

Endangered Species Worldwide



Objective

The student will be able to use a world map or globe to locate the distribution of at least 10 endangered species. The student will be able to describe the current threats and conservation efforts concerning one endangered species of animal or plant.

Materials

- Atlas
- Computer with internet access
- Large world map
- Writing and drawing materials (including markers or colored pencils)

Background

In the United States, four major federal laws protect wild animals and plants: the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Lacey Act, and the Animal Welfare Act. The United States is also a member of CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna. This treaty, with more than 160 member countries, protects rare, threatened and endangered species that are exported or imported.

Thousands of birds, mammals, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, and plants are endangered and many more become extinct each year before scientists have even had the chance to discover them. Within the U.S., more than 700 plant species and 500 animal species are listed as threatened or endangered. (A species likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future is classified as "threatened".)

Action

1. As a pre-activity to the lesson, ask students to identify areas on a world map where they think endangered animal and plant species live. Ask students to come to class the following day with a list of 10 or more endangered species and where they live to contribute to a class list.
2. As a class, make a list of endangered species. Ask students to choose a species from their list or from the class list to research.
3. Write the following questions on the classroom board for students to answer about their species:
 - What is its common name and scientific name?
 - Where does it live? Describe both the distribution (the geographical occurrence of a species) and the habitat (the place where a species lives).
 - Are there patterns to its distribution?
 - What are the current and past population estimates? If possible, find out the methods scientists used to determine the population number.
 - Explain a major reason or reason(s) for the species' population decline.
 - Why is it important to make an effort to save this species?

Endangered Species Worldwide



4. Allow time for students to gather information. When ready, have each student indicate where his or her species is found on the map and present researched information. Presentations can be oral reports or poster displays.
5. After all students have presented their animals, have the class determine the top five endangered species and discuss conservation efforts (if there are any) on their behalf. Do students think these animals will continue to live? Why or why not?
6. What animals or plants have been removed from the endangered list because of successful conservation plans? What were the plans or laws that were used to help these species achieve this new status? What is being done to ensure the continued protection of the species?
7. As a post-activity to this lesson, ask students to reflect on what they learned by comparing the information they discovered to their "previous knowledge" in the pre-activity (step #1, above).



Ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*) are among more than 40 endangered and threatened species cared for at Busch Gardens® Tampa Bay. For more about lemurs go to the National Geographic Creature Feature at nationalgeographic.com/kids/creature_feature/0201/lemurs.html.