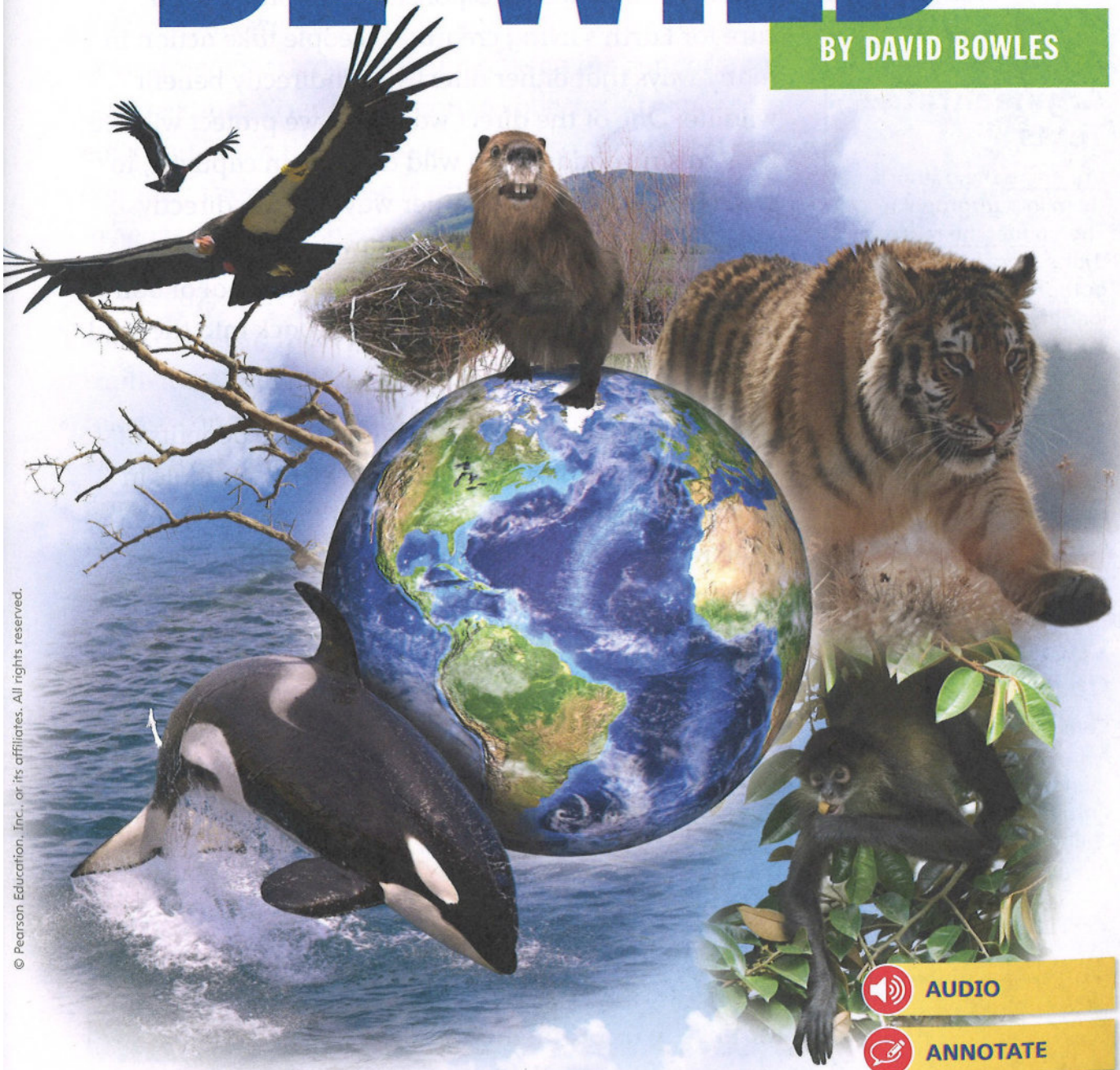



# Let Wild Animals BE WILD

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 AUDIO

 ANNOTATE





## CLOSE READ

### Analyze Argumentative Texts

Underline the author's claim in paragraph 1. Then underline reasons that support the author's claim and identify his intended audience.

**sanctuaries** human-made places of safety and protection

### Vocabulary in Context

**Context clues** can help you understand the meaning of an unfamiliar word by telling what the word is as well as what it is not.

Underline context clues that help you determine the meaning of the word *rehabilitating*.

- 1 Many people feel a responsibility to protect and care for Earth's living creatures. People take action in many ways that either directly or indirectly benefit wildlife. One of the direct ways that we protect wildlife is by raising endangered wild animals in captivity, to ensure their survival. Another way that we directly protect wildlife is by treating injured wild animals and rehabilitating them in captivity. The goal of both actions should be to release animals back into the wild where they belong.
- 2 For endangered or injured animals, the benefits of living under human protection are clear. Animals in zoos and sanctuaries have plenty of food and water. They're safe from predators. They aren't threatened by hunting, environmental pollution, and habitat destruction. For endangered species, every death in the wild means another step toward extinction. If even a few members of an endangered species are successfully raised in captivity, hope for the species stays alive.
- 3 But keeping animals alive in captivity is not the final purpose of conservation. Real success comes when animals are plentiful and strong enough to return to their natural habitat. Only then can an ecosystem be in balance. An ecosystem is all the animals and plants that live in a certain area.



