

UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
Protecting Endangered Animals



JACKRABBIT MUN V

L.B. POLY - MAY 20th, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chair Letters.....	3
Vice Chair and Rapporteur Letters.....	4
Committee Description.....	6
Introduction.....	7
Background.....	8
United Nations Involvement.....	11
Bloc Positions.....	13
Questions to Consider	16
Works Cited.....	17



HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Greetings Delegates,

I am thrilled to serve as Head Chair for this year's UNEP committee for Jackrabbit MUN V! I am currently a junior at Long Beach Poly High School and this is my third year participating in Model UN. Outside of MUN, I am the President of our L.B.P. Club De Français and am the Vice President for our Speech and Debate Team. I am also a member of the Poly yearbook staff. Outside of school, I am a musician, and I am usually practicing one of my two main instruments; guitar or piano. I also thoroughly enjoy baking and equestrian English show jumping!

Our committee topic of endangered animals has been a consistently resurfacing issue globally, and something that I am passionate about as an animal lover. I am honored that we will be able to partake in debate about this pressing issue here at Jackrabbit MUN.

Considering the complexities that our committee topic possesses I am eager to see how debate unfolds, and how each delegate will approach feasible solutions. I hope to see you all at Jackrabbit MUN in May!

Regards,

Chelsea Huerta

UNEP Committee | Head Chair

chelseahuertamun@gmail.com



VICE CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

I hope everyone is excited for Jackrabbit MUN V. My name is David Cortez, and I will be your Vice Chair for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This is my first year on Jackrabbit MUN staff and boy o boy is it going to be fun!

I am a senior at Long Beach Poly High School and this is my first year participating in MUN whatsoever! Initially joining on a whim, I've gotta say that this whim is my best whim yet! Model United Nations has opened my view on global current events, culturals, and history. Not to mention I've met some of the best people I know through this activity- plus it looks good for college!

Outside of MUN I am a section leader for Poly's Marching Unit (Go Saxophones!) and have also spent a good year in Poly's gardening club (I planted baby carrots!). Now outside of school I currently spend my Saturdays at Long Beach Fire Dept. 17 for fire training (I get to destroy cars and run around with the fire hose!). I also have my own little 9 to 5 at a vegan fast food restaurant (...it's not that fun, working kinda sucks).

Anything environment you can count me in! When it comes to the environment, we are in the fight of our lives and we are losing. We have already passed the point of no return and our situation is not getting any better. I love environmental committees because while everyone agrees, "yeah, we need to protect endangered animals." BUT the beauty lies within the nuance. With each delegate presenting new and unique ideas that don't fall under the same ol' "poaching is bad" rhetoric. Genuinely, genuinely, am I looking forward to what pot our committee stirs up.

Best Regards,

David Cortez

UNEP Committee | Vice Chair



RAPPORTEUR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

I'm so happy that you all will be joining us at Jackrabbit MUN V! I commend you all for pushing yourselves to learn more about research, policy, debate, and collaboration. With all of the issues that exist, it's critical that we have a rising generation of passionate, ambitious, and educated leaders who are willing to implement the sustainable solutions necessary to create a more equitable world. Therefore, I am so excited to learn about the innovative ideas you all will bring to the table and the ones you will continue to create outside of the conference!

For those of you who may be nervous or unsure of what to expect, just know that your chairs will be here to encourage and support you! As intimidating public speaking can be, we are all here to learn from one another. I hope you all will become comfortable and confident enough to share all of the research you did and policies you developed.

Starting off as a shy student to the MUN program here at Poly, I've shared many of the same concerns and fears some of you may have. However, it is important to push ourselves outside of our comfort zones in order to become more aware of the growth and potential that exists within us. Just know that I admire you all for being here, and I hope that you all leave the conference with a great experience and awesome memories!

Best,

Isabel Martinez

UNEP Committee | Rapporteur

isabelmartinezmun@gmail.com



COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the global authority that sets the environmental agenda, promotes the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.



UNEP employs seven interlinked subprograms for action: Climate Action, Chemicals and Pollutants Action, Nature Action, Science Policy, Environmental Governance, Finance and Economic Transformations, and Digital Transformations.

