

Noah's Landing in the Classroom

Interactive Ideas for Extending Your Visit

Conservation Cards

Objective

Many of the animals at Noah's Landing are threatened in the wild. In this activity, students will identify types of animals and note characteristics such as diet, habitat and threats to their environment. At the conclusion, they will brainstorm ways to protect these animals in the wild and create a conservation board.

Key Vocabulary

Habitat

Diet

Threatened

Endangered

Keystone Species

Conservation

Preservation

Supplies

Disposable Cameras

Construction Paper

Photo Paper

Before Your Visit

1. Visit the Noah's Landing "Teacher Resources" page to download an updated version of the Noah's Landing Animal Guide. Assign one animal to each child in your class.
2. Ask the class to define extinct and endangered animals. Questions might include:

What animals have become extinct?

What happens when an animal becomes endangered?

What are some reasons that animals disappear?

Optional Reading:

Humans share the planet with more than thirty-three million kinds of plants and animals. Over the course of time, many of those species have disappeared or become extinct. Scientists are not sure how many animals have disappeared over time but there is one thing that is for certain: once an animal becomes extinct, it can never live again.

The relationship between animals and humans is complex. People view many animals as pests without realizing how important they are to our survival. Snakes, for instance, help control rodent populations by eating mice and rats. Imagine if all the world's mice were running



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through our classroom right now. We would wish for some snakes to come along! Even if animals may seem like pests, they are important parts of the ecosystem, providing food for other animals or helping to control animal populations by eating other animals. An animal that is so interconnected with other animals in their ecosystem that their disappearance changes the balance of the whole ecosystem is called a keystone species. If a keystone species becomes extinct, the entire balance is disrupted.

Take, for example, the sea otter. People hunted the sea otter for fur in the 1700s and soon, they began to disappear. When their numbers decreased, sea urchins increased and began to eat the kelp beds where other fish laid their eggs. Until the sea otter population rebounded, the entire ecosystem was under threat.

Extinction is not a quick or simple process. Animals today are threatened by various factors: habitat loss, pollution, disease, deforestation, or invasive species. Sometimes, humans introduce new animals to the ecosystem when they release their pets. These "invasive species" may disrupt the food chain or destroy critical wildlife. Consider the South American cane toad, which was introduced to Australia in the 1930s. Farmers brought the cane toad to Australia to control unwanted pets. Unfortunately, these highly toxic amphibians began to eat local pet food and, in turn, many household pets tried to eat the toads. Often, these pets became sick or died after eating the toads. Now, the cane toads are considered pests!

It's important that we all work to preserve and protect species around the world. Let's consider how we can protect animals.

3. Have the class brainstorm around the issue of animal preservation.
 - Let's list some ways that animals are threatened by humans.
 - What can we do to protect the world's animals?
4. Break the class into teams and explain that they will be creating conservation cards about the animals at Noah's Landing. Assign each student an animal and explain that they will be researching their status in the wild. Are they threatened? Endangered? If so, what are their major threats? What can we do to protect them?

At Noah's Landing

1. Arm each team with a camera and a notebook for their tour at Noah's Landing. During their tour, remind them to listen for facts about their animal. When they visit their animal, have the student record the facts in their notebook and take a picture.

In the Classroom

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1. Have the pictures printed that each student took. Give them their printed picture and a sheet of construction paper. Tell them they are going to create a "conservation card" with their animal's picture at the top and a few lines of text explaining:

Animal Name
Habitat
Diet
Status in the Wild
Threats

2. When the students have finished their cards, consider making a class bulletin board that showcase their work. You can also include a group poster detailing the ways that we can protect species in the wild. Turn it into a learning experience for everyone!

