A Description of Some of the Endangered Species in South America by Cody

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Animals and plants are indescribable gifts of nature. We all love watching them on dedicated TV channels like Animal Planet and Discovery. You may have watched these channels on TV with the services of any of the popular connection like the ATT Uverse. However, due to the selfish needs of man, a majority of the flora and fauna have fallen prey to the hunting and killing. This in turn leads to the extinction or endangering of the species of animals. So many have been endangered and later on gone on to become extinct. Given below is a short description of some of the endangered species of South America today.

Amazonian Manatee

Also nicknamed as the Amazonian ox manatee or the South American Manatee, this rare species is spotted in the Amazon River in South America and its surrounding areas in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela. This exotic species looks pretty much like the gigantic walrus. It is slow-moving and gentle in nature; it swims with itâ€™s a flattened tail. The average weight of Manatees ranges from 1000lbs to 1200lbs. These mammals usually come up to the top of the water surface to breathe air. They prefer living in warm and fresh water. They live in large groups during the summer months and prefer being solitary or as small families in the winter months. The Manatees predominantly feed on the aquatic vegetation and fruits of trees in their neighboring places.

There was a lot of commercial hunting and slaughtering of the Amazonian manatee in the 1930â€™s and 40â€™s. They were killed for their skin which was used in the making of a lot of commonly used items such as the water hoses and machine belts. However, hunting of these animals has been strictly prohibited today. Yet there is some quiet hunting going on in some parts. The Amazonian manatees are presently being housed safely in the Brazil reservoir in order to be protected from the hunting.

Andean Cat

The Andean cat is among the rarest and the least spotted of all the species of cat. They are spotted in Andes Mountain in South America and in the rocky terrains of Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, and Chile. The size of the Andean cats is pretty much similar to that of the domestic cats but they appear a bit larger due to their long fatty tail. The body of the Andean cat has stripes and spots. An adult Andean cat can grow upto an average length of 24 inches and can weigh as much as 12 lbs. There is very little information on their reproduction but it is believed that these creatures are solitary in nature. They feed predominantly on insects, birds, and mammals including chinchillas and viscachas (rodents).

Today Andean cat are scarcely found in the wild nevertheless none of them are in captivity. The population of this species of cat is also unknown. Poaching is one of the major threats to the Andean cat. Some are being killed in Chile and Bolivia due to superstitious beliefs. The Andean cats are being carefully tracked by the Andean Cat Alliance and Conservation International using radio-telemetry.

Giant Otter

The giant otter, found in the lakes, creeks, and swamps of South America, is the largest species of the Otters. A fully-grown giant otter on an average weighs 76lb and measures up to 6 feet long. The fur of the giant otter is thick, velvety and brown in color. The giant otter has a signature mark in the

form of a white spot on its throat with which it can be distinguish easily. The giant otters have sharp eyes and large ears and are terrific underwater hunters. Their legs are generally short and blunt; they have webbed feet and sharp claws. They commonly feed on fish, crabs, frogs, and snakes. They are generally very co-operative by nature. They are seen as small families with each taking up a different responsibility in the group. Each group has one main elderly breeding pair.

There are reportedly around 3000 to 5000 endangered giant otters today. The main reason for the dip in their population is because of hunting; mainly for their fur. They almost neared extinction in the 70â€™s. Fishermen kill the giant otter since they are strong threats to the fish. The government has banned hunting or killing of this species in order to protect them from being endangered.

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