

# **THE ENDANGEREDS**

**MELTING POINT**

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**HARPER**

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The Endangered: Melting Point

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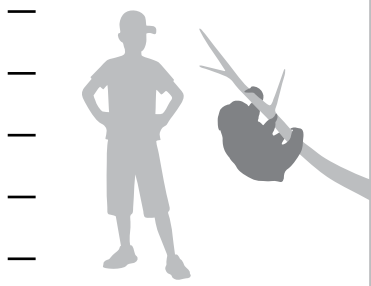
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First Edition

# ABOUT THE ANIMALS

	
<b>Common Name</b>	
Three-toed pygmy sloth	
<b>Scientific Name</b>	
<i>Bradypus pygmaeus</i>	
<b>Habitat</b>	
Isla Escudo de Veraguas Panama	—
<b>Weight</b>	—
5.5–7.7 lbs.	—
<b>Length</b>	—
19–21 in.	—
<b>Conservation Status:</b>	
Critically Endangered (less than 100 animals remaining)	



## LEARN MORE:

The three-toed pygmy sloth is the smallest sloth species on Earth and also the most endangered, with fewer than

50 members of the species exclusively inhabiting the red mangroves on the small (less than two square miles) island of Escudo off the coast of Panama.

These sloths eat mainly mangrove leaves, which puts them under threat due to deforestation of the mangroves. In addition, hunting and feral cats are also putting pressure on the three-toed pygmy sloth.

Due to their small population, the three-toed pygmy sloth is considered one of the most endangered species on the planet.





## HONU

### Common Name

Pacific green sea turtle

### Scientific Name

*Chelonia mydas agassizii*

### Habitat

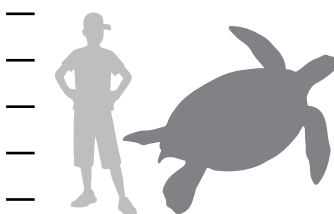
Pacific Ocean from  
Alaska to Chile

### Weight

150–419 lbs.

### Height

2.5–5 ft.



### Conservation Status:

Endangered

## LEARN MORE:

Sea turtles spend nearly their entire lives at sea. Only females and babies spend any time on land—females to lay eggs and babies to hatch. And as soon as those babies hatch, they make a mad dash to the sea.

Green sea turtles, unlike other sea turtles, are herbivores. Eating lots of algae and seagrass makes the fat under their shells green, hence their name. They live all over the world and are the largest of all the hard-shell sea turtles.

Some scientists consider the Pacific green sea turtle to be a unique species; some consider it to be a subspecies.

The biggest threats to sea turtles are marine debris like plastic that they may mistake for food and choke on, fishing lines that can wrap them up and prevent them from surfacing for air, getting caught in fishing nets, and their eggs being harvested for food (often illegally).



**MAR**

**Common Name**

Laysan albatross

**Scientific Name**

*Phoebastria immutabilis*

**Habitat**

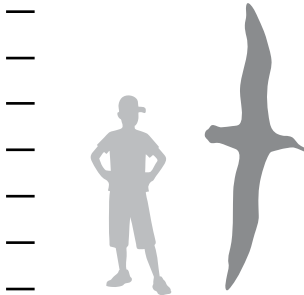
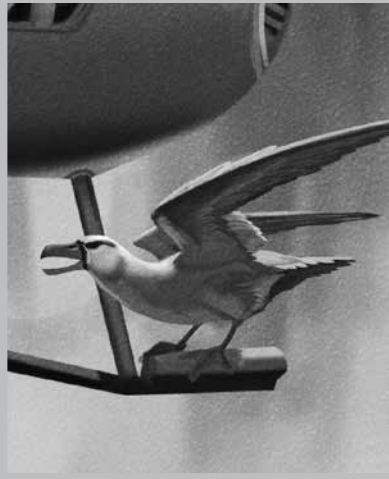
Open ocean of the Pacific

**Weight**

4.5–9 lbs.

**Height**

Total 31.6–32.4 in.  
wingspan 6.4–6.7 ft.



**Conservation Status:**

Near Threatened

**LEARN MORE:**

Albatrosses are equipped with a locking system within the joints of their wings that keeps their wings in the open position without requiring the birds to expend any additional energy. Given the enormous span of their wings along with this unique locking system, albatrosses are

known as exceptional gliders. They can remain airborne for months at a time, covering a distance of more than 9,300 miles in a single trip! That's roughly equivalent to flying from New York City to Sydney, Australia, nonstop.

Albatrosses spend nearly their entire lives over the sea, feeding primarily on fish and squid, but they can also scavenge for food or dine on crustaceans, zooplankton, and other small animals.

Because they can live for more than sixty years, they're highly selective when choosing a mate. Courtship involves preening each other, dancing, and singing. Every few years they return to the same colony where they were born to mate, a habit called natal nesting. The female lays one egg, then the partners take turns tending the egg/chick and hunting for food. The proud parents care for the chick for about four to nine months before it's ready to set out on its own. The young bird then spends the first few years of its life at sea, without touching land.

There are twenty-two different species of albatross. The Laysan albatross mostly lives in the Hawaiian Islands and is medium in size compared to other albatross species.

The main threats to albatrosses are entanglement in fishing nets, getting caught on long line fishing hooks, mistaking plastic debris as food, and pollution.

