

Endangered Animals

Be a wildlife warrior!

These teachers' notes should be used in conjunction with Project Pull-out #28: Endangered Animals which is found in DMAG's issue 81, December 2008. The Project Pull-out will inspire students to learn about the world's endangered animals.

These activities encourage students to:

- Learn about endangered animals around the world
- Understand that survival of a species depends on many things
- Find out why species become endangered
- Think about how human actions affect the survival of a species

Science: Environment Matters

What it means to be endangered

As a class discuss what it means when an animal is said to be "endangered." Ask the class to brainstorm all the animals – and plants – that they know are endangered. Write the list on the board. Explain that there are over 16,000 species of plants and animal that are now endangered – if they had to list them all on the board they'd be there for weeks!

Ask the class to brainstorm the reasons why animals become endangered. If they can't think of many reasons,



These Asian elephants are at Australia Zoo.

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prompt them with the reasons listed on page 53 of DMAG.

Choose two of the above reasons and discuss them in detail with regards to consequences. For instance, **what is the consequence of habitat loss e.g. bushland being bulldozed to put in a new suburb.**

For an animal, some of the consequences might be:

- Loss of food
- Loss of home/shelter – for instance, where do the animals go when bushland is cleared?
- The animal's habitat gets fragmented so one group on one side cannot reach the group on the other side, so they have to mate with a smaller group of animals
- Greater exposure to roads and thus being hit by cars
- Greater exposure to attack by domestic animals
- Stress on the animal, causing it to be more vulnerable to disease

Science, English and Art

Endangered animal project

As a class, read the Project Pull-out from pages 48 to 53.

Ask each child to choose one of the animals featured – tiger, elephant, turtle or koala. They are each to do an in-depth project on it.

Each project should include:

- Pictures of the animal. At least one of these should be hand drawn/painted
- A map showing where it is found
- Characteristics of the animal and a brief written piece about why the animal is unique
- The threats facing the animal
- A short exposition/essay about how they think each animal can be saved

Extension exercise 1: Ask the class to debate which animal most deserves charity money to help save it. There can be two debates to start: tiger v koala and elephant v turtle. The winner of each debate can then go head to head in a final debate.

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Extension exercise 2: If possible, arrange a visit to a zoo or wildlife park to see the animals they're studying. Ask each student to write a short piece – a first hand account – on “what impressed me the most” about the animal they've been studying.

Science: Environment Matters Human activity and the environment

Now that the class has some understanding of the actions that endanger animals, discuss the reasons why those actions occur in the first place. Draw a mind map to help illustrate the things related to this.

For instance, what is causing habitat loss?

Some answers might be – clearing for houses/new suburbs, for farms, to sell the timber, to build a mine etc.

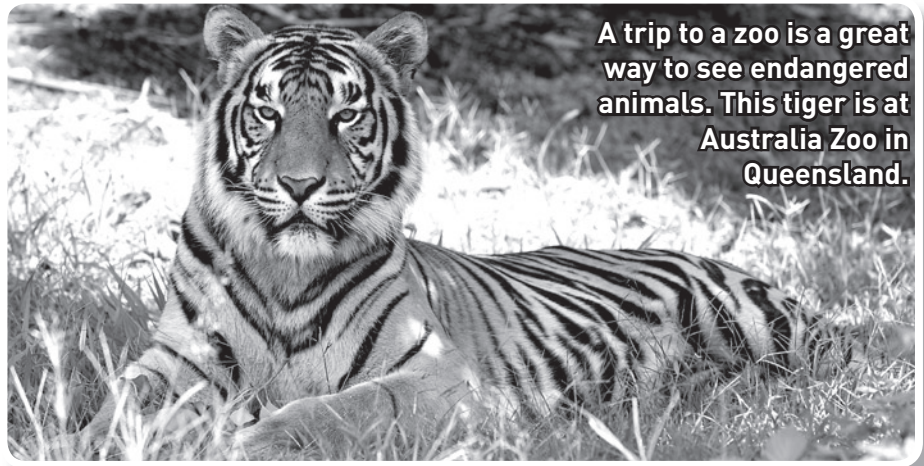
Can some of these things be changed? For example, can greater density housing be built instead of big blocks? Can only timber planted in managed plantations be used instead of timber in untouched forests? Can there be greater policing of illegal logging?

What about farm practices? Can farmers leave corridors of bushland?

Can more areas be put aside as National Parks? What about things such as mining, can open cut mines be regenerated after use?

Extension exercise 3: Maths: Population explosion

Ask students to break into pairs to try to find out – using the Internet or an atlas – the population of the world:



A trip to a zoo is a great way to see endangered animals. This tiger is at Australia Zoo in Queensland.

© Australia Zoo

- 50 years ago
- Now
- In 50 years (an estimate)

How does the estimated population in 50 years time compare to that now - i.e., will it have doubled? Tripled?

As a class, discuss how an increase in population is going to increase problems like habitat loss. With more people, what will there be greater demand for: food, housing, land, resources such as oil, plastics and metals? Discuss.

Science: Environment Matters Environmental footprints

Discuss what an environmental footprint is. Ask students about the things they do that impact on the environment. Talk about what would happen if every person lessened their environmental footprint – would this have an overall impact?

Read the Project Pull-out, paying attention to the things people can do to help save endangered animals. As a class, come up with a master list. What are some practices the class can adopt? Can students do some of

these things at home e.g. turning off lights when they're not using them?

Extension exercise 4: School Environmental Management Plan

Carry out an environmental audit of the school, paying attention to things like recycling, water use, electricity use, composting and areas of native vegetation. If you can, give your school a makeover to improve its grounds.

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