

Panda conservation drive harms other mammals

7th August, 2020



Zoologists have long hailed saving the giant panda from the brink of extinction as a conservation success story. For decades, the panda has been the "poster animal" for all endangered species. It is even on the logo of the World Wildlife Fund.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature removed it from the endangered species list in 2016, although it remains "vulnerable". Many conservationists are now concerned this has come at a cost to other mammals, especially those sharing its habitat. A study published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution found that the leopard, snow leopard, wolf and Asian wild dog have almost disappeared from the majority of areas in which the giant panda lives.

Researcher Professor Sheng Li, from Peking University, commended the efforts to protect the giant panda but lamented this has come at the expense of some of China's larger, carnivorous mammals. Since panda conservation areas were established in the 1960s, Asian wild dogs have disappeared from 95% of protected reserves, leopards from 81%, wolves from 77%, and snow leopards from 38%. Professor Li said his findings "indicate the insufficiency of giant panda conservation for protecting these large carnivore species". However, he added: "Failing to safeguard these large carnivore species does not erase the power of the giant panda as an umbrella that has effectively sheltered many other species."

Sources: bbc.com / theguardian.com / cnn.com

Writing

It is a crime against humanity if a species of animal becomes extinct. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

zoologists / hailed / giant / panda / extinction / endangered / species / journal / dog / efforts / carnivorous / mammals / leopards / wolves / safeguard / umbrella / power

True / False

- a) Zoologists said they have long failed giant panda conservation. T / F
- b) The giant panda is on the logo for the World Wildlife Fund. T / F
- c) The giant panda is now vulnerable but not endangered. T / F
- d) The snow leopard has suffered because of panda conservation efforts. T / F
- e) Panda conservation started in the 1950s. T / F
- f) Over 90% of Asian wild dogs have gone from areas where pandas live. T / F
- g) A professor said panda conservation helped to protect large carnivores. T / F
- h) A conservation group said umbrellas were effective in helping pandas. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. brink | a. vanished |
| 2. logo | b. loss |
| 3. vulnerable | c. protect |
| 4. cost | d. symbol |
| 5. disappeared | e. set up |
| 6. commended | f. verge |
| 7. lamented | g. remove |
| 8. established | h. at risk |
| 9. safeguard | i. praised |
| 10. erase | j. rued |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How happy are you that pandas are not on the brink of extinction?
- c) What is your favourite mammal?
- d) What do you think of the idea of conservation reserves?
- e) What will the endangered species list look like in 50 years from now?
- f) What three adjectives best describe the giant panda?
- g) Is it OK for the panda to be saved at the expense of other animals?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the conservationists?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. saving the giant panda from the brink | a. species list |
| 2. removed it from the endangered | b. of the giant panda |
| 3. this has come at a cost | c. of areas |
| 4. A study published | d. in the 1960s |
| 5. disappeared from the majority | e. to other mammals |
| 6. commended the efforts to | f. these |
| 7. conservation areas were established | g. of extinction |
| 8. large | h. protect the giant panda |
| 9. Failing to safeguard | i. in the journal |
| 10. erase the power | j. carnivore species |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about pandas?
- How sad are you that animals are on the brink of extinction?
- What other conservation success stories do you know of?
- What do you think of the World Wildlife Fund?
- What animals are you worried about?
- Why are so many species becoming extinct?
- How interesting are conservation journals?
- What advice do you have for conservationists?

Spelling

- zlotsoosgi have long hailed saving the giant panda
- the brink of tiionctnxe
- the andedgeren species list
- although it remains aleuvenbrl
- A study published in the njluaor
- disappeared from the imjrytoa of areas
- ondecmmed the efforts to protect the giant panda
- China's larger, uiovnrocras mammals
- protected sseererv
- the ucsnifyifcnie of giant panda conservation
- Failing to afseugdar these
- eelthdrse many other species

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. h	4. b	5. a
6. i	7. j	8. e	9. c	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Giant Pandas

You think giant pandas are the most important thing to be protected. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): polite manners, a language or roses.

Role B – Polite Manners

You think polite manners the most important thing to be protected. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): giant pandas, a language or roses.

Role C – A Language

You think a language is the most important thing to be protected. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): polite manners, giant pandas or roses.

Role D – Roses

You think roses are the most important thing to be protected. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): polite manners, a language or giant pandas.

Speaking – Extinction

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that are most important to save from extinction at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|----------------------|
| • Snails | • Giant pandas |
| • Plankton | • Polite manners |
| • A recipe | • A language |
| • Roses | • An Amazonian tribe |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.