

Endangered Species Gallery Walk

SCIENCE SUBJECT: Life Science, Ecology, Biology

GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SCIENCE CONCEPTS: Endangered Species

VOCABULARY: *endangered species, Endangered Species Act, habitat*

LESSON SUMMARY: Identify groups of animals that are threatened and/or endangered and name some species within each group. Research one species, describe why it's threatened or endangered and compare its problems to those of other endangered species.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES: By researching threatened/endangered species, your students will put a face on species biodiversity and gain insight into some of the problems that threaten all living things. As they share their research, they'll begin to understand broader issues of biodiversity loss—such as the HIPPO dilemma. HIPPO is an acronym that represents the five major threats to biodiversity, which are caused by human activity: **H**abitat loss, **I**ntroduced species, **P**ollution, **P**opulation growth and **O**ver-consumption. This activity provides a way to help students understand the threats to biodiversity and what the word "endangered" means. It also provides students an opportunity to use their creativity to design a poster and share information with their peers

MATERIALS: Copy of "Legal Lingo" and "Poster Parameters" for each student. One copy of "State And Federally Listed Endangered And Threatened Animals Of California" and "State And Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, And Rare Plants Of California"; poster board; magazines with pictures of threatened/endangered plants and animals.

PROCEDURE

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Make photocopies of the list of California threatened/ endangered species for each student. Copy the "Poster Parameters" onto a chalkboard or a poster-sized paper. Have a piece of poster board available for each student. In addition, gather



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magazines that the students can use to cut out pictures of their endangered species. Past issues of *National Wildlife*, *International Wildlife*, *Natural History*, *Audubon*, *Ranger Rick* and *National Geographic* are all good sources. The Internet will also have information and pictures students can download. If your school has a computer lab with these resources, you may want to set up a time for your group to use the lab for their research.

WHAT TO DO

1. Discuss the terms "threatened," "endangered" and "extinct."

Display a copy of "State And Federally Listed Endangered And Threatened Animals Of California" and "State And Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, And Rare Plants Of California". Explain that every organism on this list is threatened or endangered. Discuss the terms "threatened," "endangered," "extirpated" and "extinct." (See "Legal Lingo".)

2. Explain the task and have students choose an organism to research.

Tell students that each of them should pick an organism from the list to research. Have each student select a different species, encouraging them to select one that they are unfamiliar with. Each student will need to research the organism and then create a poster to teach others about it. Point out the "Poster Parameters" you copied earlier and review what the students should be trying to find out about their species—this is the kind of information they should include on their poster. Hand out poster board and give students time to conduct research.

3. Take an endangered species gallery walk.

When the students have finished their posters, use them to create a scavenger hunt. Your scavenger hunt might include statements like the following:

- Name two endangered wetland animals and explain why they're endangered.
- Find two reptiles that are endangered. Record their names and why they're endangered.
- List three different kinds of plants that are threatened by loss of habitat.
- Name an endangered animal that lives in woodland areas.
- Name two animals that winter in one part of the world and breed during spring or summer in another part.
- Name three animals that live in prairies and state why they're endangered

The questions must be developed from the students' posters and should be designed to get students to read each other's posters and draw conclusions about why different organisms are in trouble. You should include questions that cover the



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full range of organisms your students researched. Next hang the posters where everyone can see them and hand out copies of your scavenger hunt clues to the group. Explain that the students should "tour the gallery," reading the posters to find the answers to the scavenger hunt sheets.

4. Share scavenger hunt results.

After students have finished their scavenger hunt, review their answers as a group. What seemed to be the biggest problem(s) facing the species in the gallery? What other generalizations can the students make about threatened/endangered species? For what reasons are marsh plants in trouble? Wetland animals? Birds of prey? Students should notice, for example, that pollution has been a big problem for many birds of prey, that many species are in trouble because of introduced species and that animals that live in woodland areas are threatened by habitat loss. What are people doing to help endangered species? Is there anything that students can do?

Why do people care about losing species?

WRAPPING IT UP

Assessment

1. Posters should be assessed separately, making sure that each poster meets the parameters of the assignment.
2. Have each student give examples of species that are threatened or endangered and describe why. Have him or her choose a group of species from the California endangered species gallery (e.g., a group of marsh plants) and list major reasons the species are endangered. Identify and match endangered species to each reason. Can the students recognize a common reason or reasons for endangerment of different groups of plants and animals?

Source: Illinois Biodiversity Basics, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Chicago Wilderness, World Wildlife Fund.



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