

Endangered Species

In 1973, the United States Government passed legislation to protect vanishing species.

The Endangered Species Act classifies animals based upon population numbers. The exportation or trade of endangered and threatened species is prohibited by the Endangered Species Act. Federal agencies monitor the survival of the species and govern any activities that may threaten the species in danger. This includes deforestation of habitat, hunting, and the trade of products from the species (i.e. ivory from elephant tusks).

There are four classifications which are used to describe the status of a species.

Extinction refers to the disappearance of a species as a result of altered environmental or outside factors. If no member of the species survives and is able to reproduce, the entire line is lost. A species may also become extinct through gradual evolution into a different species.

Extinct in the wild refers to a species that has no surviving members outside the confinement of wildlife parks and zoos with captive breeding programs. Extinct in the wild animals usually result from the disappearance of suitable habitats. Theoretically, if habitats can be re-established in the wild, the captive bred populations could be released into their native habitat.

Endangered animals are species which are likely to become extinct unless drastic actions are taken to ensure the survival of the species. Man can help by creating new habitats or preserving natural ones, captive breeding, and outlawing the hunting of the animal.

Threatened animals are species that are likely to move into the endangered category in the near future.

Man can take important steps in preventing the extinction of species.

Extinction of animals can be prevented by man being aware of the impact its actions have on the survival of a species, and taking active steps to preserve the future of wildlife.

Conserving the environment is an important part of wildlife preservation. Simple steps such as recycling in the home and proper disposal of trash helps to protect the natural habitat of animals. Minimizing pollution from industry also plays an important role in preserving habitats. Research into the ecosystem of a proposed building site or development area can ensure the cohabitation of native species and man. Letters to congressmen and legislators will establish the importance of wildlife conservation in the public sector, and encourage the continuation and development of laws to protect endangered species. The support of educational animal preservation facilities like Global Wildlife Center is also a major step in the survival of species. Centers such as Global not only provide a safe habitat for endangered species, they also encourage members of the community to take an active role in wildlife conservation.

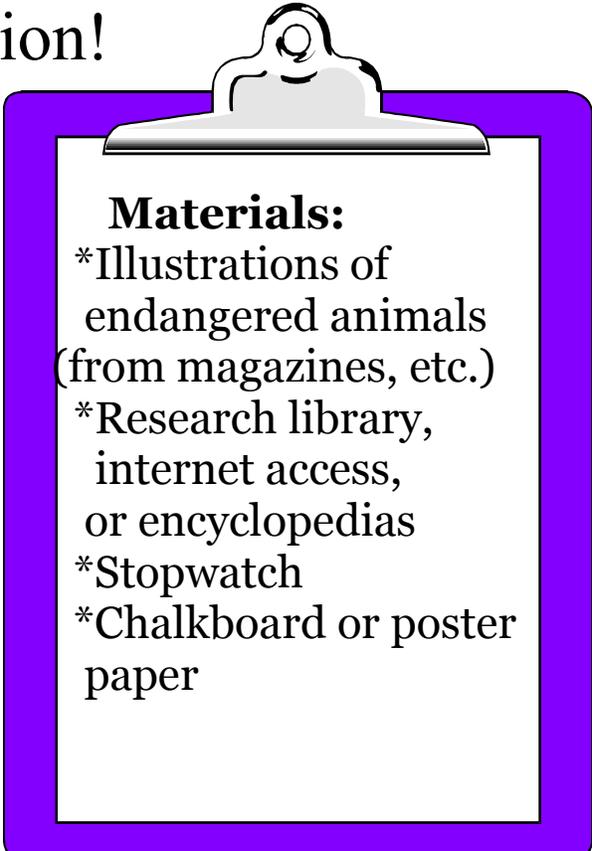
Countdown to Extinction!

Objective: The student will identify species that are classified “endangered,” research why, and suggest ways to prevent their extinction.

Introduction:

The teacher will introduce the lesson by explaining the importance of the protection of endangered animals. The teacher will have the students examine the natural causes for extinction such as floods, earthquakes, and fires, as well as human interference with hunting, loss of habitat, and pollution.

The lesson will also introduce the students as to the ways man can save endangered species.



