

Wild hunters are hunted, threatened



Because of illegal hunting, the jaguar population in Corcovado national park has decreased from 150 in 1994 to only 30 in 2004. The Nature Conservancy raises funds for patrols and to create a "biological corridor" so animals can move safely between parks.

Photo by The Nature Conservancy



Which two leaves are the same?



A loud screech sounds from monkeys in the treetops of the rainforest in Costa Rica. It is a warning cry. A harpy eagle, a powerful raptor, is searching for a meal.

The harpy is one of the largest and most powerful eagles. Yet, it is endangered because of hunters and destruction of its habitat.

The harpy eagle inspired the artist who drew "Fawkes the phoenix" in the movie "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets."

The harpy, "Harpia harpyja," is about 3.5 feet long with a 6.5-foot wingspan. Females are larger and heavier than the males, weighing up to 20 pounds.

The eagle is dark gray overall, with a light ash-gray head and white belly. Adults have a distinctive double crest on their heads.

A harpy speeds through the skies at up to 50 miles per hour. Its talons are up to five inches long, longer than a person's fingers. They are as big as a grizzly bear's claws.

The harpy eagle hunts meat. It can carry off a 15-pound animal. It eats tree-dwelling mammals such as monkeys, sloths and even other birds.

Harpies mate for life. The eagles raise one chick every two to three years. The baby tries its first flight at about six months. However, its parents feed it for another six to 10 months.

If humans disturb the nesting site, harpies can become aggressive. They are very protective of the chicks.

The harpy eagle is not the only endangered species liv-



A harpy eagle can snatch a monkey out of tree and carry it off for lunch.

Photo by The Peregrine Fund

ing in Costa Rica. The jaguar (*Panthera onca*) is also on the list. The beautiful spotted jaguar was hunted for its fur.

Now, thanks to an international treaty, the jaguar cannot be traded. However, it may be too late. Only 15,000 jaguars remain in the wild.

Jaguars live in thick forest or swamps. They are found in Central and South America and in Mexico. In 1996 there were two sightings in Arizona and New Mexico.

Costa Rica is a perfect habitat for the jaguar.

The jaguar measures about five to six feet from its nose to the tip of its tail. Males weight 140 to 200 pounds. Females are a little smaller. Wild jaguars live 12 to 16 years.

The mother raises a litter of one to four cubs. The cubs stay with her for two years.

The jaguar stalks and ambushes its prey. Once it makes the kill, it drags the meal to a safe location before eating.

The meat-eaters enjoy wild pigs, large rodents, sloths, deer, caymans, tapirs, smaller animals and freshwater fish. Occasionally they will venture into populated areas and feed on farm animals.

For the **Kid** in You



Newspaper in Education activity

Search your newspaper for pictures of animals. Circle them.

Write a paragraph about your favorite pet or your favorite animal in a movie.