

PRO AND CON: CONSUMPTIVE AND NONCONSUMPTIVE USES OF WILDLIFE

OBJECTIVES

Students will: 1) identify examples of consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife; 2) describe reasons given for both consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife; and 3) evaluate their personal views about consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife.

METHOD

Students research and debate the topic.

BACKGROUND

NOTE: This activity is enriched if offered after other wildlife-related activities. See, in particular, activities related to Section Two of the Conceptual Framework (Human Values and Wildlife); Section Three (Wildlife and Ecological Systems); and Section Four (Wildlife Conservation).

Age: Grades 7-12

Subjects: Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Speech

Skills: analysis, comparing similarities and differences, debate, description, evaluation, public speaking, reporting, research, small group work, synthesis

Duration: minimum of two 45-minute periods

Group Size: from two students to two teams of students

Setting: indoors

Conceptual Framework Reference: II.A., II.B., II.C., II.D., II.E., II.E.1., II.E.2., II.E.3., II.F., III.E., III.E.1., III.E.2., III.F., III.F.1., III.F.4., IV.A., IV.A.1., IV.A.2., IV.A.3., IV.A.4., IV.D., IV.D.1., IV.D.2., IV.D.3., IV.D.7., IV.E., IV.E.4., IV.E.5., IV.E.6., IV.E.7., IV.E.8., IV.E.9., IV.E.10., IV.E.11., IV.F., IV.F.1., IV.F.2., IV.F.3., IV.F.4., IV.F.5., IV.F.6., IV.F.7., IV.F.8., IV.F.9., V.A., V.A.1., V.A.2., V.A.3., V.A.5., V.A.6., V.B., V.B.1., V.B.2., V.B.3., VI.B., VI.B.1., VI.B.2., VI.C., VI.C.1., VI.C.2., VI.C.3., VI.C.4., VI.C.5., VI.C.6., VI.C.7., VI.C.8., VI.C.9., VI.C.10., VI.C.11., VI.C.12., VI.C.15., VI.C.16., VI.D., VI.D.2., VI.D.3.

Key Vocabulary: consumptive, non-consumptive, fact, value

Appendices: Local Resources, Agencies and Organizations

Among many areas in which there are differences of opinion concerning wildlife and its habitat, one area which gives rise to particularly heated discussion at times has to do with questions of "consumptive" and "nonconsumptive" uses of wildlife.

Consumptive uses are generally considered to be those in which wildlife is killed, as in hunting, fishing and trapping. Such uses may include as a food source; for sport; for recreation; as a source of products for personal use; as a source of products for commercial use and sale; as a means to control damage to private land and crops; and as a population management tool.

Nonconsumptive uses are generally considered to be those in which any wildlife is watched, studied, or recorded without being killed, such as in hiking, bird-watching, sketching and photography. Such uses may be for purposes of recreation, education and research. Some nonconsumptive uses may actually be vicarious, such as movie, television and gallery viewing of wildlife.

Just as consumptive uses of wildlife have impacts on individuals and populations, so can nonconsumptive uses. There are times, for example, when nonconsumptive uses may actually be damaging to wildlife and its habitat, such as observation of wildlife at too close ranges during breeding seasons and high human use of areas where endangered species may be negatively impacted.

At first glance it seems like distinguishing a consumptive from a nonconsumptive use of wildlife should be easy. When people directly kill an animal, it is clearly a consumptive act. Yet, direct killing is just one factor

that affects wildlife mortality. The issue of wildlife consumption has some gray areas. One gray area is habitat and how people affect its quality and availability for wildlife. That gray area is defined by human impact on wildlife's basic needs for food, water, shelter and space suitably arranged for survival.

Human impact takes many forms. For example, the piping plover is a little shore bird that in part of its range feeds along the ocean's edge. At low tide it runs behind receding waves and feeds on exposed marine worms and other invertebrates. When people approach a plover it stops feeding and becomes defensive. A beachful of swimmers or a regular stream of joggers or sea shell hunters can keep plovers from feeding. Because of nearby human activity, many plovers starve to death. The piping plover is now classified as a federally threatened species. Loss of habitat and human disturbance are two of the plover's primary problems. This is also true for inland piping plover populations.

