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Vanishing Wild

India is bursting with incredible creatures – frogs that dance, dolphins that “see” with sound, birds that boom and turtles that clean coral reefs. But many are now in serious danger. Their homes are shrinking, rivers are dirty and poaching is still a big problem. Some animals have fewer than 100 of them left in the wild. Can we protect them before they disappear forever?



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Indian skimmers like to flock along riverbeds and estuaries



Why Are These Animals in Trouble?

Imagine losing your home, food and safety all at once. That's what's happening to these endangered animals. Forests are being cut for roads and buildings. Rivers are blocked by dams or are full of garbage. Some creatures are even hunted or stolen. With their homes disappearing, it's tough to survive. These animals aren't weak – they're just running out of space, food and clean air or water.





What Makes Them So Special?

These animals are amazing! The purple frog lives underground almost all year. Gharials have super skinny snouts built for fish-catching. Hawksbill turtles wear jewel-like shells and help keep coral reefs healthy by munching on sponges. And dancing frogs wave their legs to impress a mate! Many of these species live only in India and nowhere else on Earth. If we lose them, we lose something truly magical.





Can We Still Save Them?

Totally! Scientists, rangers and even schoolkids are helping. They clean rivers, protect nests, stop illegal hunting and plant more trees. Safe zones, breeding centres and eco-bridges are giving animals a better shot at life. You can help, too – by using less plastic, learning more and sharing their stories. Small actions can make a big difference. Every saved frog, turtle or dolphin is a big win for nature.



Superb large fan-throated lizards, found in dry grasslands





What If They Disappear Forever?

If these animals vanish, we lose more than just cool creatures. Forests may change. Rivers may grow dirty. Some plants won't grow without seed-spreading bats or poop-dropping monkeys! Nature works like a big team and every player matters. Saving animals isn't just about them, it includes us, too. When we start to protect them, we will also keep the planet healthy for everyone. No wild = no balance!





Great Indian Bustard

Find Me Here!

In Rajasthan's dry grasslands, especially in the Desert National Park. Look for tall birds walking through golden fields.

CRITTER STATS

Scientific name: *Ardeotis nigriceps*

Size: 1.2 m tall – like a 7- or 8-year-old child!

Weight: up to 10–15 kg

Lifespan: 12–15 years

Habitat: dry and open grasslands

Conservation status: critically endangered



Boom! A loud call echoes over the dry grasslands of north-western India carrying as far as half a kilometre – it's the great Indian bustard, India's heaviest flying bird! This grand bird once strode across grasslands in 11 Indian states, but is now mostly found only in Rajasthan.



When it's time to find a mate, this bird puts on quite the show! The male puffs up a special organ called the gular pouch – that's where the sound comes from – so it hangs like a showy balloon from its neck.

Males parade up and down in special display sites called leks – females are always welcome at the lek, but another male is quickly chased off!





Snack attack! These birds pick up bugs, seeds and even tiny reptiles while they walk. No fast food here – just fast pecks!

Bustards usually lay just one egg at a time, and only once during the year. At a time when their numbers are falling, every baby is precious!

The biggest threat to these birds are power lines connecting windmills in the desert. Bustards can't see straight ahead and fly into thick wires buzzing with electric power – and that usually spells death for the bird.





DID YOU KNOW?

The great Indian bustard almost became India's national bird but lost out to the peacock.



Scientists are now helping bustards lay eggs and raise young in enclosures, but what's equally important is saving their grassland habitat and not allowing it to be taken over for other activities.



Less than 150 of these magnificent birds are left in the wild. Yep, just a few birdy superheroes remain!





Gharial

Find Me Here!

On the Chambal river – look out for them in the water or on the sandbanks where they bask in sunny spots.

CRITTER STATS

Scientific name: *Gavialis gangeticus*

Size: up to 6 m – the length of 3 bicycles!

Weight: 150–250 kg

Lifespan: 40–60 years

Habitat: deep and fast-flowing rivers

Conservation status: critically endangered



Swoosh! A long snout slices through the water like a knife. Meet the gharial – a fish-eating crocodile with a toothpick snout! With its toothy grin and sleek body, this river reptile is an expert fisherman. But this ancient crocodile is in big trouble.



Gharials have super skinny snouts full of sharp teeth and strong neck muscles – just right for snapping up slippery fish in the water. Their jaws move fast, like lightning under the river! They are a little more clumsy on land, thanks to weak legs.

Gharial dads are hard-working! They guard eggs and later keep a close watch on baby gharials, using their long snouts to gently guide the little ones back to safety if they wander too far.

