



Module Three

Lesson 6

Honour those lost

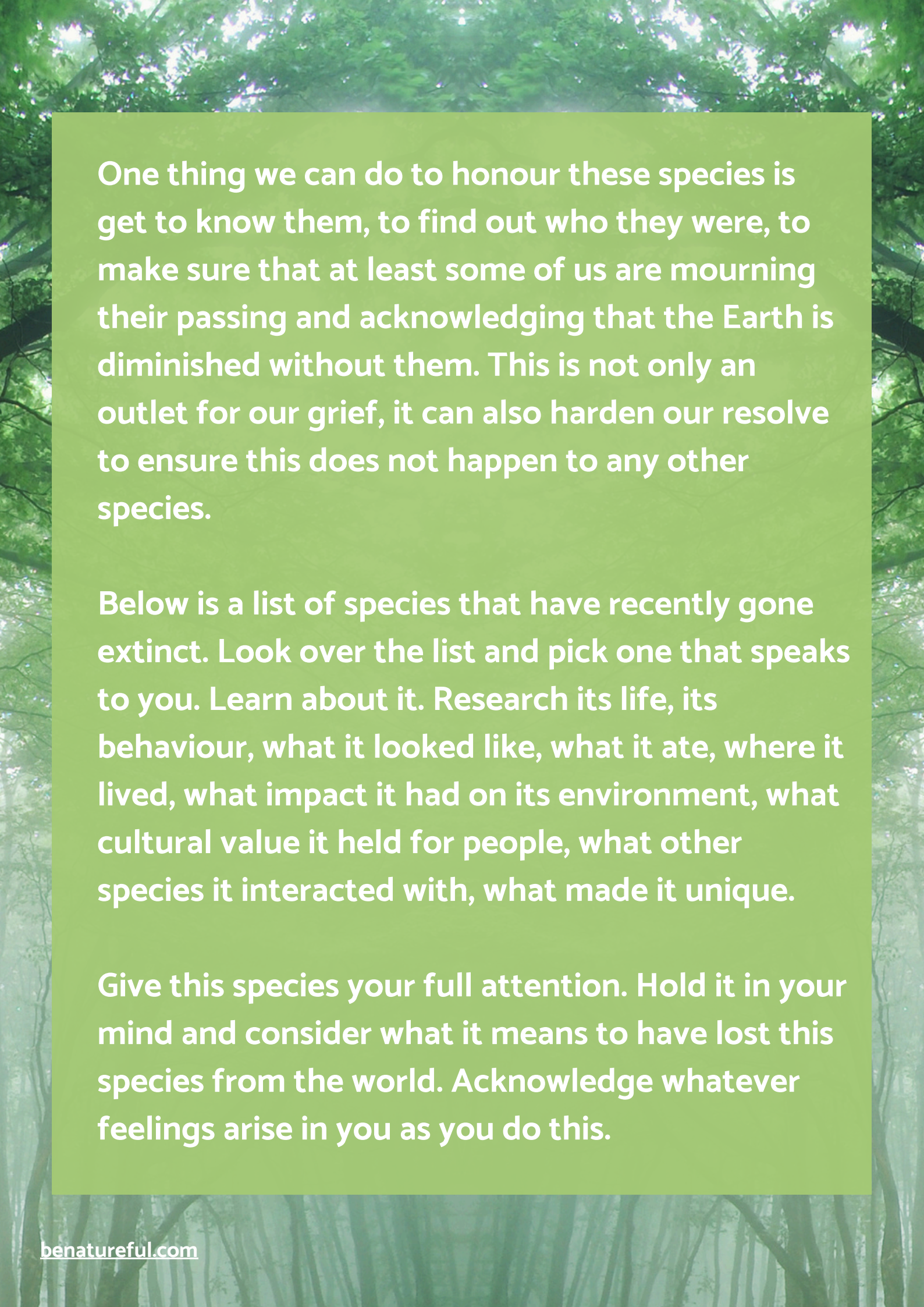
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Species extinctions are hard to bear for those of us who love all life on Earth. Many of our most loved species are in serious decline and many species have been completely lost from the planet. These members of our community have gone forever - we will never see them again.

Sadly, the media generally does not think that these species are worth reporting on so many species that have gone extinct in recent years are unfamiliar to us and their passing has gone largely unnoticed.



One thing we can do to honour these species is get to know them, to find out who they were, to make sure that at least some of us are mourning their passing and acknowledging that the Earth is diminished without them. This is not only an outlet for our grief, it can also harden our resolve to ensure this does not happen to any other species.

Below is a list of species that have recently gone extinct. Look over the list and pick one that speaks to you. Learn about it. Research its life, its behaviour, what it looked like, what it ate, where it lived, what impact it had on its environment, what cultural value it held for people, what other species it interacted with, what made it unique.

Give this species your full attention. Hold it in your mind and consider what it means to have lost this species from the world. Acknowledge whatever feelings arise in you as you do this.

If thoughts come into your mind about who to blame for this species' extinction, or judgements about why it happened, acknowledge them but let them pass, bring your attention back again and again to the species and the individuals of that species. If you are struggling with your thoughts as you do this, take a moment to close your eyes and focus on your breathing, and the movement of your body as you breathe in and out, as you let go of the thoughts and return to the task.

Once you have done this and you have learned all you can, sit quietly for a moment and hold them in your mind. Contemplate the fact that they're gone. Acknowledge what this causes you to feel. If you want to cry then do so, it's a normal reaction. When you are ready, you can share what you have learned with other people, your family and friends. Tell them what made this species so amazing and share with them what the world has lost. And don't be afraid to tell them how this has made you feel.

If you ever hear of another species that has gone extinct, or very soon to be going extinct, or even the loss of an individual animal, you can repeat the exercise and honour them in the same way. Or you can choose another species from the list and repeat the exercise.

Splendid poison frog

Bramble Cay melomys

Indo-Chinese warty pig

Baiji dolphin

Pinta giant tortoise

Western black rhino

Alaotra grebe bird

Pyrenean ibex

Bermuda flicker

Smooth handfish

Chiriqui harlequin frog

Christmas Island pipstrelle

St Lucia skink

Barbados racer

Little flat-topped snail

Sooty crayfish

Long-eared mouse

Santa Maria weevil

Lord Howe long-eared bat

Spined dwarf mantis

Bermuda saw-whet owl

Navassa rhinoceros iguana

Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog

Catarina pupfish