

ETHI-THINKING

OBJECTIVES

Students will: 1) generate a list of activities done outside that are harmful to wildlife and the environment; 2) discuss reasons these activities are inappropriate; and 3) recommend alternate activities that are not harmful.

METHOD

Students list activities that might be harmful to wild plants and animals and use photos or drawings to picture, discuss, interpret and evaluate these activities.

BACKGROUND

NOTE: This activity can be used as an introduction to "Playing Lightly on the Earth."

The major purpose of this activity is for students to discriminate between outdoor activities that are harmful to wildlife and the environment and those which are not.

MATERIALS

art materials (crayons, construction paper, magazines for photos) to make discussion cards

PROCEDURE

1. Ask students to help you make a list of activities people do that seem harmful to wild plants and animals. Ask them to think about things they've seen or

know about that might be harmful. Some of these things could be:

- picking up baby wild animals in the environment (birds, fawns, etc.)
- carving initials in trees
- driving vehicles (cars, motorcycles) over fragile environments
- removing plants from the environment, like digging up cactus
- destroying bird nests
- illegally killing, collecting, harassing, or possessing wildlife

2. Have students use cut-out photos or drawings to make these activities into cards showing pictures and describing what is happening. (Or, the teacher can prepare cards in advance, laminate, and use again.) Or, older students can dramatize the situation in skits, "commercials," songs, poems, etc.

3. Collect the cards. Count students off to make groups of four each. Hand out one card to each group and ask them to discuss (or present the skits, poems, etc.):

- What is happening?
- Does it harm wildlife? How?
- Does it seem to be appropriate or inappropriate behavior? Why?
- Is the person doing it having fun?
- What else could he or she do that would satisfy his or her needs and interests without harming wildlife or the environment?

4. Ask each group to report to everyone else about: a) their feelings concerning what is happening in the outdoor activity shown in the picture; and b) their recommendation for an alternative activity the people could do that would not be harmful.

Age: Grades K-8

Subjects: Social Studies, Science, Art, Language Arts

Skills: analysis, application, description, discussion, drawing, evaluation, generalization, media construction, problem-solving, small group work, synthesis

Duration: one or two 20 to 40-minute periods

Group Size: any

Setting: indoors or outdoors

Conceptual Framework Reference: I.D., V.A., V.A.5., V.A.6., V.B.1., VI.A., VI.A.2., VI.A.3., VI.A.4., VI.A.5., VI.B., VI.B.1., VI.B.2., VI.B.3., VI.B.4., VI.B.5., VI.C., VI.C.1., VI.C.2., VI.C.12., VI.C.16., VII.A., VII.A.1., VII.A.2., VII.A.3., VII.A.4., VII.B., VII.B.1., VII.B.2., VII.B.3., VII.B.7.

Key Vocabulary: harm, wildlife

Appendices: Simulated Field Trips

EXTENSIONS

For Grades K-2:

Ask the students to draw pictures of things they know about or have seen happen that would hurt wild plants and animals. Ask them to describe what is happening in their drawing, and what could happen instead that would not be harmful.

For Older Students:

1. Choose something you or your family owns, like a car, television, refrigerator, etc. Imagine you are that object—and explore how you—from invention to garbage dump—affect wildlife!
2. Distinguish between actions that are harmful to individual plants and animals, and those which are harmful to large numbers of plants and animals. In what situations, if any, does it seem appropriate to harm a single animal or plant? In what situations, if any, does it seem appropriate to harm large numbers of animals or plants? In what situations, if any, does it seem inappropriate to harm a single animal or plant? In what situations, if any, does it seem inappropriate to harm large numbers of animals or plants? (Remember the definitions of wildlife and domesticated animals. Don't forget that wildlife includes, but is not limited to, insects, spiders, birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians and mammals.)
3. Sometimes it is difficult to decide what is harmful and what is not. Usually if something is against the law, it is harmful in some way. Sometimes actions may be legal or there simply may be "no law against it," and people differ in their judgment as to whether the



actions are harmful or not. Sometimes we may recognize that some of our actions are harmful in some ways—like some of our choices for housing, transportation and consumer products in our daily lives—and we still take those actions because of our perceptions of the importance of our wants and needs. One way to examine wants and needs is to categorize them according to: Luxury, Useful But Not Necessary and Necessary for Survival. We begin to get into the area of personal value judgments. Think about personal ethics. What are ethics? How do we each make responsible decisions in our daily lives? (See "Enviro-Ethics" for an activity aimed at identifying a "Personal Code of Environmental Ethics.")

AQUATIC EXTENSIONS

1. Generate a list of activities that are sometimes or always harmful to aquatic species of wildlife and aquatic habitats. Discuss the ways these activities are harmful. Discuss ways these harmful activities can be prevented.
2. Identify at least five examples of things people can do in aquatic environments that are not damaging to populations of aquatic animals or the long-term health of aquatic habitats.

EVALUATION

1. Make a list of five things which people do that harm wildlife.
2. Make a list of five things which people do that harm wildlife habitat.
3. For each thing listed, describe what you can do about it.
4. Make a list of ten things which people do that help wildlife.
5. Choose ten magazine photographs of people doing things. Examine each photograph and evaluate the potential environmental impact from the activities of the people portrayed. Explain the reasoning for your evaluations. For activities you perceive to have a negative impact, suggest changes people could make to lessen their impact.