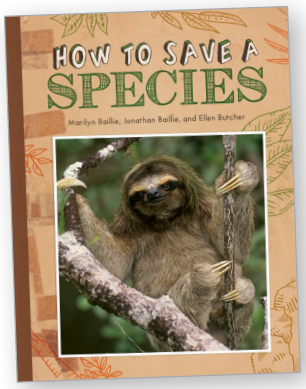
Meet Conservation Biologist Dr. Jonathan Baillie



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How to Save a Species

By Marilyn Baillie, Jonathan Baillie, and Ellen Butcher

"A thorough exploration of several endangered animals, which may well encourage readers to take an active interest in protecting wildlife."

— Publishers Weekly

Grades	4 to 6
Reading levels	Fountas & Pinnell: S Lexile® Measure: 1060L
Curriculum links	**Science:** Life Science; Animals; Habitats; Environment; Conservation; Life Systems **Social studies:** Community; Maps; Cultures and Societies; Current International Issues

About the book

How to Save a Species profiles 17 of the world's 100 most endangered species, as identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) — their "Red List" reflects research from thousands of experts from around the world, including co-author Dr. Jonathan Baillie.

Dr. Jonathan Baillie is the Director of Conservation Programmes at the Zoological Society of London, England.

What first piqued your interest in conservation biology? Can you recall any experiences you had when you were younger that brought you to this field?

I've been passionate about wildlife ever since I can remember. My mom took me to hear Jane Goodall speak about her research on chimpanzees in Africa when I was about nine years old. From that moment on, I wanted to follow Jane Goodall to Africa. Years later, I was thrilled to do just that.

What education and training did you complete to become a conservation biologist?

Completing my undergraduate degree and two graduate degrees adds up to a lot of studying. I got to spend a lot of time doing fieldwork during my studies, and I was learning about things that fascinated

me, so I actually really enjoyed the process. For my Ph.D., I studied threatened animals and birds on an island off the coast of Africa. After that, I continued to live in the African jungle in Gabon, where I researched lowland gorillas and their habits.

You were born and raised in Canada, but you now work in London, England, at the Zoological Society of London. Where else in the world has your work in science taken you?

My work in conservation biology has taken me to many corners of the world, especially in Africa. I've worked in Kenya, Tanzania, Gabon, and the Congo. These days, I'm spending more time in Mongolia and Nepal.

What does a typical day in the life of your job look like?

When I'm in the field, I wake up in my tent before sunrise. I meet with the rangers and we go out to count the endangered rhinos living in that area. We set up hidden camera traps to take photos of animals. The cameras are activated by motion and can photograph the habits of rare animals in the forest. The cameras also photograph poachers — illegal hunters who kill wildlife. We carefully record our findings, talk about our conservation strategies, and see if we need to implement any new plans.

Tell us about a conservation success story that you find especially inspiring.

The recent reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park is a great example of a successful conservation effort. Having these predators back has rebuilt an entire ecosystem in the park. Plants and animals that were once disappearing are now increasing in numbers because the natural food chain is back in place.

What conservation case do you think needs the most urgent attention right now?

The Javan rhino needs our immediate conservation attention. There are less than 50 left in the world. Before long, there might not be any left.

What advice would you give to aspiring scientists?

Anyone can be a scientist if they really want to become one. Whether it's saving endangered species or not, find something YOU are passionate about, set a goal, and keep working towards it.

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