

On The Brink Post Visit Guide: 2nd to 9th Grade

These resources will expand upon your zoo visit and provide additional opportunities for your students to learn and explore in the classroom and beyond!

In-Classroom Activities

BLUEBIRD & STARLING SHUFFLE

This game is similar to musical chairs. Use two different colors of carpet squares or chairs to represent habitat where the birds can nest and find food. Designate half of the class as starlings, and the other half bluebirds (have the students wear photos of each). The starlings can nest on any carpet square/chair, while bluebirds can only nest on one color. Students move around the squares/chairs, and when some signal is given (i.e., teacher clapping hands, music stopping), they must find a spot to nest and eat. Any students without a square/chair, or on the wrong color, did not make it through that year. At some point, remove some carpet squares/chairs, explaining that the land was cleared for a farm or shopping mall. Continue year after year, checking to see how many starlings and how many bluebirds are left. The end result of the game will vary somewhat, depending on what colors of carpet squares/ chairs you remove each year. Try taking away only bluebird habitat, stating that starlings can still live on the land that is turned into suburbs. Have the students keep track of the populations and graph them after several rounds are complete to expand the lesson.

Animal connection: Bluebirds, an endangered species in many states, are very particular about the habitat that they live in and the type of food they eat. Starlings, however, are very adaptable. They can eat many foods and nest in many places, and even push bluebirds out of nesting spots.

EXTINCTION IS FOREVER

Share the following quote with your students: “What is a man without beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to man. All things are connected.” - Chief Seattle, 1855. In the form of a poem, short story, or even a painting, have students express their interpretation of this quote and share a personal experience in which they felt connected to animals or nature.

Watch & Learn

ENDANGERED ANIMALS

<https://youtu.be/7k8CcAU2Lt0>

ENDANGERED SPECIES: WORTH SAVING FROM EXTINCTION?

<https://youtu.be/h5eTqjzQZDY>

7 SPECIES THAT WERE SAVED FROM EXTINCTION

<https://youtu.be/8vFU8CHBPV0>

Get Involved!

Encourage your students to become citizen scientists and help collect data for real environmental research!

WildWatch Kenya

Across Africa, all giraffe populations have declined by about 40%, leading the IUCN Red List in December 2016 to officially list giraffes as “Vulnerable” to extinction. The main drivers behind the decline appear to be habitat loss and fragmentation, land degradation, and poaching. A network of 100 motion-activated trail cameras has been set up to do research. Studying these photos allows us to understand which giraffes are using different areas of the habitat throughout the year. Students can help to count, identify, and track the giraffes and other wildlife living in sites in northern Kenya.

<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/sandiegozooglobal/wildwatch-kenya>

Monarch Watch

This education, conservation, and research program based at the University of Kansas focuses on the monarch butterfly, its habitat, and its spectacular fall migration. Students can participate in raising larva, tagging adults, and even mapping flight pathways.

<https://www.monarchwatch.org/class/challeng.htm>

Student Take Home Worksheet

Encourage students to continue the lesson at home with family or friends using these activities!

Host a Neighborhood Cleanup!

Enlist the help of your family, friends & neighbors in greening and cleaning up your local area. Use the following checklist to make sure you are prepared and set up for success!

- Pick a location:** Is there a road nearby with a lot of litter? Does that local park need sprucing up? Choose someplace that needs a little extra attention and could benefit the whole neighborhood.
- Get permission:** Check with your family and contact any local organizations that may need to approve or be aware of the event (township or community leaders, etc).
- Save the Date:** Pick a date at least a few weeks in the future so that you will have time to gather materials and recruit volunteers.
- Get the info out:** Put out signs or hang flyers with the date, location, and time of your cleanup around your neighborhood. Ask a parent to share the info on your neighborhood newsletter or on their social media page.
- Ask for donations:** Local businesses may be interested in donating supplies such as garbage bags, gloves, water and snacks. Your community waste-management organization may also offer supplies and other types of support.
- Share your work:** Be sure to take plenty of photos to share with and inspire your friends, classmates, and community members!
- Show appreciation:** When the clean-up is complete, be sure to give thanks to your volunteers and all those who supported you!

