

Protect Endangered Species: They are worth more than you think.

Introduction

We are grade 5 & 6 ecologists and we have been researching endangered species and have a simple question to ask you: What are endangered species?

Background Information

Endangered species are animals that are threatened or going to be extinct. And if all endangered species die the future and the world will not experience the need and value of these animals.

For example, the swift fox is an endangered animal in Alberta. It eats rabbits, mice, ground squirrels, birds and insects. If the swift fox were to become extinct, there will be too many rabbits. This is a bad thing as these rabbits will eat all of the grass. This is a bad thing as there will be not enough oxygen and too much carbon dioxide. We've now got a chain reaction.

In other words, all animals connected in a food web rely on the balance of that food web. The animals that are connected will be affected and possibly become extinct themselves.

All animals have value. Not only for balance in a food web, we humans can learn much from animals of all kinds. If we look hard enough we can look at the process of why they go extinct. How much have we learned about the do-do bird? Compare this with how much we COULD have learned about the do-do bird, its ecosystem, what it eats, or many other things. Because this bird is extinct, we have lost the opportunity to value it and learn about it.

Factual Information & Supporting Research

Examples of Endangered Species in our Region

The sage grouse is an endangered species in Calgary Alberta. According to information found on the CBC website, this endangered species has a protection order that was released by the government in November of 2011. Concerns are being raised that the endangered sage grouse could disappear from Canada after a dramatic drop in its population was noticed this past spring.

The short horned lizard is also an endangered species and can be found in southern Alberta. It likes to hang out in warm south facing slopes in the rocky and grassy areas and it likes to eat ants, beetles and some grasshoppers.

How are endangered species important to the ecosystem?

Endangered species, like all other species, are important to an ecosystem because if some of them went extinct then the food chain and their habitat would be affected because the animals won't have a food source and they would die out.

Whatever eats that animal will be affected. For example: if the short horned lizard dies, the beetles, the grasshoppers and the ants – the food the lizard eats, will become overpopulated, creating a chain reaction. Other animals might die because they won't have anything to eat.

Most importantly, if too many animals or endangered species went extinct this would have a dramatic effect on an ecosystem. If too many plants go extinct, herbivores will die. If too many herbivores die, carnivores will die. If both herbivores and carnivores die, then omnivores, like us could die. The effects of this will be catastrophic.

Helping endangered Species

The SARA (species at risk act) is helping keep endangered species from becoming extinct or further at risk. For example, during our recent floods, members from the SARA help the listed and threatened animals by checking if they were injured, lost their home, were sick or diseased, then they would try to rehabilitate the animal to try to help it return to the wild.

What does it cost to protect endangered species?

To protect the endangered whooping crane it costs \$48 million. This money is used to protect and monitor its nests, eggs and young in North America. The whooping crane is a big concern in Calgary because there are only around 153 whooping cranes left in Calgary.

It costs \$26 million to protect the endangered grizzly bear. Some of this money is being used to make “bear parks” where bears can live with protecting and be safe. We have a strong concern that they will be extinct soon.

However, we think, the cost of saving an animal is priceless.

Laws to protect endangered species

Did you know Alberta has no laws to protect endangered species? According to endangered species.com Alberta is thinking about having a law with consideration of animals who are dying out and going extinct.

And did you know the Alberta Wildlife Act does not legally protect endangered species habitats? The Act only protects endangered animals from being killed. It does not protect their habitats. We ecologists think this not right. Animals have the same rights to live as humans do.

The “So What” - Opinion & Recommendations

Why don't we care about the small things in life.

Why do we care so much about big endangered animals? What about the small animals? We know that all animals and insects have an important role in the ecosystem and if one species becomes extinct that will affect the ecosystem because that will create a reaction and affect many animals.

We think that we should have laws to protect endangered species because if the endangered species die, the future will not experience the value of endangered species that we can feel right now. I think that humans should help us ecologists in protecting endangered species by giving us extra support. This can benefit the ecosystem by protecting endangered animals and plants.

Conclusion

We need to work as a team to save endangered species. If we don't, we will be an endangered species ourselves. Thank you...