

HOPE FOR ANIMALS AND THEIR WORLD

Book Group Discussion Questions

Considering its warm, conversational tone and its depth of timely information, *Hope for Animals and Their World* makes an excellent book for book groups to read and discuss. The following 10 questions will help kick start your discussion.

1. Of the many success stories profiled in this book, which ones inspired you the most?
2. When the California condor became seriously endangered the “protectionist” wanted to give the birds better protection in the wild and if this did not work, let them gradually disappear with dignity. “Interventionists” wanted to save the bird through captive breeding with the hope that they could be successfully re-released back into the wild. Given what you know of the captive-bred condors’ challenges re-acclimating to life the wild, where do you stand in this debate?
3. Some biologists feel strongly that the animals they study should be identified by numbers, believing this practice is more scientific. For instance, the whooping cranes in the Operation Migration are known only by numbers. Some biologist also argue that giving animals numbers instead of names creates emotional distance for the scientists as well as the general public—helping everyone handle the inevitable losses of individuals in captivity and the wild. Other biologists feel equally strongly that animals should be identified by names. Which side of this debate do you stand on?
4. If an animal species no longer has a suitable habitat on Earth to sustain it do you think it should still be saved through captive breeding? Why or why not?
5. Do you think it’s ethically correct to eradicate cats, rats, and other invasive species from our islands in order to save endemic species from extinction?
6. Until you read the chapter “Healing Earth’s Scars” were you aware of how successfully we can restore a ravaged habitat? Have you seen other examples of this kind of land and water restoration in your life?
7. Many readers were amazed to learn that some animals and plants that we assumed were extinct are now being re-discovered in remote areas of the planet, and that completely new species of animals and plants are still being discovered on Earth. Did this surprise you? What else surprised you in the book?
8. Throughout the book Jane Goodall references young people’s innate attraction to the natural world, including her own girlhood fascination with animals and plants. What were the plants, trees, or animals that you were drawn to as a youth? Did those interests shape your adult relationship to the natural world? If so, how?
9. In the chapter “Why Save Endangered Species?” Jane Goodall writes about being motivated by her love of animals, such as the infant chimpanzee Flint, and how other biologists are motivated by their love for the endangered animals they protect. Is there an animal or plant that you feel this kind of love for? What lengths would you go to in order to protect it from extinction?
10. Have you ever seen a critically endangered animal or plant in the natural world? In captivity? What was that experience like?
11. How does this book inspire you to take action in your everyday life? What will you do differently now that you’ve read this book?