Materials:

- *Illustrations of endangered animals (from magazines, etc.)
- *Research library, internet access, or encyclopedias
- *Stopwatch
- *Chalkboard or poster paper

Activity:

1. Select an endangered animal as an example and identify its physical and behavioral characteristics. Discuss with the class the factors that have contributed to the animal's endangerment. Discuss with the class ways to improve the selected animal's chance of survival.
2. Divide the students into groups. Provide each with an endangered animal's picture from a magazine and have them research their animal. Students should identify physical characteristics, location and type of habitat, reproduction, diet, and factors causing endangerment.
3. Have the students introduce to the class their animal and its cause for endangerment. The teacher will write the word “Endangered” on the board and create a semantic web with each cause for endangerment branching off. Use the stopwatch and ask the students to brainstorm for solutions to each cause for endangerment.
4. Have the students try to “save” the endangered animals. If, in one minute, they can come up with five suggestions to save the animal that address each specific cause for endangerment, in one minute, they have won the battle to save the endangered species. Let the children know that every single day, an animal species becomes extinct forever.

Closure:

Have the students determine at their visit to Global Wildlife Center which of Global's animals are endangered and why.

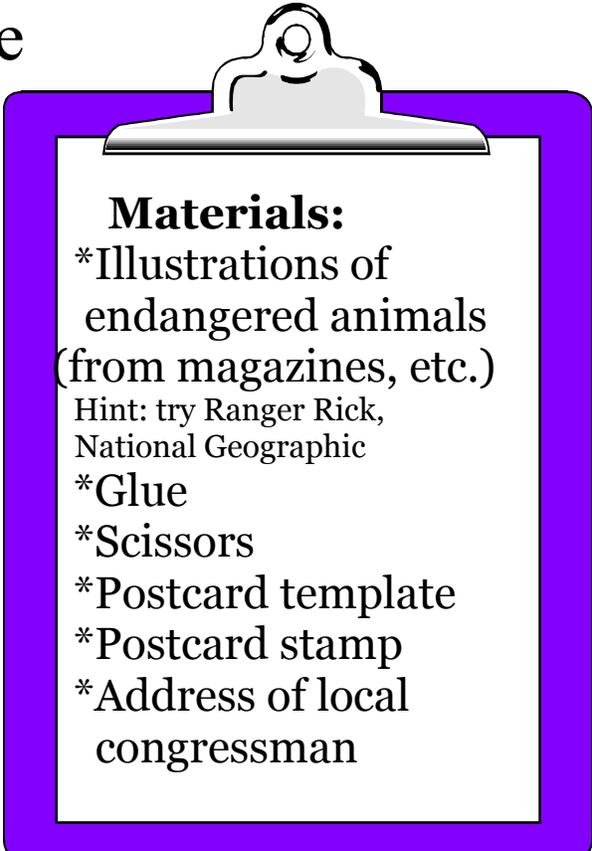
Wish We Weren't Here

Objective: The students will develop an appreciation for endangered species and share their views with members of the government.

Introduction:

The students will create their own postcards with pictures of endangered animals and their names. The students will then write a few sentences about why it is important for us to conserve endangered species.

They will understand that members of government can greatly affect the future of wildlife conservation and do their part by sending the postcards to members of government.



Materials:
*Illustrations of endangered animals (from magazines, etc.)

Hint: try Ranger Rick, National Geographic

*Glue

*Scissors

*Postcard template

*Postcard stamp

*Address of local congressman

Activity:

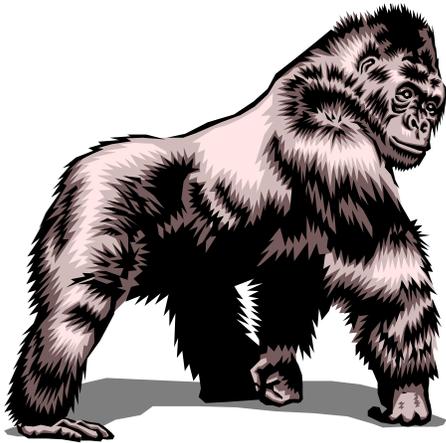
1. Duplicate the postcard on the following page and make one copy for each student.
2. Have the students cut out the post card.
3. Distribute the pictures of threatened and endangered species and the names to the students.
4. Have the students glue the pictures and names of the endangered species to the front of the postcard.
5. Model a sample sentence to the students about the importance of protecting endangered species. Ask the students to write their views on the conservation of endangered species on the back of their postcard.
6. Now have the students address their postcards to their local congressman or to the President of the United States.
7. Finally, have the students design their own stamp.
8. Collect the postcards, place a real stamp next to the created one, and mail them to the addressee.

