in a destruction of property and sometimes lives which prompts retaliatory action from residents of the villages.



Caucasus Wildlife Refuge - Armenia

- Caucasian Leopard

The Caucasian Leopard (AKA Persian Leopard) classified as Endangered, is the biggest of the eight leopard sub-species. They tend to use a stalk and attack methods of prey animals. Caucasian leopards tend to be nocturnal, but if there are no other large predators, there can be more movement throughout the day. They tend to reside in remote, mountainous habitats. There is thought to be less than 1,000 Caucasian Leopards in the wild as their choice of habitat exposes them to increased vulnerability to habitat fragmentation. Their unique coats also result in them being targeted by poachers and the fur trade.



- Egyptian Vulture

This Endangered Species is also known as 'Pharaoh's Chicken' due to their depiction in hieroglyphs and protection under ancient Pharaonic law. The smallest of vultures, with a wingspan of 155-170cm, is by no means gentle. They usually feed upon carrion, decaying meat, as well as acting as an opportunistic feeder. They can fly over 80km daily to find food. The Egyptian Vulture is also very intelligent, using stones to crack open eggs and twigs to gather wool strands. Their most prominent threat tends to be their exposure to poisons. Egyptian vultures have experienced a global population decline of 50-79% over three generations. The Refuge has been recognised as a breeding ground and support from WLT is helping to protect these birds.



Caucasus Wildlife Refuge - Armenia

- Syrian Brown Bear

This small Brown Bear subspecies, the Syrian Brown Bear, weighs up to 250kg. It tends to have lighter fur colour than its other relatives and is the only bear in the world to have white claws. They tend to follow an omnivorous diet and can be tempted to consume livestock upon entering farmland. There are limited statistics available for this species, but a rough estimate of the population is approximately 400-600. Syrian Brown Bear cubs have been identified within the protected Armenian land providing a more optimistic outlook about their survival as a sub-species.



- Armenian Mouflon

The Armenian Mouflon is a wild sheep, thought to be the ancestor of all domestic sheep breeds. They are not currently classified due to insufficient data. Although there is a rough estimate of there being around 250 in Armenia. Mouflons tend to be non-territorial and promiscuous and often have twins for each pregnancy. With good balance, they tend to live on steep mountains that provide suitable grazing. Its biggest threats come from its descendants, the modern domestic sheep breeds due to the competition for food, displacement for foraging and the risk of transmitting diseases.



- Eurasian Lynx

This large Lynx sub-species generally weighs 18-36kg. These are elusive and solitary creatures, active at dawn and dusk. Their lifestyle is supported by the animal acute hearing and eyesight. The range of a male Eurasian Lynx can vary between 100 km² and 1,000 km², which will include 1 - 2 female home ranges. This makes their communication skills more important, whilst they cannot roar, they can mew, hiss and purr. During the mating season emit a loud mating call. Although their conservation status was downgraded in 2008 from Near Threatened to Least Concern, they still experience threats, this is mainly due to poachers and habitat loss.



Planting trees will provide a home and safer place for all of these amazing animals, creating more accessible habitats and connecting pockets of land, reducing competition for resources and mates, limiting disease transmission and increasing genetic diversity, all resulting in an improved chance of survival.

Want to support World Land Trust and the animals they help protect? Visit [here](#) to donate, or [here](#) to join the Plant A Tree programme.

Find out more about Flexiteek's environmental commitment [here](#).

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