

2010-2011 State of the Wild: A Global Portrait

By the Wildlife Conservation Society

Reviewed by Michalis Hadjimarou, Cyprus

2 010-2011 *State of the Wild: A Global Portrait* describes the present state of wildlife and wild places, detailing developments in conservation and examining environmental issues around the world. As experts in the field, the authors provide a reliable account of what has happened in the past, what is happening now and what should happen in the future to conserve precious places, from the wild oceans to urban green spaces. One section of the book is devoted to the challenges facing wildlife conservation, such as those that occur at times of conflict. Another section highlights both new species and new populations of known species that have been discovered recently.

Some of the information about efforts to conserve wildlife, in both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, is rather predictable and disheartening. By contrast, there are also some surprising success stories, giving us reason to be more optimistic.

The book discusses how the increased pressure on land and natural resources, mostly due to the growth of human populations and changing global economic forces, threatens wildlife conservation. The effects of climate change and the degradation of ecosystems are also discussed.

The authors highlight two important issues that have implications for the future conservation of the wild.

First, the planet is changing rapidly and we have to consider this as we plan, develop and execute conservation programmes. Second, we need to consider our planet as an interconnected system: damage to one part can have cascading effects in distant areas.

With such a variety of issues covered, everyone can find something of interest in *State of the Wild* and it would be a valuable addition to a school library. If they have a good standard of English, teachers from any science discipline and from any level of secondary education will find the book extremely useful. It would be suitable for teaching, discussions, debates and comprehension exercises. The book would also be an excellent source of information for case studies and class projects. Some issues that students could investigate, either individually or in groups, include:

1. How do oil spills affect aquatic ecosystems?
2. In conflict zones, how can wildlife conservation organisations help local people make a living in environmentally stressed areas, while at the same time protecting the environment?
3. How does human conflict affect wildlife; do all species suffer or can some use it as an opportunity to thrive?

Details

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