Gifts you can adopt

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Looking for a holiday gift that will benefit the planet? Consider "adopting" an endangered species. Several worthwhile organizations have programs where you donate money and in return you'll receive an adoption kit. It's a fun way for your child to learn about the natural world and feel like they're making a difference.

- **Oceana:** The Adopt-A-Creature program allows you to "adopt" whales, sharks, sea turtles, dolphins, and more. Kits range from $25 for a single animal to $150 for an ocean family. They include an adoption certificate and either a stuffed animal or cookie cutter in the shape of the animal you adopt. Proceedings fund efforts to reduce overfishing, seabird contamination, and habitat destruction.

- **World Wildlife Fund:** Choose from more than 90 endangered species. Popular options: polar bear, snow leopard, panda, gray wolf, tiger, and frog. Kits range from $25 to $250 depending on whether you're adopting a single endangered species or a whole family and which extras (such as a stuffed animal) you want. All options come with an adoption certificate and a photo of the adoptee.

Here are some suggestions for those who want to choose gifts that benefit less fortunate people around the globe:

- **ABC Home & Planet Foundation:** Its Gifts of Compassion program provides a way to make donations that benefit a wide range of good causes from creating a new home for a family displaced by Hurricane Katrina to developing an organic farm in India to educating an Afghan girl. You'll pay anywhere from $45 to $130 depending on the project you want to support. A photograph depicting the impact of the gift and a personalized certificate packaged in a vintage silk sati envelope is sent to the person whose name you make the donation in.

- **Global Goods Partners:** Help to alleviate poverty and promote social justice in marginalized communities by making a contribution to fund health training for youth in rural Argentina or buy looms and sewing machines for a cooperative of Burmese refugees in Thailand in the name of a loved one. Another option: Shop Fair Trade holiday gifts that support women-led initiatives. Detailed information is provided about which organization and part of the world each purchase is benefiting.

Check out Oxfam America Unwrapped and Heifer International for more gifts that give back.
