

Parent Outline: 6 & Up

January: Restoration Ecology

Welcome/ Staff/Volunteer Names

Introduction: **Today's Topic-Restoration Ecology**
Question: Can lost species be successfully reintroduced?

Ice Breaker/ **Who Am I?** Give each student characteristics of an endangered Iowa animal.
Game: Students pair up and try to guess their partner's animal.

Background/ Basic needs of species survival: food, water, shelter, space
Exploration: Problems leading to species decline, extirpation, & extinction.
Things that help animal populations come back & survive.

Game: **The Rare Scare**

Animals successfully reintroduced to Iowa: Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, River Otter. Canada Goose and White Tailed Deer expanded their ranges after extirpation to become abundant. Also Bluebird, Snowy Egret, Wood Duck

OUTDOOR Look for Bald Eagles at creek mouth.
EXPLORATION: Look for Otter sign & Turkey tracks.
Try snowshoes.

Game: Habitat Tag.

Closing: Ask students to brainstorm what they can do to help threatened and endangered species.

Send Off: Goodbye!

Next Month's topic-Ravenous Rodents

Take Home: Parent Outline

Background

Vocabulary

Extirpated, extinct, endangered, threatened, restoration, reintroduction

Background and Learning Extensions

www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw Cornell University Ornithology Lab site—Project FeederWatch
www.iowadnr.com Information on NatureMapping-volunteer wildlife survey programs; links for kids

Iowa Wildlife. 1998. Iowa Association of Naturalists. ISU Press, Ames, IA. (IAN-601--606)

Iowa Mammals (IAN-601) <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/wi.htm>

Iowa Wildlife and People Series. 1995. Iowa Association of Naturalists. ISU Press, Ames, IA.

(IAN-401—408). *Iowa Food Webs and Other Interrelationships* (IAN-405).

Iowa Wildlife Management. (IAN-401).

Living On the Edge: Endangered Species in Iowa. 1992. Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des Moines.

Managing Iowa Wildlife: Wild Turkeys. 1991. Iowa State University Extension, Ames. Pm-1302f

Why We Are Concerned:

All species have intrinsic value beyond their potential to be helpful to humans. There are many species we enjoy, but to effectively manage and protect certain species, we must protect the whole biological community. Biological diversity insures that nature stays in balance, and helps keep the environment clean through various natural processes.

Since the 1980's, federal programs have encouraged habitat restoration and reconstruction, like the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV), and 1985 Farm Bill. Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge (Prairie City) is the largest reconstruction project in Iowa (8,000 acres). There is a herd of Bison and some Elk roaming the prairie there, and a nature center to visit also.

Ways we can help:

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)-setting aside a portion of land not to be farmed.

There is also the similar Forest Reserve Program.

Environmental organizations for learning about issues and supporting biodiversity include Audubon Society, Pheasants Forever, and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Chickadee Checkoff-income tax form donation supports DNR Wildlife Diversity Program which funds research, wildlife watching opportunities, education, and species reintroduction programs.

Visit parks and natural areas-more use means more financial support.

Building Artificial Habitat-nest boxes and platforms for Bluebirds, Kestrels, Wood Ducks, and Canadian Geese. Bat and butterfly roosting boxes can also be made.

Feeding stations-bird feeders with a variety of food.

Brush and rock piles for habitat-basking turtles, nesting ducks, rabbits, snakes, birds and invertebrate cover.

Helping wildlife also reduces pests by helping their predators, many animals eat insects like mosquitoes.

Iowa related species that have avoided extinction/extirpation or made a comeback:

Bison (in other areas), Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, Osprey, Snowy Egret, Trumpeter Swan, Wild Turkey, Wood Duck