UNEP works closely with its 193 Member States, representatives from civil society, businesses, and other major groups and stakeholders to address environmental challenges through the UN Environment Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment.



TOPIC SYNOPSIS

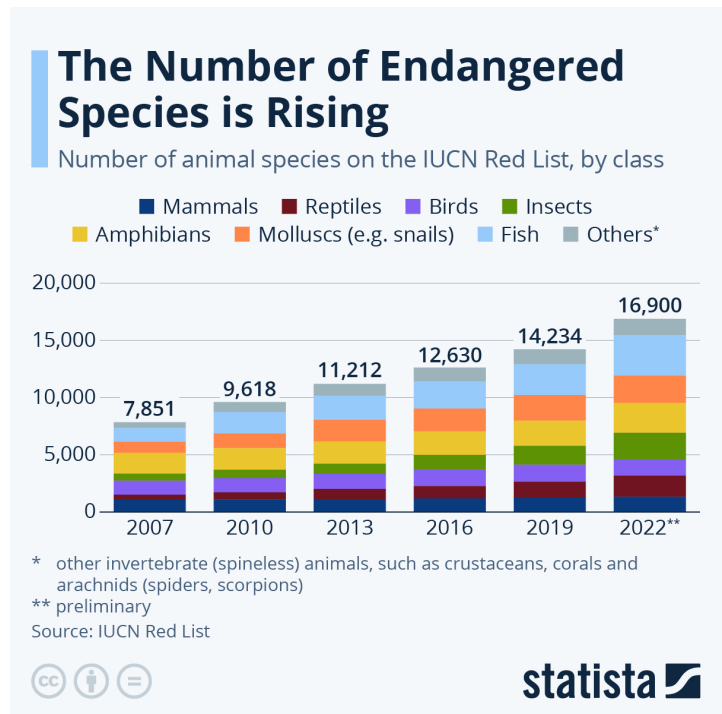
From the smallest ant to the largest whale, the Earth is home to more than 8.7 million plant and animal species. However, for many reasons, over 40,000 of these species are currently considered threatened or endangered. The removal of any of these species from ecosystems can have disastrous ecological effects, but solving the issue is no easy task. From climate change to poaching to habitat destruction, these animal extinctions and the resulting loss of biodiversity can have profound implications for the future of humanity. Delegates in this committee will be tasked with tackling this problem head-on, working together to balance individual countries' political, social, and economic needs with the ultimate needs of the planet.



BACKGROUND

The loss of habitat due to farming, mining, new urban developments, and the demand for wildlife products has significantly decreased the natural space for wildlife. According to the United Nations, at least two-thirds of the planet's land and seas have been transformed by human activity, resulting in the unprecedented loss of species we are currently seeing—by some estimates as much as 1,000 times greater than any recorded time in history. The degradation and destruction of habitats have increased the exposure of humans to zoonotic diseases (illnesses that arise from human contact with animals). Habitat destruction can also encourage more rapid evolutionary processes and diversification of diseases.

The illegal wildlife trade generates as much as US\$23 billion annually and continues to pose a real danger to biodiversity, ecosystems, and human health, as a number of emerging diseases stem from animal products. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), together with other United Nations agencies, governments, international organizations, and the private sector, is working to raise awareness, enforce laws, and enlist the support of local communities to stop the illegal trade in wildlife.



The Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 established a federal list of endangered species in the U.S. and outlawed the harming of listed species. It also established the authority for the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land important to conservation. The Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969 expanded the federal list to include endangered species worldwide and expanded the protections for these species.

Additionally, the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reported that around one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades. This is more than ever before in human history. The average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20%, mostly since 1900. More than 40% of amphibian species, almost 33% of reef-forming corals, and more than a third of all marine mammals are threatened.

Though the picture is less clear for insect species, available evidence supports a tentative estimate of 10% being threatened. At least 680 vertebrate species had been driven to extinction since the 16th century, and more than 9% of all domesticated breeds of mammals used for food and agriculture had become extinct by 2016, with at least 1,000 more breeds still threatened.



