



NYSDEC Environmental Education

Wildlife Conservation I

For Students in Grades 1 through 3

A 45- minute program designed to introduce students to some of the wild animals that live with us on the planet. Discuss what animals are wild, and which animals have been domesticated. Students will understand the difference between common wildlife, and endangered and threatened species of wildlife. Students will become familiar with the NYSDEC, and how they manage wildlife populations and habitats to preserve these animals for future generations.

Goal

Take advantage of the popularity of animals with children to help explain the differences between wild and domestic animals. Introduce students to some of the familiar species of Long Island wildlife. Students will learn what wild animals need to survive. Students will be introduced to some of the adaptations and behaviors that animals have tailored to survive. Students will consider the proper ways that humans should interact with wildlife which are outlined by NYSDEC protocols.

NYS Elementary Science Core Curriculum

Standard 1: *Scientific Inquiry*

Key Idea 1: The central purpose of scientific inquiry is to develop explanations of natural phenomena in a continuing, creative process.

Standard 4: *The Living Environment*

Key Idea 3: Individual organisms and species change over time.

Key Idea 5: Organisms maintain a dynamic equilibrium that sustains life.

Key Idea 6: Plants and animals depend on each other and their physical environment.

Key Terms

Extinct

Wild

Threatened Species

Endangered Species

Domesticated

Protected Species

Migration

Tame

Habitat

Hibernation

Life Span

Life Cycle

Background

As of December 1999, US Fish and Wildlife Service listed 939 plants and animals as endangered, and another 266 listed as threatened. Some of the reasons these animals are disappearing are because of the effects of people. The NYSDEC helps to manage and protect wildlife species in New York State.

Materials

Bring animals and animal artifacts to demonstrate some of the diversity of wildlife on Long Island and around the world.

- Preserved butterfly display
- raccoon fur
- live snake, or snake skin
- live box turtle, or shell of box turtle
- deer antlers

Procedure

What is wild? Differences between wild and domesticated animals are important. Engage students in a discussion about what all animals need. (The following exercise is adapted from Project Wild, *Beautiful Basics*).

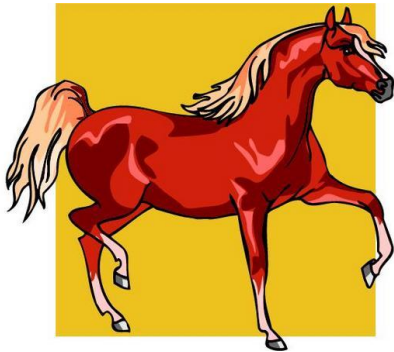
- 1) Draw a three column chart on the board, with the headings "People," "Pets" and "Wildlife."
- 2) Ask the students to identify the things that people need to survive. As they are suggested, list them (or supply illustrations of the concepts) in that column.
- 3) Do the same for pets, and then wildlife.
- 4) Combine similar concepts into broader topics. For example, "running around" and "moving around" could be combined into "room to move." Strain out any concepts that are "wants" and not "needs" (food belongs on the list, DVDs do not).
- 5) Refine the list to demonstrate what things are needs.
- 6) See if the three columns are similar or different. Encourage the students to talk about *why* they came to the conclusions that they did. In most cases, the general needs for people, pets and wildlife are the same, or very similar.

After the exercise, show some of the animals and animal artifacts to the students. With each item shown, talk about what that animal would need to survive, and whether or not the students would be likely to encounter that species in their yard or their neighborhood. Ask the following for each species:

- 1) What does this animal need to survive?
- 2) Do you think this animal can meet all of its needs in your yard/neighborhood?
- 3) Would it be a good thing for this animal to be in your yard/neighborhood?
- 4) Where is the best place for that animal to live?
- 5) Can you think of any problems that this animal might create for your family?

Open the discussion to include domestic animals (farm animals and pets).

For example, is a horse a wild animal? Is a dog? Is a wolf? Is a robin?



Project WILD lessons:

grades K-4 **What's That, Habitat?** Identify basic needs for food, water, shelter and space

grades PK-4 **Thicket Game** Students experience adaptations in modified 'hide-n-seek' game

grades K-4 **Too Close for Comfort** Explore negative impacts of overcrowding

grades K-4 **Animal Charades** Students distinguish between wild and domesticated animals

grades K-4 **Everybody Needs a Home** Students generalize people and animals share similar needs

Project WILD is one of the most widely-used conservation and environmental education programs among educators of students in kindergarten through high school. It is based on the premise that young people and educators have a vital interest in learning about our natural world. A national network of State Wildlife Agency Sponsors ensures that Project WILD is available nationwide --training educators in the many facets of the program. Emphasizing wildlife because of its intrinsic value, Project WILD addresses the need for human beings to develop as responsible citizens of our planet.

The NYSDEC Public Affairs and Education staff are available to teach Project WILD workshops for educators. Please contact NYSDEC for a workshop. Please call 518-402-8043 or via e-mail at prowild@gw.dec.state.ny.us.