

WHAT'S  
A  
TIGER,  
DADDY?

## *"What's a tiger?"*

*Sooner or later you will be asked that question. If you're young it will probably be your children who ask; if you already have children it will be their's asking it. You may have to answer, "The tiger was an animal that used to live in Asia when I was your age. There aren't any now."*

*The wild animals of the world are an important part of our environment, and they are in trouble.*

\* Fewer than 3,000 tigers live in the wild today; their numbers are dwindling by the month. Like other predators they are needed by the species on which they prey as a population control.

\* The American alligator still is extensively poached for the leather trade, despite legal protection in every state in its range. Without the waterholes dug by the alligator much of the wildlife in the Everglades and other wet regions can not survive seasonal droughts. Measures taken in the name of flood control are further endangering the alligator and all other wildlife.

\* No more than 60 monkey-eating eagles exist in their only home, the Philippine Islands. Shooting and habitat destruction are responsible.

\* Slowly coming back from near extinction two generations ago, the sea otter population along the California coast now numbers about 1200 animals. Abalone fishermen call the otter a threat to the industry and are seeking to have legal protection of the species reduced.

\* Forty or fewer California condors are alive today. The whooping crane is increasing under rigid international protection and captive propagation, but the 1969- 1970 count showed only 56 in the wild and 21 in captivity.

\* The fashion fur industry may soon spell the end of most of the big cats and many of the smaller ones. Nobody needs a fur coat, but as long as any customers can be found some furriers will find a way to supply them.

\* Oil spills at sea (how long is it since you read about the latest one?) kill millions of seabirds and other marine animals and foul our swimming beaches.

\* Persistent pesticides like DDT concentrate in the bodies of animals. The bald eagle and other birds are dying out, their ability to reproduce hampered by pesticides. These same chemicals are in our food and in our own body tissues.

\* The oceans seem limitless, but the sewage and chemicals we have been dumping into them are beginning to turn up in measureable amounts. Once "farming" the sea looked like the way to supply food to an expanding human population-- but you can't farm a sewer.

## *What can YOU do about it?*

1. You can help to reduce the drain on endangered wildlife by refraining from buying products made from skins or other parts of endangered species; you will be even more effective if you do not buy any of their other wares from manufacturers and retail outlets which deal in such products. You can increase the force of a boycott by informing the principal officer of these businesses of your intent, and your reasons for taking such action.

2. In a democracy the will of the majority usually prevails once the government becomes aware of it. If the majority of citizens want to protect wildlife and wild lands-- or the environment in general, for that matter-- these ends can be achieved, for elected officials are responsive to the wishes of large numbers of voters. You can make known your opinions on legislation which will protect wildlife and the environment (and just as important, on legislation which will add to the threats). Some bills are specifically designed to benefit wildlife, and others will benefit it indirectly, through control of pollution and pesticides, and the establishment of wilderness areas, national parks and forests. Laws which will help to slow our population increase will ultimately benefit both the environment and mankind. Local, as well as federal, laws are passed in response to the wishes of the citizenry, but legislators must hear from their constituents before they can assess the prevailing will.

3. Joining one or more conservation-oriented organizations will help to strengthen them, and will provide you with a source of pertinent information on important issues as they arise. The threats to the natural world are so numerous, and often so well camouflaged, that you can keep well informed only through membership in an active conservation group.

4. You can express your views to others via letters to magazines and newspapers which publish pieces bearing on conservation. In so doing you will encourage the newsmedia to continue their coverage of the subject.

5. Word-of-mouth may seem to be a relatively ineffective course of action, but in its cumulative result it can be quite potent. A "grassroots" shift of public opinion could make fur coats lose their standing as status symbols, and a strengthened public concern for the quality of the environment, and for the preservation and wise use of as much wild land as possible, with its wildlife, could ensure that humanity does not leave its mark of destruction needlessly on every square mile of the planet's surface. Word-of-mouth takes time to spread, but it must take place if conservation is to have the broad popular base it needs to succeed.

## *Some active groups*

New York Zoological Society  
Bronx Park  
Bronx, N.Y. 10460

National Audubon Society  
1130 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10028

Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco, California 94104

Environmental Defense Fund  
P.O. Drawer 740  
Stony Brook, N.Y. 11790

The Nature Conservancy  
1522 K Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Zero Population Growth  
367 State Street  
Los Altos, California 94022

National Wildlife Federation  
1412 Sixteenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Wilderness Society  
729 Fifteenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005

World Wildlife Fund  
Suite 728  
910 Seventeenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009



"...when the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again."      WILLIAM BEEBE