

DIARY OF A WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER BOOK

TEACHER'S NOTES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jan Latta was born in Sydney. She worked in advertising as a creative director. In 1994 she went to Africa and came face-to-face with a mountain gorilla in Rwanda. The experience changed her life. When her guide said there were only 600 mountain gorillas left in the world, she decided to publish books for children on endangered animals.

But first, she had to become a wildlife photographer to tell the animals' stories. She travelled to Africa seven times, living in tents and hiring local guides to keep her safe. Every day she followed prides of lions, dangerous rhinos, herds of elephants and gentle giraffes. She came close to cheetahs and played with mischievous chimps. She went to China twice to photograph and write about pandas. Then took two trips to Borneo, where she photographed orangutans in the jungle. And for the tiger book, she went to India. Jan is returning to Africa in 2011 to follow leopards for her next book

Taking photographs and writing about endangered animals in their natural habitat gives students a unique look into the animals' lives.

MAKING THE DIARY OF A WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER BOOK

When the children's book publisher of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) heard about my adventures in the wild creating the True to Life Book series, she asked me to write Diary of a Wildlife Photographer. It was a challenge – 20,000 words, editing thousands of photographs down to the 300 that were chosen for the book, and sorting out my sketches. Then I was asked to design the book. This was a great compliment. I closeted myself for six months at home and rewrote the diary notes I'd scribbled in the back of the jeep.

Then came the design concept, the typography, and deciding on a good printing size for the book. Pat Latta, my sister, did the maps and the beautiful calligraphy. I nervously sent the first draft to the ABC's editor. After many corrections, the book started to take shape, chapter by chapter.

Next, the colour proofs and more corrections, and finally the 'dummy' book for a final read. When that is approved the printer starts printing. Then comes the most exciting moment - seeing the printed book for the first time. Turning the pages and the smell of new ink.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- . Name the animals called the Big Five of Africa?
- . What is the most dangerous animal in Africa?
- . What is the difference between an Indian and an African elephant?
- . What is a family of lions called?
- . What is a dik dik?
- . What is the fastest animal on land?
- . Name three groups of primates.
- . What is the rhino's horn made out of?
- . Why are pandas endangered?
- . What is the difference between the black and white rhino?
- . How can we help save endangered animals?
- . Name the African tribes.

ACTIVITIES

Safari

Plan a safari in Kenya. What animals will you see? Where will you stop to camp? Describe your guide. What are the dangers? How do you travel from camp to camp? What foods do you eat? Are you frightened at night?

A day in the life of a lion

Pretend you are a lion. Describe your family. How do you hunt? What do you hunt? Who eats the kill first in the pride? Describe where you live and how you survive. Do you have predators?

Endangered animals

Name some of the most endangered animals in the world. What can you do to help save them from extinction? Name some of the charities that help endangered animals.

Mzee

Pretend you are Mzee – the naughty mischievous chimp. What antics do you get up to when you play? Do you like the family dog? What is your favourite food? Where do you sleep at night? How did you feel when you were rescued by humans?

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A journey of giraffes

A herd of elephants

A pod of hippos

A pride of lions

A crash of rhinos

A duet of dik diks

A troupe of baboons

A float of crocodiles

A pack of wild dogs

A leap of leopards

A swift or ambush of tigers