

# Save our Wildlife

**Should Christians and the Church be more active in protecting wildlife and habitats that are in danger of becoming extinct? – and if so, how?**



Mountain gorilla -

*Judith Allinson writes:*

- This is the question we shall be tackling in the workshop I will be running at the conference in Lancaster on 3 November, 10am-4.30pm. The conference is called **“Keeping the Ark Afloat: All Hands on Deck - a conference on - Environmental Justice”** and is being organised by Lancaster Faith and Justice (Catholic Diocese of Lancaster) and Christian Ecology Link, a national ecumenical organization. It is for everyone and we are holding at the Chaplaincy at Lancaster University. Other workshops include: **“climate change”** and **“greening your parish”**.

- Extinction rates are happening at 1000 times (maybe 10,000 times) as fast as when there were no human beings. The last 100 years has shown a great increase in extinction rates.

- **“Extinction crisis escalates: Red List shows apes, corals, vultures, dolphins all in danger.”**

(Quote from September’s IUCN (World Conservation Union’s list of endangered species)

- In my next article, I will list some of the suggestions that were made – Can you send in any suggestions of what to do, or examples of what your church/workplace is doing?  
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**IUCN press release: Sep 2007:**

Life on Earth is disappearing fast and will continue to do so unless urgent action is taken. There are now 41,415 species on the IUCN Red List and 16,306 of them are threatened with extinction, up from 16,118 last year. The total number of extinct species has reached 785 and

**a further 65 are only found in captivity or in cultivation.**

In the space below, please draw or write the name of plants or animals for which you think we should pray, or have concern about.

Local/UK

World

## A link with the past - but what of the future?

In the bible we read of Job and the **auroch** (wild ox) *Job 39:10 Can you hold the wild ox by its harness to the furrow?* That species (which was wild and never domesticated), along with many other wild animals has now disappeared. On the right, Judith Allinson examines a friend's fossil horns of an auroch that once roamed the woodland in the Ribble valley in Lancashire. These huge animals, portrayed in cave paintings in France, became extinct in Britain (due to human activity) about 2000 BC. The last one in the world died in Poland in 1627.



Judith and auroch horns

## Extinct and threatened Species of Lancashire, Britain and the World

Five species extinct in Lancashire in the last 100 years

- Dormouse
- Marsh Gentian
- Pine Martin
- Large Copper Butterfly
- Nightjar

Five species extinct in the world in the last 200 years:

- Carrier Pigeon 1900 wild, 1914 -zoo
- European Bison 1920 wild (still in zoos)
- Great Auk 1844
- Lesser Bilby 1931 (Australian marsupial, common in early 19<sup>th</sup>C)
- Chinese River Dolphin 2006

In danger of extinction in Lancs:

- Birds-eye primrose
- Frog Orchid
- Pearl-bordered Fritillary
- Yellow Wagtail

Five species extinct in Britain:

- Beaver: 13th C.
- Wolf: 1486 England
- Brown Bear: before 10th C
- 5 out of 59 species butterfly in 200 yr
- Crane 16th C

Rare species in Lancashire of national importance:

- Lancaster Whitebeam
- Lady's Slipper Orchid (..non-native)
- Northern Spike-rush
- Red Squirrel
- Water Vole

Examples of species under threat in the world:

- Cedars of Lebanon,
- Orang-utans (to Oil Palm farms)
- Lowland Gorillas (Bushmeat)
- Whales
- Cod

Habitats under threat in Lancs:

- Lowland raised bog, (to drainage)
- Limestone pavement, (to rockeries, roadstone)
- Species rich grassland (lost 98%) (to fertilizers and reseeded)

It takes work and money to protect those that are left!!!