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The Magnificent Cat that Needs Protection to Save it from Extinction by Randy Collins

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One of the most magnificent animals of the wild is undoubtedly the Tiger that belongs to the feline species. This magnificent creature that inhabited many parts of Asia is facing the threat of extinction. Though not yet it is already on the list of endangered species and if not protected with all earnestness it could well become extinct.

This brilliantly colored specimen is the largest of the cat species and a fully grown adult can reach a length of up to 3.3 meters and weigh up to 300 kg. The distinct feature is the reddish-orange colored fur that has dark vertical stripes in contrast. They possess a set of strong teeth with the longest canines among living felids with canines growing up to 3.5 inches in length. The average age of a Tiger in the wild is about 26 years and is the same for those in captivity as well. They are territorial and solitary animals that socialize as well. They need large areas for hunting and this leads to frequent man animal conflict resulting in many unwanted killings. The global population of Tigers in the wild is estimated at a poor 3000 to 3800 individuals. This population is scattered across Asia making enumeration and tracking and monitoring very tedious and difficult. Major reasons for the decline in the population are destruction of habitat for human use, and poaching. The area of occupation has shrunk to 457,497 Sq miles from almost 1,000,000 in the 1990's.

Tigers are very charismatic and have featured heavily in ancient mythology and folklore and are, even today, depicted in modern films. The Tiger, which is the national animal of India, has featured in Indian mythology as the fit mode of transport for the Gods. The Tiger has also been the emblem on the flags of valiant kings in India and sporting teams of recent times. These magnificent animals that are pretty muscular possess powerful hindquarters and a large head. The tigers' stripes that are dark in color are distinct for each animal and are unique as fingerprints. They function as an effective camouflage and help the tigers to merger into the background while stalking prey. The Bengal Tiger that lives in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh is fast reaching extinction with just 2500 living In the wild. The main reason for these hapless creatures to be poached is the demand for the illicit demand for body parts and bones for use in traditional Chinese Medicine. With rumors abounding in the belief that a tigers bones and body parts possess aphrodisiacal properties is one major reason that there is a high price that is paid to poachers. The canine of the Tiger is used as a lucky charm and is worn around the neck with the belief that it brings good luck and adds to the charm and attractiveness of the wearer. However with the launch of Project Tiger in the year 1972 a strict vigil is being maintained and the strict sentences and fines have deterred many a poacher.

The other species of Tiger are the Indochinese Tiger also called Corbett's Tiger (after Jim Corbett) is found in Cambodia, China, Laos, and Myanmar (formerly Burma) Thailand and Vietnam. These are smaller and darker than the Bengal Tigers. Their numbers are dwindling with the last count put at 350. The Malayan Tiger is found exclusively in the Malay Peninsula and was not considered a subspecies until 2004. This species is estimated to number around 500 in the wild. The Sumatran Tiger is found in Sumatra, an Indonesian island. These are much smaller than the Bengal Tiger and number around 400 in the wild. The Siberian Tiger found in eastern Siberia and the South China Tiger found in China have already been declared as endangered and number hardly 59 in captivity and no animals are believed to exist in the wild.

It is time for the entire world to wake up to the reality of the endangered species of animals in this planet or soon animals that we thought are safe in their habitats and in captivity may soon be extinct. The pressing need is to create awareness among the people and act accordingly.

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Randy Collins - About Author:
Randy Collins is a freelance author who is a wildlife enthusiast. He believes that the endangered species of animals in this world need protection and care to prevent them from becoming extinct. He watches related programs on a Verizon FiOS TV.

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