



ENDANGERED WILDLIFE AROUND THE WORLD

Unit of work

Introduction

Wildlife is an important and fascinating topic for students to explore. Sadly, many animal species are dangerously close to becoming extinct. Raising awareness of this issue has never been more important.

Here you will find a five-lesson unit of work investigating endangered wildlife. The lessons are aimed at students in years 3 to 7, but are flexible enough to be adapted for other year levels.

Each lesson has a brief introduction, broad learning outcomes, a list of required resources, and suggested assessment options.

Lesson 1: Meet the animals

Introduction

In this lesson, students will be introduced to seven animals. They will be given the opportunity to work as a group to discover information about one of the animals and present that information to their peers.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will work as part of a team to research and present information.
- Students will be able to describe attributes and characteristics of one or more of the featured animals.
- Students will compare their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge after their research.



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Resources

- Interactive whiteboard
- **‘Endangered animals KWL chart’** activity sheet
- Names of featured animals in a hat for group selection (optional)
- Computers with internet access and/or a resource centre
- **‘Animal research’** activity sheet (one per student or pair)
- Maps indicating where each of the featured animal species lives in the wild. Individual maps for each animal (and a world map that includes all of them) can be found with the activity sheets section.

Assessment options

- Contributions to class discussions
- **‘Animal research’** activity sheet
- Participation in group research and presentation.

Lesson steps

Display the **‘Classifying animal species’** sheet on an interactive whiteboard. What does the ‘Endangered wildlife around the world’ topic mean to them? Discuss with a partner and share ideas.

Explain that these animals were chosen because they are at risk of extinction. How does this make students feel?

Now ask students if they are familiar with these animals. What (if anything) do they already know about them? What would they like to know about them? Ideas can be recorded on copies of the **‘Endangered animals KWL chart’**. This could be done as a whole class for each animal, or in small groups. The questions that students have could be transcribed and featured on a class ‘Endangered Wildlife’ wondering wall.



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Divide the class into small groups. Each group will be assigned one of the animals to investigate further. This can be the students' choice, or allocated by a 'lucky dip' system, but all the animals should be researched.

Once groups have been established, provide some research time for students to discover more about their animal. Students should be encouraged to decide how the research can be conducted most efficiently. They may wish to allocate topics to the members of their group (e.g. one student researches habitat, another diet, another behaviours etc.).

Provide students with a variety of resources and encourage them to research broadly. These could include the internet, books, videos/DVDs, guest speakers, pamphlets etc. Encourage students to evaluate and record their sources of information. If they wish, students can use the '**Animal research**' activity sheet to record their findings.

Once students have finalised their research, they should create a presentation to share with the rest of the class. Their presentations could include the maps indicating where the animal can be found. There are individual maps for each animal and a world map showing all the animals with the activity sheets.

Once all the presentations are completed, students can record their newly acquired knowledge in the 'What have I learnt?' column of the '**Endangered animals KWL chart**' that was started earlier.



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Lesson 2: What's their status?

Introduction

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the classification terms 'Endangered', 'Vulnerable', 'Critically Endangered', and 'Extinct'. They will investigate what each means and discover how each animal is classified according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will consider the importance of classifying animals according to their conservation status.
- Students will be able to define the terms 'Endangered', 'Vulnerable', 'Critically Endangered', and 'Extinct'.
- Students will discover the classification and conservation status of each featured animal.

Resources

- Computers with internet access and/or dictionaries and other reference books
- Slips of paper (for recording)
- The various student fact sheets found in the 'Facts for students' section
- **'What's their status?'** activity sheet
- The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website (www.iucnredlist.org)

Assessment options

- Participation in class discussions
- **'What's their status?'** activity sheet
- Additions to the class wondering wall



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Lesson steps

Review Lesson 1 by discussing new and interesting information that was learnt. Focus on the classification of each animal. What are the animal classifications (e.g. reptile, mammal, amphibian etc.)? What characteristics do animals of each class have? Why is it important to classify animals? Record ideas on the board.

Now write the following terms on the board:

- Vulnerable
- Endangered
- Critically Endangered
- Extinct

Explain that we classify wildlife that is threatened or no longer existing using the above terms. Ask students to discover and write definitions for each term on slips of paper. These definitions can be added to the class 'Endangered Wildlife' wondering wall (started in Lesson 1). Ask two or three students to read their definitions for each term. A brief definition of each is provided below for your information.

- Vulnerable (high risk of endangerment in the wild)
- Endangered (high risk of extinction in the wild)
- Critically Endangered (extremely high risk of extinction in the wild)
- Extinct (no longer in existence)

Using the information in the student fact sheets, discover the conservation status of the seven featured animals. Students to record the classifications using the **'What's their status?'** activity sheet.

The second part of this lesson is optional and can be done at any time throughout teaching this unit of work. Either as a whole class using an interactive whiteboard, individually, or in pairs, allocate some time to visit and explore the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website www.iucnredlist.org. Students should record or discuss any interesting information they find or species that are new to them. Add facts, notes, pictures etc. from the website to the class 'Endangered Wildlife' wondering wall.



