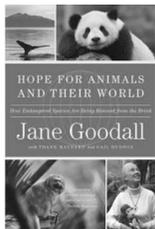


# Hope for Animals

*Prasanna Venkatesh V*



*Hope for Animals and their World:  
How Endangered Species are Being  
Rescued from the Brink*

**Jane Goodall**

Grand Central Publishing. Pages:  
432, 2011, Hardcover Price: ~₹604.  
(ISBN-13:9780446581783)

Or

[Kindle Edition]

Amazon Digital South Asia Services,  
Inc., Pages:403, 2011, Price: ~₹575  
(21061 KB, ASIN: B00FOS04HW)

“It is also important to realize that bad news is more likely to be published as being more ‘newsworthy’. In fact, there are also many truly wonderful things going on as people work selflessly to make this world better. One of the reasons we wanted to write *Hope for Animals and Their World* was to share some of the good news.”

When I was a kid I used to repeatedly browse through the *Childcraft Series – Nature in Danger*, just to see the picture of a golden lion tamarin. If you have not seen one – at least in pictures – I urge you to Google it. It will capture your attention immediately with its spectacular shining golden hair and a leonine mane. It is disheartening to know that it is still one of the endangered new world primates. ‘*Hope for Animals*’ is about the efforts made by several people to conserve such species under the threat of extinction – ranging from

the carrion beetle to the red wolf. Jane Goodall writes about her visits to various conservation centres and personal exchanges with conservation biologists who are working to help save the biodiversity of our planet.

Each chapter deals with various species which are either extinct in the wild or at the brink of extinction or critically endangered. It brings out the various details of the species, its history, its habitat and the reasons for the threat of extinction. It discusses how captive breeding programs are trying hard to reintroduce the species in the wild so that they will be back to their rightful homes. It also brings out various problems associated with each of the programs and how smart and dedicated people eventually overcome these problems.

Captive-bred animals are naïve about natural threats and predation is one of the leading reasons for why reintroduction efforts fail. In case of the Californian condors, there were very few condors, about nine in the breeding program and they lacked the genetic variability to be self sustaining. There were also problems with their behaviour; it was found that the captive bred parents in addition to providing the young with normal food had been feeding them with trash such as plastic and glass. In other cases so little was known about the species, there was no concrete method of raising them in captivity. Saving charismatic creatures is not the only goal here. Every species has its own role to play in the ecosystem which we don’t understand completely. If any species goes extinct in the



ecosystem, that species does not play its designated ecological role. For instance, the vultures in India have a major part in scavenging of dead carrion. If they do not do their job, carrion bound diseases will take a toll on other species. In the case of the carrion beetle, for instance it keeps the ant population in check.

As Jane Goodall puts it, “After all, it will make little difference to an elephant if a small plant vanishes; it will make all the difference between survival and extinction to a butterfly whose larvae feed exclusively on the leaves of that plant. All the biologists know that all living things are interconnected in the web of life; that losing even the smallest strand can have unforeseen consequences.”

The last part of the book is called ‘The Nature of Hope’, and it has some interesting solutions that have been tried and tested to help improve biodiversity and sustainability in various places by The Jane Goodall Foundation and others. Overall this book is an informative read about the conservation programs around the world. It is important to recognise that the animal species with which we share the planet have value in their own right. We have been messing things up and it is our duty to put things in their right place. We need really smart and dedicated people thinking about this problem and acting on it. Conservation is labour intensive and resource intensive. We really do need to think how we should manage our resources. Or not creating the problem in the first place.

I end with a quote by Dr Rodney Saylor of Washington State University from this book. “If we allow extinctions to happen through ignorance or greed, then with the loss of each endangered species and unique population, our world becomes less diverse and strikingly less beautiful and mysterious. Our oceans, grasslands, and forests will echo with silence, and the human heart will know that something is missing – but it will be too late.”

### Suggested Reading

- [1] E O Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*, W W Norton & Company, 1999.
- [2] **Managing Planet Earth: Special Issue, *Scientific American*, Vol.261, No.3, September 1989.**
- [3] **If the reader wants to know more on biodiversity, they are directed to the following articles by Prof Madhav Gadgil that appeared in *Resonance* first volume in the year 1996 (*Resonance*, Vol.1, No.1, pp.14-19; Vol.1, No.2, pp.18-25; Vol.1, No.4, pp.15-22; Vol.1, No.8, pp.16-21; Vol.1, No.9, pp.8-13; Vol.1, No.12, pp.17-25).**
- [4] ***Resonance* has also covered articles regarding the loss of biodiversity and extinction of species specific to India in its Nature Watch column, (*Resonance*, Vol.2, No.2, pp.75-82, 1997; Vol.5, No.11, pp.69-79, 2000; Vol.6, No.3, pp.76-85, 2001; Vol.9, No.9, pp.62-73, 2004; Vol.14, No.12, pp.1206-1209, 2009).**
- [5] ***Current Conservation* is a magazine that communicates conservation-related issues and science in an accessible manner to a wide audience. The online content is freely available. <http://www.currentconservation.org/>**

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