Closure:

Ask the students how sending their postcards might change the views of government leaders and how their voice can help endangered animals.

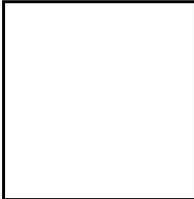
Wish We Weren't Here

Postcard activity



Lowland Gorilla

“You’ve heard the old saying, ‘Wish you were here....’ Well, nobody wants to be **here** on the endangered species list. Write a postcard to our legislators telling them how you feel about saving endangered species. With your help, we might actually be able to leave!”

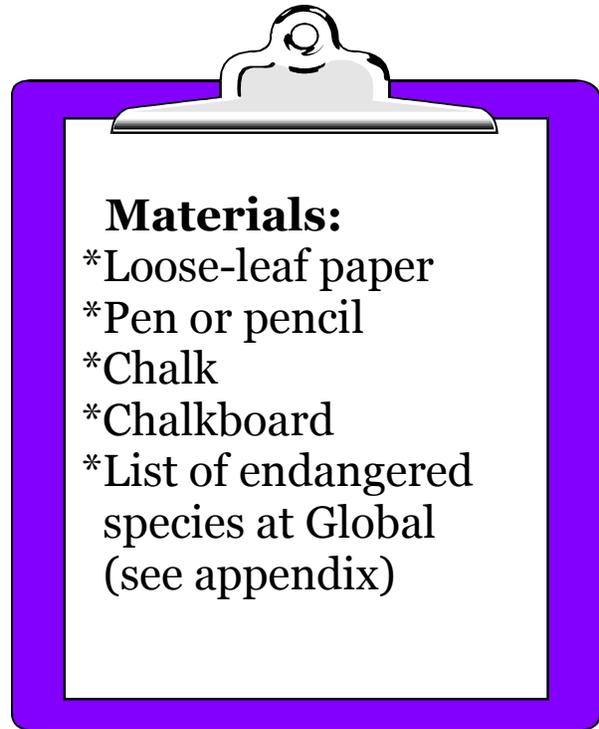
Going, Going, Gone

Objective: The students will be able to identify the terms threatened, endangered, extinct in the wild, and extinct.

Introduction:

Because Global Wildlife Center is a home for many threatened, endangered, and extinct in the wild animals, it is important for students to be able to identify these terms.

The following activity is intended to illustrate those terms in a way the children can understand easily.



Activity:

1. Make a list on the chalkboard of some of the threatened and endangered species found at Global Wildlife Center (see Glossary.) Encourage the students to agree as a class upon **one** animal they would like to be.
2. Tell the students about the animal they picked; what it looks like, why it is endangered or threatened, and its habitat. Now tell all the children to stand in a large circle, pretend they are the animal they chose for a minute, and then instruct them to sit down quietly.
3. Select one student to leave the circle. Have this student walk around the circle and tap every other child on the head. All tapped students leave the circle and return to their desk. Count the number of “animals” who are left.
4. Explain that since there are now fewer animals, they are considered a threatened species. Ask the children to repeat the term and explain to them its meaning.
5. Have the same student go around the circle again, tapping every other child. When the children leave the circle, perform a count out loud. Explain that now the animals are endangered explain the term, and have the children repeat it after you.
6. Repeat the exercise with extinct in the wild.
7. The last time the student makes the circle, he should tap everyone on the head. All students return to their desk. Have the students look at the “habitat,” or the empty space where everyone was standing. Now, explain that every animal has died, and the species will never be on the earth again. It is now extinct.

Closure:

Explain how places like Global Wildlife Center are important to animals that are extinct in the wild.