

Local Species Science Fair

OBJECTIVE

The student will research protected plants and animals that live in their state and create a presentation about that species to share with others.

MATERIALS

- library and classroom resources; Internet access
- art supplies or other presentation media

BACKGROUND

Most people can identify endangered species like rhinos, sea turtles, or manatees. However, they may not know very much about the endangered plants and animals in their own backyards.

In 1966, U.S. Congress passed the Endangered Species Preservation Act. This law allowed listing native animal species as endangered, but gave listed species a limited amount of protection. The Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Defense were assigned to protect listed species and preserve habitats. Three years later, the 1969 Endangered Species Conservation Act provided additional protection to species in danger of "worldwide extinction." This Act prohibited importation and sale of such species within the U.S. The 1973 Endangered Species Act combined and strengthened the previous acts.



ACTION

Use this activity as a science project for individual students or as a classroom project for cooperative learning groups.

1. Students use library and classroom resources or the Internet to find out what animals and plants are listed as endangered or threatened species in their state.
2. Students select a species to research. Important research points include:
 - ◆ species name (both common and scientific)
 - ◆ distribution and habitat
 - ◆ food
 - ◆ predators
 - ◆ adaptations
 - ◆ population
 - ◆ endangered or threatened species status.

Also, students should answer these questions:

- ◆ What may have caused this species' population decline?
 - ◆ What, if anything, is being done to save the species?
 - ◆ What suggestions do you have to help the species survive?
3. Students decide on the best ways to present their information. Ideas include posters, videos, models, written reports, PowerPoint®, or display boards.
 4. Provide class time for students to showcase their species with short presentations to classmates. Set aside another time for other classes and parents to attend an endangered and threatened species science fair.