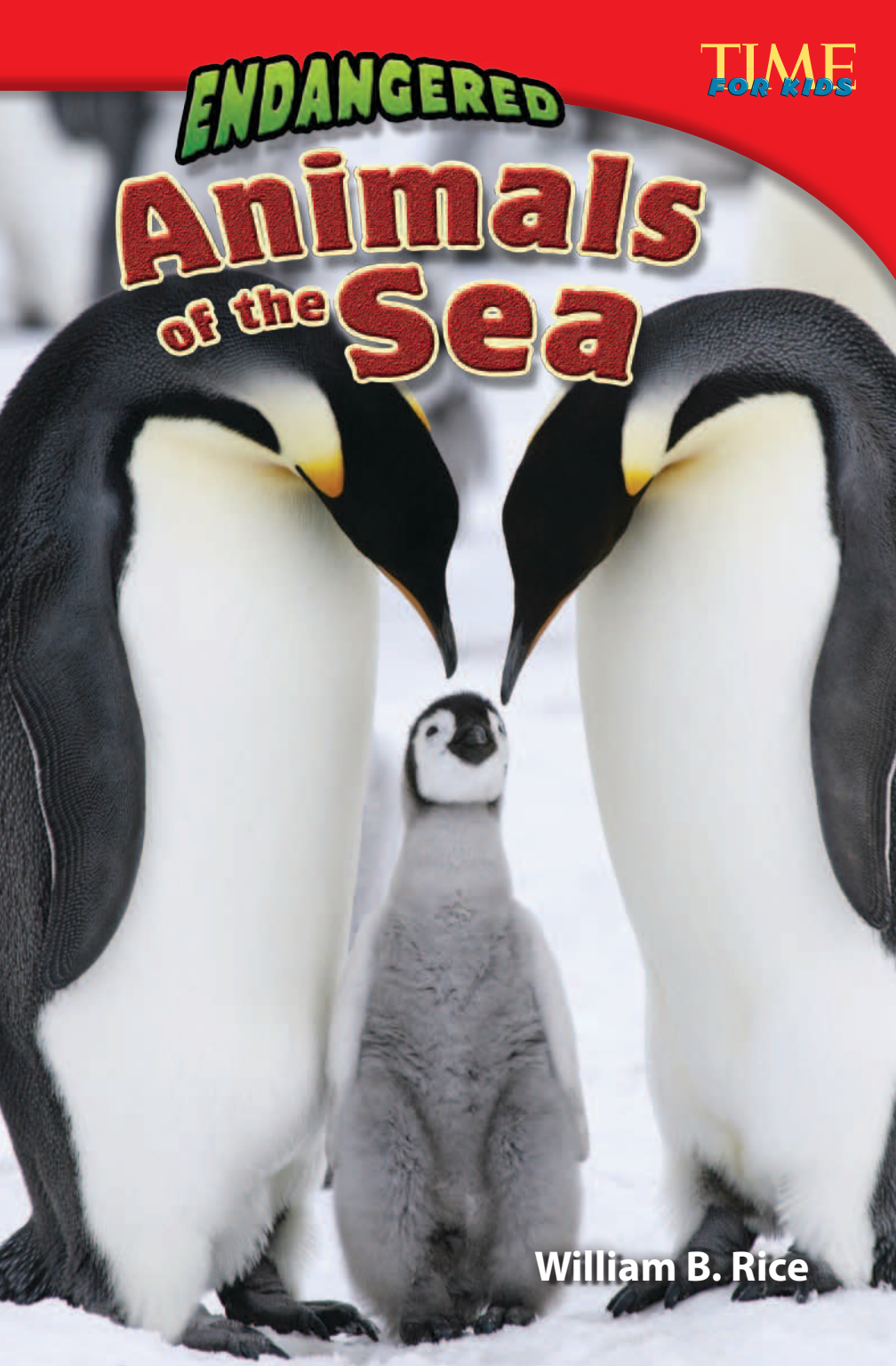
TIME FOR KIDS

ENDANGERED Animals of the Sea



William B. Rice

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A WORLD IN DANGER

Looking out across an ocean, beautiful colors can be seen over soft ripples in the water. It seems like an empty, peaceful world. But drop down, down, down, down to the ocean depths. Currents rush and swirl. The Earth shifts. And fish and mammals dart everywhere.

From the land and air above, we can't see these precious sea creatures. But they're there. And they need us to protect them. We must keep their world safe so they can live and grow strong. Together, we can make a difference.