**Common Name**

Hawaiian monk seal

**Scientific Name**

*Neomonachus schauinslandi*

**Habitat**

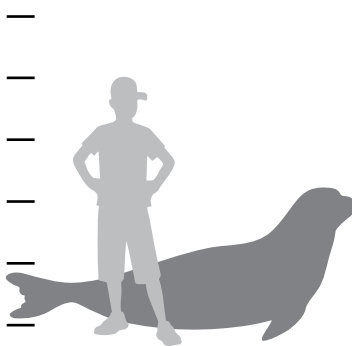
Hawaiian archipelago, which includes both the main and northwestern Hawaiian islands

**Weight**

400–600 lbs.

**Length**

6–7 ft.

**Conservation Status:**

Endangered

**LEARN MORE:**

The Hawaiian monk seal, so named because they only live around the Hawaiian Islands, is one of the most endangered seal species in the world. Adults are dark gray or brown on their back and light gray on their

stomachs. Hawaiian monk seals are “generalist” feeders, which means they eat a wide variety of foods depending on what’s available. They eat many types of common fish, squids, octopuses, eels, and crustaceans like crabs and lobster. They prefer hunting for their food under rocks along the bottom of the sea floor.

Monk seal populations are currently about a third of their historic numbers, but their population is slowly increasing. The main threats to the monk seal’s survival include plastic debris, overfishing (which limits availability of food), entanglement in fishing gear, pollution, illegal hunting (they are a fully protected species in Hawaii), and habitat loss.

## **MORE ABOUT THE ANIMALS**

### **ABOUT ORANGUTANS:**

Famous for their distinctive red or orange fur, orangutans are the largest arboreal (tree-dwelling) mammals in the world. These great apes have long, powerful arms and feet and hands that can grasp branches, allowing them to largely spend their mostly solitary lives in trees.

The word orangutan means “man of the forest” in the native Malay language, and, like humans, they are omnivores, meaning

they eat both plants and animals. Their diet consists of wild fruits like lychees, mangosteens, and figs, but also ants and termites.

Orangutans are found on both the islands of Borneo and Sumatra and each population differs slightly in appearance and behavior. For example, Sumatran orangutans are reported to have closer social bonds than their Bornean cousins, but both species have experienced sharp population declines. A century ago, there were probably more than 230,000 orangutans in total. Today, Bornean orangutans number around 100,000 and are considered endangered, while Sumatran orangutans number about 7,500 and are considered critically endangered. Orangutans are threatened by deforestation and illegal capture for the wildlife trade.

A third species of orangutan was revealed through genetic analysis in 2017. With no more than 800 individuals in existence, the Tapanuli (an isolated region in southern Sumatra) orangutan is the most endangered of all great apes.

## **ABOUT POLAR BEARS:**

As top carnivores, polar bears are critical to the health of the Arctic ecosystem. They are a formidable predator and the largest bear in the world. They are also the only species of bear considered a marine mammal, because they spend most of their lives on sea ice in the Arctic Ocean. While polar bears may be famous for their white coat of hollow hairs (the air in their fur helps them stay warm) their skin is actually black, which helps them absorb heat from the sun.

Polar bears mostly eat seals and other marine mammals.

Because of shrinking sea ice due to climate change, polar bears are an endangered species and continue to suffer the effects of humanity's dependence on fossil fuels.

### **ABOUT NARWHALS:**

The narwhal, often called the “unicorn of the sea” because of the long, spiraled tusk that juts out of its head, is a marine mammal that lives in the Arctic waters of Canada, Russia, Norway, and Greenland. They feed on cod, shrimp, and squid. The tusk is actually an enlarged tooth, and scientists believe it is used to sense the environment around the narwhal. Males may also use it to exert dominance over other males.

Like polar bears, narwhals are primarily threatened by climate change and melting sea ice, which is transforming the entire ecosystem.

### **ABOUT BLACK-BELLIED PANGOLINS:**

The black-bellied pangolin, otherwise known as the long-tailed pangolin (because its tail can be twice as long as its body), is one of eight pangolin species found in Africa and Asia.

Even though pangolins may look like reptiles because they are covered in scales, they are mammals. They use the scales for protection, rolling into a ball to defend themselves from predators.

Pangolins are solitary and usually nocturnal, or active at night, and feed mostly on ants and termites.

Tragically, pangolins are one of the most trafficked animals in



the world. Usually hunted for their meat and scales, pangolins are starting to disappear because of the illegal wildlife trade. While they are mostly sold into illegal markets in Africa and Asia, there is growing demand for pangolin leather in the United States for products like boots and belts.

## **HOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF THE ADVENTURE AND HELP NATURE WITH EARTHECHO INTERNATIONAL:**

Dear Reader,

I hope that you've enjoyed *The Endangered: Melting Point*. As the second book in this series, I hope that it serves as a reminder to you that anyone can change the world—especially you.

Sixteen years ago, I founded an organization called EarthEcho International because I believed in the power that youth have to be champions for the natural world. Since then, I have seen countless young people do extraordinary things all over the planet—young people like you who care about animals and the environment and are passionate about taking action in their communities and around the world to protect and restore what we call our ocean planet.

At EarthEcho we are building a global youth movement for the environment and have lots of different programs that are designed to help you learn and take action. Our youth leaders have passed laws, raised critical funds, started movements to protect land, founded successful businesses that help people and the planet, and so much more.

I know it seems like there is a lot of bad news about the environment these days, but I also know that there is tremendous hope. I have been all over the world and it is the optimism and determination that I see on the faces of young people just like you that reminds me of how much good there is in the world. By joining us, you will become part of a community of young people who recognize that when we come together, just like Nuk, Arief, Wan, and Murdock, there is nothing that we cannot achieve, no problem we cannot overcome, and no one who can stop us from building a better world.

—Philippe Cousteau