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Lesson 3: What causes endangerment and extinction?

Introduction

In this lesson students will brainstorm their own ideas about how wildlife becomes endangered or extinct by focusing on the featured animals. They will work in a group to contribute their ideas to a class mind map and then discuss the common causes of wildlife endangerment and extinction.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will acknowledge the many ways in which wildlife becomes endangered.
- Students will work collaboratively to generate and discuss ideas.

Resources

- **‘Wildlife endangerment and extinction – how?’** class mind map templates, with boxes and arrows that can be cut out and displayed on a wall prior to the lesson.
- Sticky notes (five per pair)
- **‘Causes of wildlife endangerment and extinction’** mind map activity sheet

Assessment options

- Participation in partner, group and class discussions
- Additions to the **‘Wildlife endangerment and extinction – how?’** class mind map
- **‘Causes of wildlife endangerment and extinction’** mind map activity sheet



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Lesson steps

Reflect on Lesson 2 by briefly discussing the classification and conservation status of the featured animals. If your class is doing a wondering wall, let your students focus their attention on that for a few moments.

Now ask students to think about the seven featured animals. How do students think these animals became endangered? Students to work with a partner and make a list of as many reasons they can think of. Give students adequate time to formulate a list of causes. Student ideas will be many and varied. Some ideas may include: pollution, hunting, habitat destruction, disease, climate change and humans.

Refer students to the student fact sheets to discover the causes of endangerment for each featured animal.

Display the **‘Wildlife endangerment and extinction – how?’** class mind map on a wall in your classroom. Using sticky notes, ask pairs to write down their top five causes of wildlife endangerment and extinction (using one sticky note per cause). Divide your class into four groups and ask each pair to share their top five causes with their group. Each group is to submit as many sticky notes to the mind map as they can (without repeating ideas). Once each group has agreed on which sticky notes to submit to the wall, they share them with the rest of the class, explaining why they chose those particular causes.

At the end of the activity, ask students to reflect on the most common causes of endangerment and extinction. Using the **‘Causes of wildlife endangerment and extinction’** mind map activity sheet, students are to transcribe the ideas from the class mind map onto their own copy.



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Lesson 4: What is being done? Let's protect!

Introduction

In this lesson students will learn about the various ways in which threatened wildlife is being conserved and protected. The lesson has a focus on Australian species and Australian conservation programs. Students will conduct basic research to discover the different programs and choose one to research further.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will be able to explain how conservation programs are working to preserve Australian wildlife.

Resources

- Interactive whiteboard
- Computers with internet access
- **'Conserve, protect, research!'** activity sheet

Assessment options

- Participation in discussions
- **'Conserve, protect, research!'** activity sheet
- Completed magazine/newspaper article assignments



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Lesson steps

Recap Lesson 3 by asking students to reflect on the main causes of wildlife endangerment. Ask students what they think should be done to help our endangered species. Record student ideas on the board.

Using an interactive whiteboard, display the 'Endangered Wildlife' student facts. In each animal fact sheet there is a section entitled 'What is being done?'. As a class read this information for each animal to discover what is being done to protect them. Add any new ideas to the class brainstorm.

Now provide time for students to research conservation programs being undertaken in Australia. They can use information from the internet, books, brochures etc. to answer the questions on the '**Conserve, protect, research!**' activity sheet.

During this research, students are to select one conservation/protection program that really interests them and research it in more depth.

Students will be required to create a magazine or newspaper article about their chosen program. The purpose of the article is to educate and raise awareness of this particular program. Explain to students that like any magazine or newspaper article, their article should have:

- a headline
- images to support or extend the text
- columns
- relevant, succinct information presented in paragraphs.



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Lesson 5: What can I do?

Introduction

In this final lesson, students will discover that endangered wildlife is something that everyone should be concerned about. They will devise ways in which they can help through the use of an action plan.

Broad learning outcomes

- Students will reflect on their learning throughout the unit.
- Students will learn that everyone is responsible for saving endangered wildlife.
- Students will identify ways in which they can help to save endangered wildlife.

Resources

- **‘Save our wildlife action plan’** activity sheet

Assessment options

- Participation in discussions
- **‘Save our wildlife action plan’** activity sheet



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Lesson steps

Reflect on previous learning with students through a class discussion and by focusing on the class wondering wall that was started in Lesson 1. Ask students what new knowledge and opinions they have developed as they have engaged with the learning in this unit.

Quickly discuss Lesson 4 and the conservation programs the students discovered in their research. Now pose the question: “What can you do?”

Give students a moment to think, as this might be a concept they have not yet considered. Explain to students that our endangered wildlife is **EVERYONE’s** responsibility. Explain that if we want to enjoy our wildlife in years to come, it is up to us to help, even if it is in a small way.

In pairs, ask students to discuss one achievable goal they could set to help endangered animals (e.g. reuse or recycle more often, donate one week’s pocket money to a conservation program). Ask the pairs to share their ideas with the class. This should stimulate meaningful discussion and enable students to feel empowered to make a difference. Following this discussion, ask students to independently complete the **‘Save our wildlife action plan’** activity sheet.