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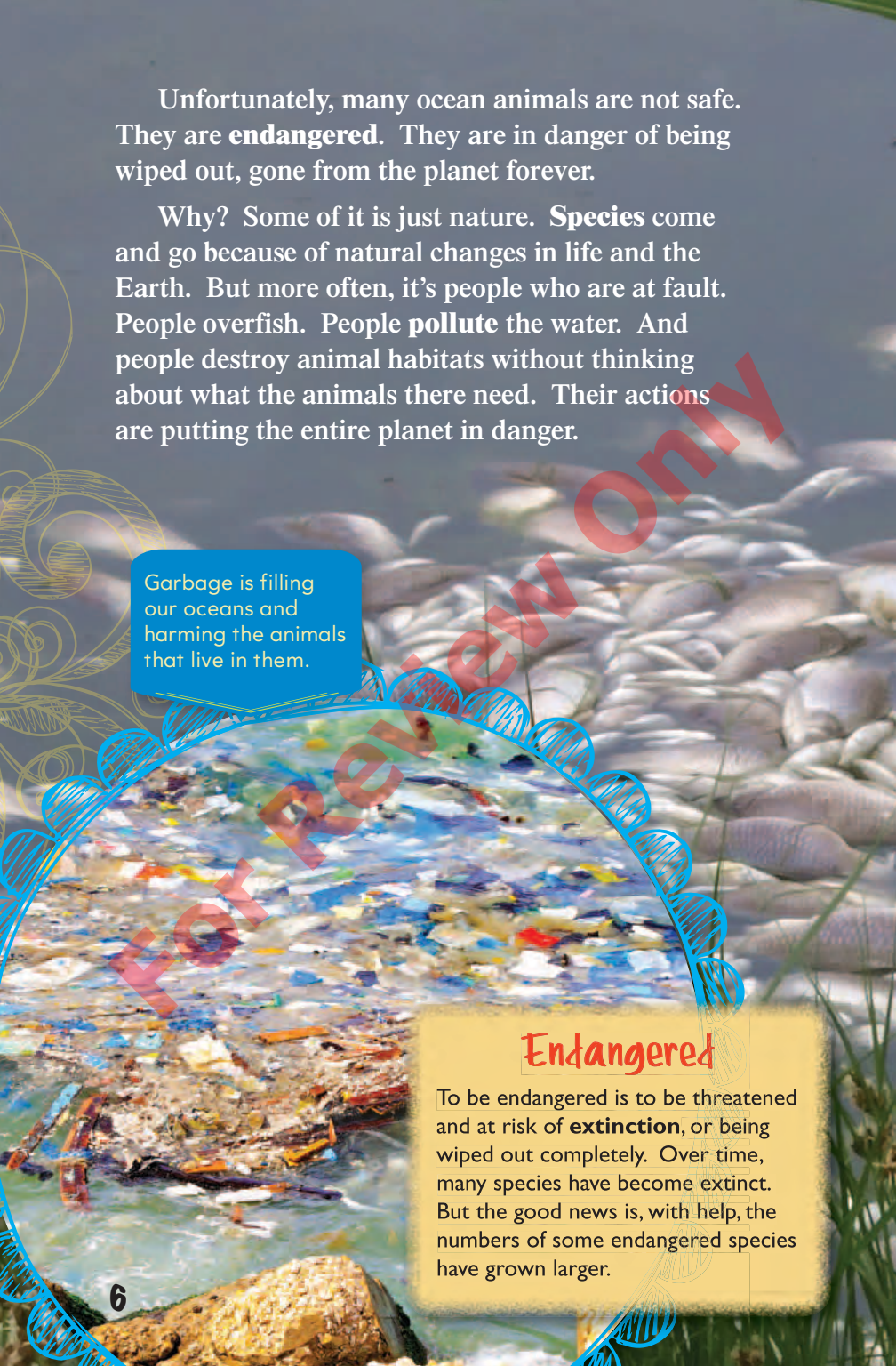


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Unfortunately, many ocean animals are not safe. They are **endangered**. They are in danger of being wiped out, gone from the planet forever.

Why? Some of it is just nature. **Species** come and go because of natural changes in life and the Earth. But more often, it's people who are at fault. People overfish. People **pollute** the water. And people destroy animal habitats without thinking about what the animals there need. Their actions are putting the entire planet in danger.

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Garbage is filling our oceans and harming the animals that live in them.

Endangered

To be endangered is to be threatened and at risk of **extinction**, or being wiped out completely. Over time, many species have become extinct. But the good news is, with help, the numbers of some endangered species have grown larger.



Plastic trash can choke, trap, or poison ocean animals.

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Why does it matter if animals become extinct? Well, it matters a lot to the animals. And it should matter to people, too. Scientists know that people, animals, and plants are all connected. We depend on one another. What hurts one also hurts another. We may not feel it right away, but even small changes can make a big difference. Our own health and well-being depend on the way we protect the world's animals—including ocean animals.