## Analyze Argumentative Texts

How does the author use facts to support his claim? Underline a sentence that lets the reader know the author is presenting evidence.

**diminished** shrank, became smaller or fewer

4 Here's one such success story. The California condor is one of the largest flying birds in the world. It was once found in many parts of the United States. But during the past two centuries, the species diminished. Settlers shot and poisoned the condors and took their eggs. Hunting condors was outlawed more than 100 years ago. However, their numbers continued to fall because of pollution, pesticide use, and other threats. Finally, by the 1970s, scientists discovered that only a few dozen wild condors were left. In the early 1980s, the U.S. government started a program to keep the condor from going extinct. Scientists began to collect wild condor eggs and hatch them in zoos. They also captured some condors. They kept these condors in zoos so they could lay eggs and raise their young in safety.

5 By 1987, there were no more condors left in the wild. However, there were 27 California condors in captivity. All along, the plan was to raise and then release condors back into the wild. No one was sure it would work. But it did. By the end of 2015, the total population of California condors was up to 435. That included 268 condors living in their natural habitat, once again soaring through the skies.





## CLOSE READ

### Analyze Argumentative Texts

Underline a reason the author uses to support the claim.

**thrive** do well, be successful, grow

**unfettered** not limited, not restricted

6 Returning wild animals to the wild is good for both animals and people. Let's start with the animals. Imagine a bird that was forever kept from flying free. Or what if a wild cat could never prowl the savannah? Wild animals such as these may be safe and protected under human care, but they can truly thrive only in the wild, where their natural instincts and behaviors are unfettered.

7 All of nature benefits when an endangered species is restored to its habitat. Many studies have shown the enormous effect even one species has on an ecosystem. This is particularly true of what are known as "keystone" species.

8 A keystone species is an animal or plant that plays an essential role in an ecosystem. If that species becomes extinct, or even threatened, the ecosystem is threatened. That's because other living things depend on that species for their own survival.



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## Synthesize Information

Highlight information that relates to a claim made in *Don't Release Animals Back to the Wild*.

- 9 Beavers are a keystone species in the United States and Europe. Beavers use logs and sticks to build dams in rivers and streams. Their dams and the pools that form behind them become habitats for many other animals. For example, ducks, otters, and dragonflies may live there. When beavers became extinct in Scotland and other parts of Europe due to hunting, other animal populations suffered as well. In 2009, beavers were reintroduced to wild areas of Scotland, where they were monitored through 2014. Biologists declared the program an “outstanding success.” The first several generations of beavers thrived and had a positive impact on the environment.
- 10 Animals can benefit in another way when they are released to the wild. Scientists have begun to put tracking devices on animals raised in captivity and on injured animals rehabilitated in captivity before returning both groups to their habitats. The devices allow scientists to follow the animals’ movements and to study their behaviors. Information gathered helps us better understand and protect species.



## CLOSE READ

### Analyze Argumentative Texts

How does the author use facts in this argument? Underline text evidence that supports your response.

11 The Siberian tiger, found mainly in the far east of Russia, is one of many threatened species that has benefited from tracking. Starting in the 1990s, members of the Siberian Tiger Project, based at the University of Idaho, began to catch Siberian tigers. They fitted the big cats with radio collars. Then they released the tigers. Scientists have been monitoring the tigers for decades, gathering valuable data. Wildlife workers use the information to help them effectively treat and release injured tigers. Scientists also hope to reintroduce Siberian tigers into areas where they have disappeared, such as northern Korea. Ongoing

monitoring will ensure the tigers have the resources they need to thrive.

12 Releasing captive animals into the wild also makes financial sense. Many people will travel almost anywhere to see animals. Therefore, reintroducing animals to a wilderness area brings in tourists. And tourists spend money. For example, wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park starting in 1995. A 2006 study by the University of

Montana estimated that wolf-related tourists—people who visit Yellowstone primarily to see wolves—brought in tens of millions of dollars each year. That money helps Yellowstone. It also helps surrounding businesses, such as motels and restaurants.





**Synthesize  
Information**

Highlight details that support the author's claim.

- 13 Some people argue against releasing animals back into the wild. For one thing, they say animals raised or rehabilitated in captivity can't survive on their own. However, scientists are learning more and more about what wild animals need to live independently. Wildlife biologists and other specialists carefully prepare animals for life in the wild before releasing them. In the end, of course, the animals have to fend for themselves. But that's nature's way.
- 14 Other people say that reintroducing predators to the wild is bad for humans. (They might attack us! They might attack livestock!) But animals that live in a balanced ecosystem, with adequate food and space, rarely hurt people or livestock. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that of all cattle that died in 2010, only about 5 percent were killed by predators. An ecosystem needs all animals, predator and prey alike, to stay in balance.
- 15 Humans have the power to save and protect species. We also have the responsibility to let wild animals be wild and live according to their instincts. Releasing animals back into nature, whenever possible, is the best course of action for them, for us, and for Earth.