The five direct drivers of change in nature with the largest relative global impacts so far are changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms,



climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species. About 66% of the marine environment has been significantly altered by human actions. On average, these trends have been less severe or avoided in areas held or managed by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

Poachers kill between 20,000–30,000 African elephants each year for the illegal ivory trade, funded by global organized crime syndicates and fueled largely by demand



in China and elsewhere in Asia. In just the past ten years, Africa's elephant population declined by 110,000—almost a third. Additionally, rhinoceros poaching has been on the rise in recent years due to demand for rhino horn in Asia, particularly in Vietnam and China, where it is believed to have medicinal

properties. The illegal trade in wildlife is not limited to elephants and rhinoceroses, but also includes pangolins, tigers, lions, and other big cats, as well as birds and reptiles.



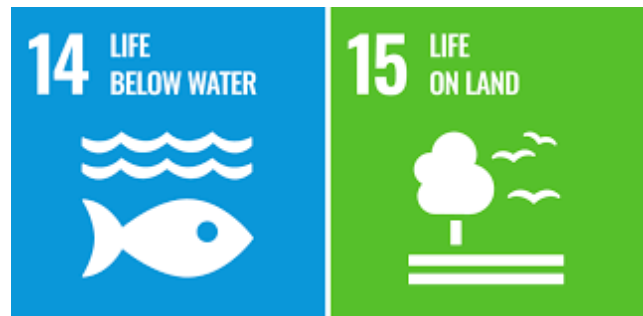
UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

The United Nations has been actively involved in efforts to protect endangered animals and their habitats. In 1973, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was adopted, with the aim of regulating international trade in endangered species and preventing their extinction. This treaty has been ratified by 183 countries and is considered one of the most successful international environmental agreements. CITES has helped to curb illegal trade in endangered species, and has contributed to the recovery of several species that were once on the brink of extinction.

In addition to CITES, the United Nations General Assembly has passed several resolutions related to the conservation of endangered animals. In 2013, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Tackling the Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife", which called on all member states to take action to combat illegal wildlife trade, including strengthening laws, increasing penalties for wildlife crimes, and improving cooperation among law enforcement agencies.

Another important initiative is the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, which include specific targets related to the

conservation of biodiversity and the protection of endangered animals. Goal 14, for example, aims to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development", while Goal 15 seeks to "protect, restore and promote



sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss."

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has also been involved in efforts to protect endangered animals. In 2010, UNEP launched the "Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals" (CMS), which aims to conserve migratory species and their habitats. The CMS has 131 member countries and covers a wide range of species, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and fish. Overall, the United Nations and its bodies have played a crucial role in raising awareness about the threat of extinction faced by many animal species, and in developing strategies to protect these species and their habitats. Through the adoption of international treaties and resolutions, the UN has helped to coordinate global efforts to conserve endangered animals and prevent further loss of biodiversity.



BLOC POSITIONS

African Bloc

The African bloc is made up of 55 member countries and is committed to protecting its wildlife and ecosystems while promoting sustainable development practices. The bloc has played a significant role in the fight against illegal wildlife trafficking, which has been a major challenge for the continent. African countries have increased their law enforcement efforts and have been working closely with international partners to combat wildlife trafficking. In 2020, the African Elephant Coalition, a group of 32 African countries, called for a total ban on the ivory trade and stronger measures to protect elephants. The bloc has also advocated for greater funding for conservation programs and sustainable development initiatives, such as eco-tourism.

Asia-Pacific Bloc

The Asia-Pacific bloc is home to some of the world's most threatened species, such as tigers, rhinos, and pangolins, and is a major market for wildlife products. The bloc has recognized the need to address the demand side of illegal wildlife trade and has been working to increase awareness and education about the impact of the trade on ecosystems and human health. Countries in this bloc have also strengthened their domestic laws and law enforcement efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. For example, China banned the domestic trade in ivory in 2017, which was a significant step in the fight against elephant poaching. The bloc has also been working to promote alternative livelihoods for communities that rely on wildlife trade, such as sustainable agriculture and tourism.



