

Survival: Risky Business

Subject: Science

Duration: 45 minutes

Location: Classroom / Outdoors

Key Vocabulary: Endangered, extinct, threatened

Related Activities: Where Have Our Plants and Animals Gone?; Incredible Shrinking Habitat; And Then There Were None

Florida Sunshine State Standards: SC.4.L.17, SC.5.L.17

Objectives: The student will be able to: a) compare and contrast the terms threatened, endangered, and extinct; and b) describe plants and animals found in South Florida's national parks which are threatened, endangered, or extinct.

Method: Students will play a "guess who" game of threatened, endangered, or extinct plants and animals in South Florida's national parks.

Background: South Florida's national parks are home to fourteen endangered wildlife species, and additional endangered species live in areas surrounding the park.

The National Park Service works with other agencies to prevent the extinction of these animals by preserving their habitats. Rangers also learn more about them through scientific study. Humans are the major cause of habitat destruction in the Everglades/South Florida. Students need to become aware of our influence on this unique environment. For additional information, refer to the "Natural History" section of this guide.



Materials

- Masking tape and pen
- 3 x 5 Cards (one for each student)

Suggested Procedure

1. Write the name of an extinct or endangered plant or wildlife species on a 3 x 5 card and tape it to a student's back. Indicate whether it is extinct or endangered. (The student should not be able to see what the species is.)
2. Instruct the students to mingle around the classroom asking other students five to ten "yes" or "no" questions about their species. Several students may be the same species.
3. After students have asked their questions, have the students form a semi-circle so that all can see. Choose one species, and stand those children wearing that species card so that their backs are facing the group. Do not disclose the name of the species.
4. The students wearing the cards should tell the group as many things as they can about their species including what they think they are. If the students guess incorrectly, have the class help by describing some of the species' other characteristics.

Evaluation

When students learn the identity of their species, take some time to add interesting information about the species. Begin a discussion: When we say that an organism is extinct, what do we mean? Can you define endangered/extinct/threatened? What if someone were to suggest that eventually all animals and plants will become extinct? What's all the fuss about endangered species? Who has an opinion?

Extensions

- Sing "Where Have All the Panthers Gone?" (p. 219)
- Have students research an Everglades/South Florida animal which is endangered or threatened.
- Students create a 3-dimensional animal out of clay or papier mache, and then create its habitat in the form of a diorama.
- Create a paper or fabric quilt depicting Everglades/South Florida endangered or threatened species. (Each student illustrates a square with a plant or animal. Then tie the squares together with yarn or ribbon to create a patchwork quilt. Display it in the classroom to generate support for helping endangered species.



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