Are the beach goers, sea shell hunters and joggers consuming wildlife when they disrupt the piping plover's feeding? Without a doubt, they are having an impact on wildlife. The question is, "Are they wildlife consumers?" Some could argue that wildlife consumption is a matter of degrees. The discussion is as much about indirect impacts as it is about obvious direct wildlife consumption and easily expands into exploring what roles humans should play in natural systems.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to acquire information about different uses of wildlife as well as reasons offered both for and against consumptive and nonconsumptive uses.

NOTE: There may be seen to be a difference between "use" and "value." All wildlife has value in some sense of the word—from ecological to intrinsic. Consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife do not include all values of wildlife since use requires, in this sense, intentional human activity.

MATERIALS

research and writing materials; debate arrangement in classroom

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of ways in which wildlife is used. Note that "uses" of wildlife do not necessarily represent all ways in which wildlife has value. Provide students with definitions of "consumptive use" and "nonconsumptive use," or see if they can provide the definitions.
2. Ask the students to volunteer to represent one side or another on the following debate topic: "Wildlife should be used consumptively and nonconsumptively." One team of students should research and prepare arguments in favor of one position, and one team of students should research and prepare arguments against that position.
3. Provide the students with time to research and prepare for the debate.
4. On the day of the debate, arrange the classroom in a format where each team of students can face the others. Each team should appoint a captain to present the team's opening remarks, limited to three minutes. Each team captain should then call on one student from each team to face a person from the other team. First one person, then the other, is given one minute to present his or her point of view. Each person is

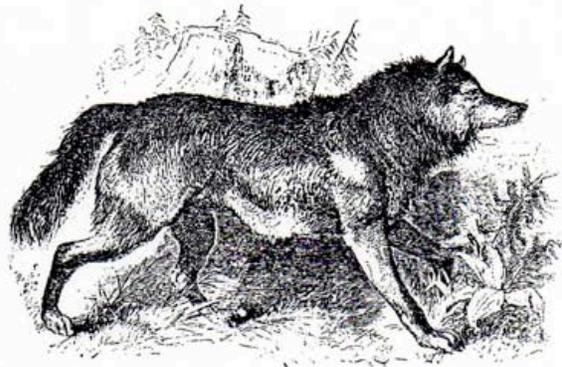
then given one minute for a rebuttal. The remaining students on each team may serve as judges of which argument was presented most effectively and accurately. A point is given the team represented by the person judged to be most effective and accurate.

NOTE: The students should vote based on the effectiveness of the argument, irrespective of which team they personally represent. Such a process may prove difficult; if so, another classroom of students may be invited to serve as a team of judges, or a speech and debate teacher, impartial adult, etc., could be invited to judge. After all team members have debated a spokesperson from the other team, each team captain should give a three-minute closing statement. Five points should be awarded to the team judged to have given the most effective and accurate overall arguments.

5. Invite the students to summarize—personally, and as a group if they choose—their views about the uses of wildlife . . . consumptively, nonconsumptively, both, or neither.

EXTENSIONS AND VARIATIONS

See "Community Attitude Survey." Interview people about their views regarding consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife. Talk with a range of representatives of differing perspectives, including, for example, people from private conservation organizations; private environmental organizations; private preservation organizations; animal welfare organizations; hunting, fishing, or trapping organizations; state wildlife agencies; federal agencies; people who secure their livelihood directly or indirectly from consumptive activities involving wildlife; people who secure their livelihood directly or indirectly from nonconsumptive activities involving wildlife; artists; teachers; community planners; and others.



EVALUATION

1. Name five examples of consumptive uses of wildlife and five examples of nonconsumptive uses of wildlife.
2. What facts, if any, are given by consumptive users to defend their position, and what facts, if any, are given by nonconsumptive users to defend their position.
3. Describe differences, if any, in the ways and reasons that consumptive and nonconsumptive users may value wildlife. Describe similarities, if any.
4. Summarize your personal views about consumptive and nonconsumptive uses of wildlife and describe the reasoning behind your views.