Species

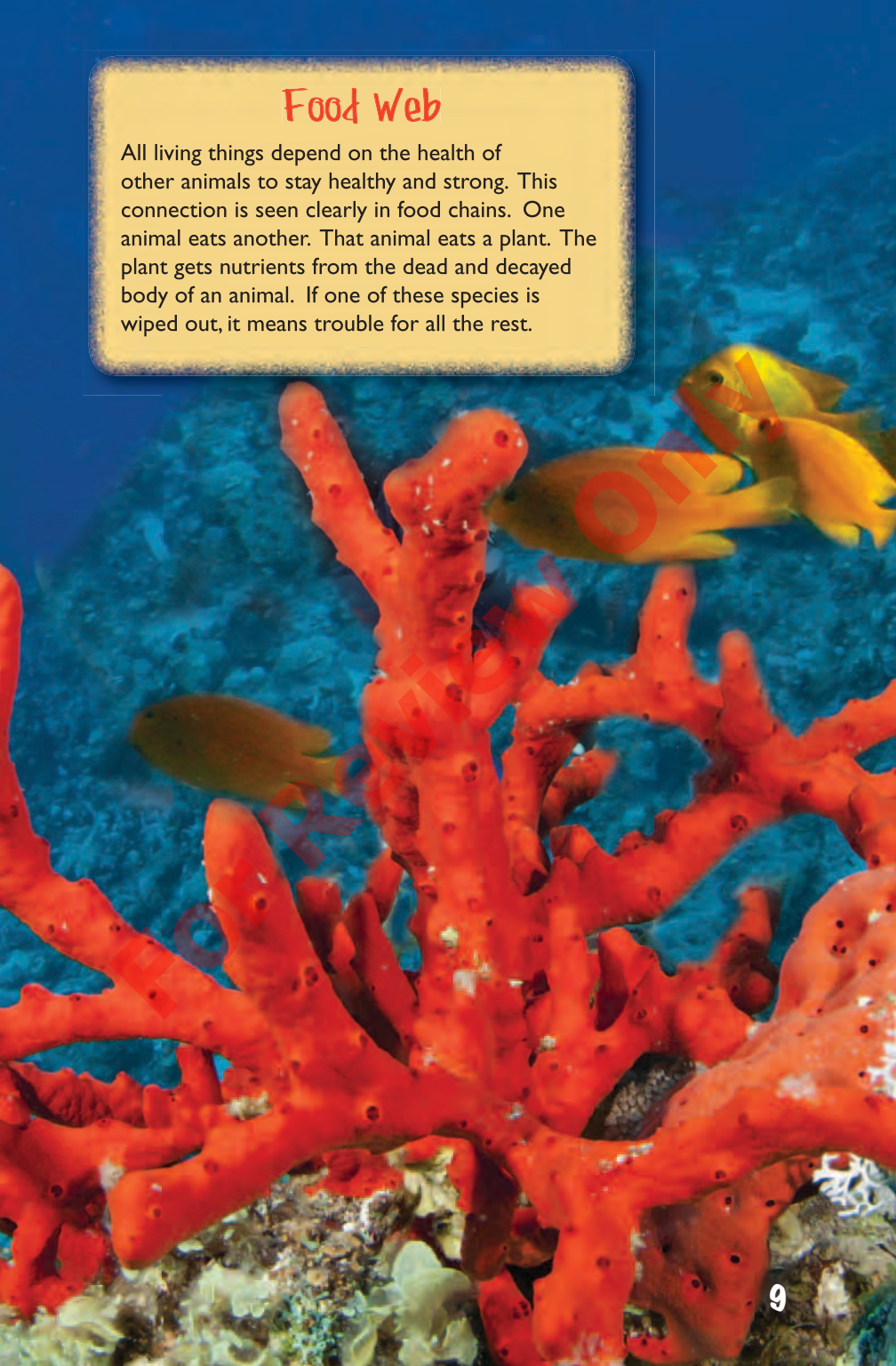
A species is a specific group of animals with common characteristics. Tigers are a species. Bald eagles are a species. And blue whales are a species, too. Throughout history, there have been millions of species on Earth. Life has existed for many hundreds of millions of years. Different species prosper at different times in different ways. And sometimes, they naturally fade away.



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Food Web

All living things depend on the health of other animals to stay healthy and strong. This connection is seen clearly in food chains. One animal eats another. That animal eats a plant. The plant gets nutrients from the dead and decayed body of an animal. If one of these species is wiped out, it means trouble for all the rest.



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