



Arche der Tiere

JOEL SARTORE SCHUTZ FÜR DIE LETZTEN IHRER ART



| CONTENTS |

FOREWORD BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT 6

INTRODUCTION BY JOEL SARTORE 16

ABOUT THE IUCN RED LIST, BAROMETER OF LIFE 24

PROLOGUE 26

GHOSTS

CHAPTER ONE 50

DISAPPEARING

CHAPTER TWO 146

FADING

CHAPTER THREE 254

DIMMING

ABOUT THE PHOTO ARK 384 | HOW THE PHOTOS ARE MADE 385

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 386 | ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 386

CONSERVATION HEROES 388 | CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND CONSULTANTS 390

PHOTO ARK EDGE FELLOWS 391 | INDEX OF ANIMALS 392



| INTRODUCTION | JOEL SARTORE |

Deep in the fall of 2018, I drove across the Czech Republic to the Dvůr Králové Zoo. The countryside looked to be from another time, tidy with stone villages and farms, every inch accounted for.

Gray clouds soaked the rolling countryside in sheets at times, requiring headlights the whole way. It seemed I was the only one on the road. In essence it was perfect weather for what I knew lay ahead; viewing the body of Nabire, one of the last northern white rhinos.

Three years before, I'd photographed her alive at the zoo, when there were just five of her kind left on Earth. Even then she was living on borrowed time. Too old for veterinarians to remove the large, fluid-filled cysts inside her, she was not expected to live much longer.

Encouraging her by offering the leafy greens she loved to eat, a keeper who had known Nabire since she was a baby led her into the photo stall we had set up at the zoo, lined with a black velvet curtain. She was sweet and patient during the photo shoot, and she let us touch her horn through the bars. She lay down and took a short nap afterward. A week later, one of the cysts inside her ruptured, and she passed away.

I thought back on all that had happened as I approached the zoo's grand old museum that afternoon. It was getting dark, and there were no other visitors. I was dreading what I would see. I hadn't felt this way since seeing my mother in the mortuary.

Inside the museum, I rounded a corner and there she was—or at least there was her body, as a taxidermist had interpreted it. The wrinkles in her face were mostly smoothed out now, and her eyes were glass. A small chain to keep visitors from touching seemed to keep her in place. Ironically, she was surrounded by beautiful paintings depicting the evolution of life on Earth in all its glory.

I sat in an adjacent room where I could see her through a doorway, and my eyes welled up with tears.

For all the work and captive breeding and news stories and sleepless nights put in by those who care, this is how it all ends. This is what extinction truly looks like: a stuffed skin in a museum.

At the time of this writing, there are just two northern white rhinos left, a mother and daughter in a pen in Kenya, backed right up against the abyss. Two females, the last of their kind. How lucky we are to have known them at all.

Yet they're not alone. Over the years, I've met many animals for whom time is up or nearly so, from frogs to birds, primates to invertebrates. How hard must we be on our planet to cause even *insects* to vanish?

OPPOSITE: Northern white rhinoceros, *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* (CR)

Iberian lynx, *Lynx pardinus* (EN)

In 2001, fewer than 100 Iberian lynx remained in the wild. Over the past two decades, conservation efforts have brought that number up to 400, and the animals are now scouting new territory in Portugal and Spain.





When Frédéric Cuvier penned the first formal description of the red panda in 1825, he declared it “quite the most handsome mammal in existence.” Nonetheless, this bushy-tailed species with dark, knowing eyes has largely dodged the spotlight of scientific inquiry, curled up in the canopy of the Himalaya’s high forests.

The panda’s solitary ways and its remote home make studying the species challenging. In its taxonomic family, the red panda now stands alone—and on shaky ground. Its closest evolutionary relatives are all extinct, and the panda’s wild population is shrinking. There are currently believed to be around 230 to 1,060 individuals, a number that is dropping as forests are cleared for human settlement, development, and agriculture. How can an animal that seems so familiar fade before us, faster than scientists can paint a full portrait of its life?

Charisma alone cannot shield an animal from the outsize impact of humans. We’ve learned this from ongoing efforts to save some of the world’s best known creatures. Many of the animals we meet in this chapter are not famous. But it shouldn’t matter. They tell us stories of resilience: a snail that lives only on a strip of beach in the Indian Ocean, nearly wiped out by rat poison; a chatty parrot, coveted by the illegal pet trade, that nests deep in the forests of Mexico; a Caribbean lizard that has flirted with extinction since scientists first identified it 80 years ago but still, somehow, survives. The imprints these animals leave on our planet may have grown faint, but they’re still here. There’s still time to make those marks brighter, stronger, clearer. ■

PREVIOUS: Visayan tarictic hornbill, *Penelopides panini panini* (EN)
OPPOSITE: Red panda, *Ailurus fulgens fulgens* (EN)
RIGHT: Crested capuchin, *Sapajus robustus* (EN)

AS OF JAN. 2019, THERE ARE

9,032

ENDANGERED SPECIES

ON THE IUCN RED LIST.



Siau Island tarsier, *Tarsius tumpara* (CR)

This small tarsier is harmed by overhunting and increased development, but its biggest threat may be its isolation. Its only populations live on the shores of a small freshwater pond and on a steep cliff by the ocean in Indonesia.



Talaud bear cuscus, *Ailurops melanotis* (CR)

Only known to exist on Indonesia's Salibabu Island—which measures less than 100 square kilometers—this elusive marsupial has proven difficult to study. Heavy hunting pressures threaten its small population.





Eine Hommage an die Vielfalt

Seit 15 Jahren ist es Joel Sartores Bestreben, alle Tierarten, die unter menschlicher Obhut leben, zu fotografieren. In diesem Band stellt er Tiere vor, die entweder vom Aussterben bedroht oder bereits in freier Wildbahn ausgestorben sind. Vom majestätischen Sumatra-Nashorn bis zum winzigen Salt Creek-Tigerkäfer – in eindringlichen Fotografien zeigt er uns die einzigartige Vielfalt an Farben, Formen und Persönlichkeiten der Tierwelt. Begleitet werden die herausragenden Tierporträts von kenntnisreichen Texten von Wissenschaftlern und Naturschützern.

Joel Sartore, 1962 in Ponca City, Oklahoma, geboren, ist Fotograf, Journalist, Autor und Naturschützer. Seit über 25 Jahren veröffentlicht er seine Bilder in der Zeitschrift National Geographic. Seit mehr als 10 Jahren arbeitet er an dem Projekt »Photo Ark«: der fotografischen Dokumentation der Artenvielfalt unseres Planeten, d.h. »jede einzelne der rund 12.000 in Gefangenschaft, d.h. in menschlicher Obhut lebenden Spezies der Erde abzulichten«. Damit möchte er dazu beitragen, den Niedergang der weltweiten Biodiversität aufzuhalten oder zumindest einzudämmen. Er ist Mitglied der International League of Conservation Photographers und der National Geographic Society.

Joel Sartore

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