WILDLIFE IN DANGER

It is a disturbing fact that today many different kinds of wild animal throughout the world are in danger of extinction. The reasons for this are many and varied, but we must largely blame pollution, pesticides, the disturbance of the animals' natural environment and man's greed and thoughtlessness.

Industry has grown enormously, and it has become common practice for factories to dispose of waste matter in streams and rivers, causing great loss of river life. Modern agricultural methods include the use of pesticides which effectively control insects classified as pests, but which also destroy many that are not. An increase in population has meant more building – and with it the destruction of much of the countryside that provides habitat for wild animals. To satisfy man's selfish desires the polar bear in North America is under threat, hunted by sportsmen; in Borneo and Sumatra the orang–utan has become part of a smuggling racket; in South America the chinchilla is almost extinct because its fur is in demand; whales are massacred world-wide for the oil and food they yield. These are only a few of the species under threat.

But the problem is receiving world-wide recognition, and some action is being taken. To name a few examples – sewage pollution in the River Thames has been greatly reduced; a ban on trading in some furs has been agreed; and organisations like Friends of the Earth do valuable work in this deserving cause.

1 Give in your own words two reasons why some species of wild animal may become extinct.
2 How do factories contribute to the problem?
3 What is the meaning of **pesticide**?
4 What effect has the increase in the human population had upon wildlife?
5 Why is the polar bear in North America under threat?
6 Which countries have problems with smuggling?
7 Which animal is hunted for its fur?
8 Why are whales hunted in such large numbers?
9 What is being done to help preserve our river life?
10 Name one other way in which wildlife is currently helped.
11 Provide a subtitle for each paragraph that will sum up what each is about.