

Strand

LIVING THINGS

Strand unit

Plant and animal life

Objective

- become aware of some of the basic life processes in animals

Working scientifically

- Questioning
- Observing
- Predicting
- Investigating
- Analysing (sorting, classifying, recognising patterns and interpreting)
- Recording and communicating

Background information

At certain stages in its life cycle an animal may be vulnerable. The example given is that of a sea turtle which, as a newborn, must survive a trip across sand to reach the safety of water. At this stage it is highly vulnerable to birds and other predators. This is one reason why a turtle lays large numbers of eggs.

Nature has provided protection to vulnerable species by ensuring large numbers of young are born, allowing for high rates of mortality. In addition to the pressures of nature, humans have, through their development, created increasing pressure on many animal species.

The spread of population and development of beaches have increased pressure on turtles which will return to the same beach to breed each season.

Before the lesson

Materials needed

- Photographs, charts, books of endangered species, Internet access.

Preparation

- Collect books about endangered animals, encyclopaedias and CD-ROMs. Bookmark websites on the Internet that contain appropriate images and text about endangered animals.

The lesson

Stimulus

- Read the passage on the sea turtle from the worksheet. Discuss the turtle's life cycle and how the turtle is endangered while out of the water.

What to do

- After discussing the life cycle, have pupils suggest three reasons why the turtle's life cycle could contribute to its extinction.
- Discuss how the spread of human civilisation has created pressure on many animal species. Pupils list three ways in which this has affected the sea turtle.
- Discuss what animals would have existed in your local environment before it was settled in by humans. Pupils suggest how the life cycle of these animals made them vulnerable to human development.
- Discuss how some animals (generally larger animals) are more vulnerable to human development than smaller species such as insects.
- Use the research materials to find out more about one endangered animal (working individually or in pairs). Record and summarise the information and present it to the class. Discuss the types of threats to these endangered animals (for example, poaching, deforestation). Are any threats more common than others?

After the lesson

Answers

1. The breeding cycle means that young turtles, when making their way to the water, are vulnerable to attack by birds and other predators.
2. Human activity has had a negative effect on the turtle population. Activities such as hunting, egg collecting, lights on beaches and human activity have reduced nesting areas and affected the survival rate of hatchlings.
3. Answers will vary.
4. Teacher check

Additional activities

- Identify the life cycle of a mammal or bird now extinct from your local environment. Describe how the life cycle contributed to the animal's extinction from the environment.

Display ideas

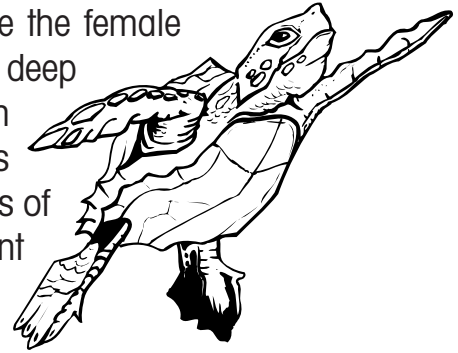
- Display research reports completed by pupils about an endangered animal. Reports could include locations, descriptions, habitats, food, special features and threats leading to endangerment.
- Draw or collect pictures of endangered species to make a collage. Label with titles or special facts.

The sea turtle

The life cycle of some animals makes their survival very difficult. This has combined with the threat posed by human development, leading to numerous animals becoming endangered.

The Life Cycle of a Sea Turtle

The sea turtle is a very fast animal when in the water. On land the turtle is very slow. In the life cycle of a turtle the female must leave the water and lay hundreds of eggs in deep burrows in the sand. When the young turtles hatch they must get from the burrow to the water across many metres of sand. There are only eight species of sea turtle and they face extinction for many different reasons.



1 Describe how the sea turtle's life cycle contributes to it being in danger of extinction.

2 List other reasons why you think the sea turtle is an endangered species.

(a)
(b)
(c)

3 What animals native to your local environment have become endangered? How has their life cycle contributed to this?

4 Complete the box below with facts you have found about one endangered animal.

	Name: _____
	Where found: _____
	Why is it endangered?: _____

