

ENDANGERED MARINE SPECIES

Research Project

Pick an endangered or threatened marine animal and research the history of that species to answer the questions below. Write a report, give an oral presentation or follow the directions below to share the data obtained.

Here are some endangered/threatened marine animals to choose from:

MAMMALS

Whales (many species)
Dolphins (many species)
Seals (many species)
Manatees

BIRDS

Penguins (many species)
Greater flamingo
Brown pelican

REPTILES

Sea turtles (many species)
Marine iguana
Saltwater crocodile

FISHES

Sharks (many species)
Atlantic Bluefin Tuna
Clownfish
Great barracuda
Leafy sea dragon

INVERTEBRATES

Octopus (many species)
Giant Squid
Emperor nautilus
Staghorn coral

- What is the scientific name of the species?
- How many were originally living in the ocean and what was their range?
- How many are currently living in the ocean and what is their range?
- When did their numbers begin to dramatically decline?
- Why? What factors caused them to become endangered or threatened?
- What has been done to recover this species in the wild?
- What groups and organizations are involved in their protection and recovery?
- What are the challenges facing the recovery effort?
- Might the species ever return to its original numbers? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Here's a great way to offer this lesson:

1. Break into groups of four. Each group picks one endangered/threatened animal then each student within the group researches and answers two of the eight questions above on their own using all available resources (books, newspapers, Internet, calling authorities).
2. The groups come back together to share the data they have obtained about their animal. All four students should complete the answers to their remaining questions so they are fully informed about their animal.
3. Each group creates one visual aid that represents the information they have learned about their animal (dioramas, stuffed animals, posters, clay sculptures, etc + use written elements to better explain details).
4. Students rotate counter-clockwise from project to project to teach and learn about all the animals:
 - a. Place all the groups with their projects in a large circle around the room.
 - b. Each group should count off 1-4.
 - c. The number 1 person will stay with their project while 2, 3, and 4 rotate to the right. Number 1 person then teaches the arriving students about their animal for 5 minutes using their project to demonstrate.
 - d. Next, every number 2 person stays with the animal they just learned about, while 1, 3 and 4 rotate again to the right. The number 2 person then teaches the arriving students about that animal.
 - e. Then person 3 stays. Then person 4 stays. Then back to 1.
 - f. Continue until every student has gone fully around the room and is back at their original project.

Through the process, each student plays the roles of both teacher and pupil, so they must listen carefully to the information at each project because they may have to teach it to the next group.