**Supplementary materials**

**Supplementary methods**

A five-step process was followed to analyse the reasons participants gave for choosing species: 1) data familiarisation; 2) code generation and code searches; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; and 5) defining and naming themes.

**Qualitative analysis**

*Table S1: The themes derived from the qualitative analysis showing reasons given for choosing species. Individuals could mention more than one reason; the numbers show the number of participants who mentioned each theme, and example statements for each theme are given.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Theme* | *Definition and example statement* | *Experiment DCE1 (imaginary animals, 235 statements)* | *Experiment DCE2 (imaginary animals, 285 statements)* | *Experiment DCE3 (real animals, 266 statements)* | Total |
| *Population trend* | Participant mentions population trend or population stability.  *‘I chose the animals that were declining’* | *57* | *157* | *167* | 381 |
| *Population size* | Participant mentions population size or number of animals*.*  *‘Due to low population’* | *53* | *60* | *56* | 169 |
| *Appearance* | Participant makes a reference to the species appearance, whether positive or negative.  *‘I think it’s impossible to choose so I just went with looks’* | *14* | *72* | *31* | 117 |
| *Ecological role* | Participant mentions the relationship between the animal and the wider environment.  *‘Chose species that contribute to ecosystem in positive way’* | *86* | *4* | *7* | 97 |
| *Personal preference* | Participant states they chose animals they liked best or found most interesting, without stating what led them to that preference.  *‘I picked the ones that seemed the most interesting’* | *19* | *26* | *28* | 73 |
| *Extinction risk* | Participant mentions extinction or level of threat.  *‘I picked the one that I thought was in the most danger of going extinct’* | *17* | *19* | *13* | 49 |
| *Familiarity* | Participant says they are familiar with the species or it reminds them of something, alternately states they go with more unique species.  *‘I am a little bit familiar with them’* | *6* | *23* | *10* | 39 |
| *Ethical statement* | Participant makes an ethical statement, including statement of obligations to conserve.  *‘I feel all species of animals should be protected, it does not matter what kind of animal it is.’* | *14* | *14* | *8* | 36 |
| *Species affordance* | Participant mentions the relationship between the animal and humans, specifically the role of the animal for humans.  *‘I chose the species that would benefit our future’* | *28* | *3* | *5* | 36 |
| *Conservation effort* | Participant mentions level of conservation attention or conservation effort.  *‘I chose them based on their conservation efforts’* | *32* | *0* | *0* | 32 |
| *Needed help* | Participant expresses the view that they selected the ones which required the most help, without giving any specific reason why.  *‘I chose the species in need of immediate help’* | *8* | *6* | *5* | 19 |
| *Choosing a particular type of animal* | Participant states they chose particular types of animals rather than others.  *‘I simply love birds and primates’* | *1* | *0* | *16* | 17 |
| *Fake animals* | Participant mentions that the animals are not real.  *‘I did not choose any of the species shown because they were made up animals’* | *1* | *10* | *0* | 11 |

EDGE species selection

EDGE focal species were preferentially chosen, and initially selected to ensure diversity in the variables assessed in this study. Once 27 species were shortlisted, those with the best quality pictures (e.g. clearly showing the whole animal) were selected, leaving a final selection of 17 species for participants to choose from (Table S1).

*Table S2: Number of participants selecting each of the 17 focal EDGE species to receive a donation on their behalf in the two surveys. Species ordered by total number of participants selecting the species across the two surveys.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Species* | *Scientific name* | *Number of participants selecting species in survey 1 (n=278)* | *Number of participants selecting species in survey 2 (n=342)* |
| Red panda | *Ailurus fulgens* | 62 | 86 |
| Bornean orangutan | *Pongo pygmaeus* | 33 | 35 |
| Black rhino | *Diceros bicornis* | 46 | 22 |
| Hirola | *Beatragus hunteri* | 11 | 44 |
| Rufous headed hornbill | *Aceros waldeni* | 20 | 25 |
| Bengal florican | *Houbaropsis bengalensis* | 15 | 21 |
| Red slender loris | *Loris tardigradus* | 12 | 16 |
| Bactrian camel | *Camelus ferus* | 6 | 19 |
| Kottigehar dancing frog | *Micrixalus kottigeharensis* | 5 | 16 |
| Bairds tapir | *Tapirus bairdii* | 6 | 15 |
| No Donation |  | 14 | 7 |
| Cuban greater eared funnel bat | *Natalus primus* | 12 | 7 |
| Largetooth sawfish | *Pristis pristis* | 9 | 8 |
| Giant anteater | *Myrmecophaga tridactyla* | 5 | 7 |
| Round Island boa | *Casarea dussumieri* | 7 | 4 |
| Red ruffed lemur | *Varecia rubra* | 6 | 4 |
| Chinese giant salamander | *Andrias davidianus* | 7 | 3 |
| West African dwarf crocodile | *Osteolaemus tetraspis* | 2 | 3 |