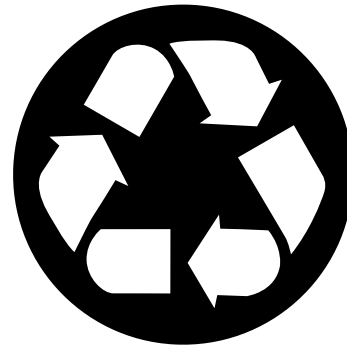


Conservation and Environmental Protection



Objectives

- ▶ understand the need for environmental protection
- ▶ learn some of the tools used to protect sensitive environments

Vocabulary

conservation

Background

Many environments, like the coral reefs in South Caicos, can be easily damaged or even destroyed if humans aren't careful. Corals are easily broken and killed by boat anchors and careless scuba divers. Reefs can be killed by pollution from the land or an oil spill at sea. Too much fishing can turn an active reef into an ocean desert. To stay healthy reefs need protection.

But environmental protection is not always easy. Why not? First, protecting the environment can be expensive. People want clean air and clean water, but they don't like having to pay more for it. Second, protecting the environment may be less convenient. It takes more effort to recycle than to throw away. Finally, most people don't worry about protecting the

environment until it is in trouble, but by then, it may be too late.

Some of the tools planners and government leaders use to protect sensitive environments are:

- Laws, which prohibit activities that damage the environment.
- Parks and Conservation Areas, which preserve environments in a natural state.
- Education, which helps the public appreciate the importance of an environment and teaches them how to protect it.

At the South Caicos research site, SFS students explore ways to use all of these tools to protect the reef and other island habitats.

Materials

poster board

markers

Activity

As a class, have students brainstorm a list of environments and animals from around the world that need protection. For example: coral reefs, rainforests, wetlands, and woodland forests; or whales, sea turtles, tigers, and condors. Talk about why these environments/animals need protection. Ask students to suggest some ways to protect them.

Next, ask students to select one of the animals or environments from the list and complete the following steps.

1. Imagine that you are the leader of an environmental protection group. Write a slogan that asks people to protect your environment/animal, such as: "Save our reefs. Don't collect living coral.", "Wetlands are nature's wonderlands. Don't build here!", "Will the tigers of today be here tomorrow?"
2. Design and create an environmental protection poster using your slogan and a picture of your environment/animal.
3. On the back of the poster, write two reasons why this environment/animal needs protection.
4. Write two reasons why people might not care about protecting this animal.
5. Write two reasons why people should care about protecting this environment/animal.
6. Write two things people could do to protect this environment/animal. Display posters in the classroom. Have each student make a speech or write a press release that will convince others to save this environment/animal.

Extend the Activity

Have students write to one of the environmental protection organizations listed below. Can they get answers to these questions: What kinds of environments/animals does this organization protect? How do they protect them? Do they have a research program? What can you do to help their cause?

- ▶ The Cousteau Society, 930 W 21st St., Norfolk, VA 23517
- ▶ National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036
- ▶ The Nature Conservancy, 1815 N. Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209
- ▶ World Wildlife Fund, 1250 24th St., NW, Washington, DC 20037
- ▶ Greenpeace USA, 1436 U St., NW, Washington, DC 20009

Create an "Environmental News" bulletin board that features newspaper and magazine reports on current problems and successes in environmental protection. Try to include articles on local, national and global issues.

Have students write to your Congressman or Senator and ask him/her to support laws that protect the environment.