Eastern European Bloc

The Eastern European bloc is made up of 11 countries and is committed to promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. The bloc has recognized the importance of combating illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife and has been working to strengthen domestic and international laws against these activities. The bloc has also been working to increase funding for conservation programs, such as habitat restoration and wildlife monitoring. For example, Romania has been working to protect its large carnivores, such as bears and wolves, through habitat restoration and education programs.

Latin American Bloc

The Latin American bloc is made up of 33 countries and is home to some of the world's most biologically diverse regions. The bloc has recognized the importance of protecting these unique ecosystems and the endangered species that inhabit them. Countries in the bloc have been working to combat illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife, as well as to address the drivers of habitat destruction, such as mining and deforestation. Brazil, for example, has been working to protect the Amazon rainforest through increased law enforcement efforts and sustainable development initiatives, such as community-based conservation programs.

Middle Eastern Bloc

The Middle Eastern bloc is made up of 18 countries and has recognized the importance of biodiversity conservation and the need to combat illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife. The bloc has been working to strengthen domestic and international laws against these activities and to increase funding for conservation programs. The United



Arab Emirates, for example, has been working to combat the illegal trade in falcons through increased law enforcement efforts and public awareness campaigns.

Western Bloc

The Western bloc is made up of North America, Europe, and Australia, and is committed to protecting endangered species and ecosystems while promoting sustainable development. The bloc has been working to combat illegal poaching and trafficking of wildlife, such as through increased law enforcement efforts and demand reduction campaigns. The bloc has also been working to promote sustainable development initiatives, such as renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. For example, the European Union has implemented a ban on the trade in seal products to protect the welfare of seals and to support sustainable fisheries.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are the main drivers of endangered species, and how can they be addressed?
- How can the international community work together to combat illegal wildlife trade?
- What role do local communities play in protecting endangered species?
 - How can they be involved in conservation efforts?
- How can the economic and social benefits of biodiversity be balanced against the need for conservation?
- What role can technology play in conservation efforts?



WORKS CITED

- Brown, Joshua. "Study: Elephant Poaching Costs Africa \$25 Million per Year in Lost Tourism." *The University of Vermont*, 1 Nov. 2016, <https://www.uvm.edu/news/story/study-elephant-poaching-costs-africa-25-million-year-lost-tourism>.
- Cho, Renee, et al. "Why Endangered Species Matter." *State of the Planet*, 3 Apr. 2019, <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/03/26/endangered-species-matter/#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20rate%20of%20extinction,climate%20change%2C%20and%20nitrogen%20pollution>.
- "Endangered Species." *Endangered Species | UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform*, <https://leap.unep.org/knowledge/glossary/endangered-species>.
- Environment, UN. "About UN Environment Programme." *UNEP*, <https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment>.
- "Importance of the Endangered Species Act." *Endangered Species Coalition*, <https://www.endangered.org/importance-of-the-endangered-species-act/#:~:text=Ecological%20importance&text=Each%20species%20that%20is%20lost,air%2C%20water%2C%20or%20land>.
- Kennedy, Fiona. "A History of the Endangered Species Act." *Earth Day*, 10 Mar. 2022, <https://www.earthday.org/a-history-of-the-endangered-species-act/>.
- "Tackling Wildlife Crime Through International Agreement." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*,
-



<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/sustainable-development-goals/human-impact-stories/tackling-wildlife-crime-through-international-agreement.html> .

“Three Ways the United Nations Environment Programme Works to Address Illegal Trade in Wildlife.” *UNEP*,

[https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/three-ways-united-nations-environment-programme-works-address-illegal-trade#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Environment%20Programme%20\(UNEP\)%20hosts%20the%20Convention%20on,of%20plants%20to%20prevent%20overexploitation](https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/three-ways-united-nations-environment-programme-works-address-illegal-trade#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Environment%20Programme%20(UNEP)%20hosts%20the%20Convention%20on,of%20plants%20to%20prevent%20overexploitation) .

“UN Report: Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating' – United Nations Sustainable Development.” *United Nations*,
United Nations,

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report> .

