



## *In The News*

Current Events in Earth & Space Science

Summaries for the Classroom

---

### **Mammal Extinction**

In 2011, the world has seen the loss of some mammals through species extinction. The Western Black Rhino and Eastern Cougar no longer roam the planet, and an entire genus of African antelope is on the verge of extinction. Why is this happening? What can be done?

#### **Articles to Share with Students**

National Geographic News – Entire Mammal Genus on Brink of Extinction

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/11/111108-hirolas-extinct-genus-animals-science-africa-antelopes/>

CNN.com – Western Black Rhino Declared Extinct

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/10/world/africa/rhino-extinct-species-report/index.html>

NPR AUDIO: Fish and Wildlife Service: Eastern Cougar's Extinct

<http://www.npr.org/2011/03/03/134222014/Fish-And-Wildlife-Service-Declares-Eastern-Cougar-Extinct>

BBC VIDEO: IUCN: Quarter of the world's mammals are at risk of extinction

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-15678307>

#### **General Information**

The Encyclopedia of Earth – Causes of Extinction

[http://www.eoearth.org/article/Causes\\_of\\_extinction?topic=58074](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Causes_of_extinction?topic=58074)

ARKive – Discover the World's Most Endangered Species

<http://www.arkive.org/>

New York Times Topics – Endangered and Extinct Species

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/endangered\\_and\\_extinct\\_species/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/endangered_and_extinct_species/index.html)

## Questions for Classroom Discussion

- What does it mean for a species to be extinct?
- What is the IUCN? What is The Red List?
- What is the difference between a genus and a species?
- What are some of the causes for species to go extinct?
- Can we stop mammal species from going extinct? What are your thoughts?
- What do you think will be the impacts on the biosphere of planet Earth if mammal species continue to go extinct?
- Do you think humans should protect endangered animals or allow them to go extinct? Why/why not?
- If you were allowed to save three mammals from the endangered species list so they would not go extinct, which animals would you choose and why?

## Tags

Mammals, Extinction

## Big Ideas

From the Earth Science Literacy Principles

- Big Idea 1. Earth scientists use repeatable observations and testable ideas to understand and explain our planet. (1.2, 1.3, 1.5)
- Big Idea 3. Earth is a complex system of interacting rock, water, air, and life. (3.6)
- Big Idea 6. Life evolves on a dynamic Earth and continuously modifies Earth. (6.2, 6.6, 6.7)
- Big Idea 9. Humans significantly alter the Earth. (9.7, 9.8, 9.9)

From The Big Ideas in Earth and Space Science (ESBD)

- The Biosphere (17)
- The Nature of Science (22, 25)

*Compiled November 12, 2011, by L.A. Guertin*