



Lowland Gorilla

Overview:

Time is running out for more than a thousand of the world's wild mammal species. The most comprehensive assessment of the world's mammals has confirmed an extinction crisis, with almost one in four at risk of disappearing forever, according to The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, revealed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona. Today's activities will focus on this crisis and what is being done to avoid it. Students will discuss, write, and do research about the endangered mammals.

Grade Level:

5

Subject Matter:

Science and Language Arts

Standards Addressed:

Science

Students will be able to understand how an organism's ecosystem and habitat affect its survival.

Students will learn that for any particular environment, some kinds of plants and animals survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all.

Language Arts

Students will be able to write narratives with a consistent point of view, using sensory details and dialogue to develop characters, setting, and plot.



Pygmy hippo

Classroom Activities:

1. Activity #1 Discussion about endangered mammals

- What does it mean if we say a mammal becomes endangered or extinct?
- 25% of mammals are threatened. Can you remember the names of any of the mammals that were in the NewsDepth feature? Can you recall any mammals that you have ever visited in a zoo? Where did they come from originally?
- Why do you think animals become extinct?
- Listed are some resources that may help your students answer that question and more
 - <http://www.endangeredspecie.com/> The Rarest Info Around
 - <http://library.thinkquest.org/5736/> This is a website from Thinkquest created by students with lots of useful information about animal extinction.

- <http://library.thinkquest.org/19689/data/menu.html> Another link from Thinkquest with information about animal extinction.*
*You will notice that a lot of the resources refer to “animal” extinction rather than “mammal” extinction. The mammal information is included in those sites but is reached by using various links.

2. Activity #2 Animal Charades. (This can also be used as a hook – 10-15 min.)

- Prepare a list of animals that are endangered (with or without pictures) and cut the list apart. Fold the slips of paper and put them into a container or paper bag so that students may draw from them. A few types of species that have members that are endangered include: alligator, whale, sheep, elephant, hummingbird, shark, eagle, wolf, panda, tiger, rattlesnake, grasshopper, fly, polar bear, rhino, gorilla, turtle, snail, panther, butterfly, dolphin, rabbit, frog, and iguana.
- To begin this lesson, discuss the term "endangered species" and what students know about it. What animals can your students name that are "endangered"? What do they believe causes animals to become extinct?
- Now point out that many kinds of animals your students find interesting are in danger of disappearing altogether. Tell students that they are going to pretend to be some endangered species and have their classmates try to guess what these animals are. As in the formal game of charades, students are not permitted to talk, but they may pantomime the behaviors of the animals.

3. Activity #3 Writing activity about an endangered mammal. (extended research time)

- Encourage students to learn as much as they can about an endangered mammal of their choice (or you can assign them). This can be done in class using the internet, or can be assigned as homework. Choose one of the following writing options:
 - Students will write a simple poem (haiku, cinquain, or tanka) about an endangered mammal of their choice. They can also include an illustration.
 - Students will write a short story about an endangered mammal. Encourage them to use vivid imagery.
The following is a website that displays several very good illustrated stories written by 5th graders about endangered animals. Have students read some aloud in class. They will need at least one day to complete these.
<http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/5thgrade99/animals.htm>
- Drawing or painting with paragraph
Some of the earliest works of art depicted animals or other elements of nature. Find pictures of early cave paintings. Can you identify animals that are now extinct? Paint or draw your own picture of an endangered or extinct species in the style of a cave painting. In a paragraph explain where this picture could actually be painted to preserve it for future generations if the animal becomes extinct.
Sample: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave_painting

4. Activity #4 Web of Life

- http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/03/lp310-03.shtml This is an activity provided by Education World in which the students investigate endangered species and how they impact the environment to complete a "web of life."



European Bison



Pere David's Deer



Iberian Lynx

Additional Resources:

http://www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm?uNewsID=1695 This is an article about the World Conservation Congress in Spain.

<http://www.thinkquest.org/library/search.html> Thinkquests endangered species resources. There are very many excellent websites created by students around the world who have participated in a Thinkquest competition. Lots of valuable information that can be presented and studied in the middle school classroom.

<http://www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/Endangered/index.html>

An exhibition from the American Museum of Natural History. This fascinating site will hold the attention of students of all ages, as they investigate endangered animals and endangered habitats, discover the causes of endangerment, learn how humans contribute to it, and find out what they can do to prevent it. Best of all, students can take an interactive tour of the museum's exhibition on endangered animals and habitats.

<http://eelink.net/EndSpp/> Endangered Species Links.

<http://www.sciencenetlinks.com/lessons.cfm?BenchmarkID=4&DocID=310> A lesson plan designed to orient students to the plight of endangered species and to help them understand and gain perspective on human issues that continue to endanger species and threaten our global environment.

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/kids/index.html> Students learn how loss of habitat and ecosystems can lead to a decline in biodiversity, and how the Endangered Species Act helps conserve endangered and threatened species.

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr133.shtml Education World explores some of the most valuable "endangered species" sites for teachers and students. Also included, endangered species activities and online projects for students of all ages!

http://www.bagheera.com/inthewild/class_activities.htm Bagheera Classroom: activities that apply generally to threatened, endangered, and extinct species.

<http://www.animalinfo.org/rarest.htm> Animal Info - World's Rarest Mammals.

Sources for pictures:

Lowland gorilla

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/staticfiles/NGS/Shared/StaticFiles/animals/images/primary/western-lowland-gorilla-looking.jpg>

Pygmy Hippo

http://dsc.discovery.com/news/2007/06/27/pygmyhippo_ani_zoom0.html?category=animals&guid=20070627090000

European Bison

<http://www.americazoo.com/goto/index/mammals/animals/388.jpg>

Pere David's Deer

<http://www.americazoo.com/goto/index/mammals/animals/368.jpg&imgrefurl>

Iberian Lynx

http://www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/index.cfm?uNewsID=1695