

NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE



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Let's Learn About Wildlife

You need a home, and wildlife does, too! Wildlife's home is called **habitat**, and every living thing needs a habitat with these **four** things in order to survive:

Food - to provide energy needed to move, live and grow. Food might be plants, bugs, or meat from other animals.

Space - enough space to find the food, water and shelter they need to roam and call home.

Shelter - to stay out of the weather, like a den, a pile of rocks, an underground hole, a bush, or a nest.

Water - to drink or consume.

These four things need to be arranged in just the right way if they are to provide good habitat for wildlife. Each animal species needs a distinct type of habitat. For example, people usually live in houses and call them a home. A fish, though, lives in water and gets its food, space, shelter and water in a different way and place than we do. Plus, different fish might need different arrangements of **food, space, shelter and water**. If any of these four things is missing, at least one species will be impacted. And, many times, if one thing is impacted, other things in that habitat are impacted, too. That's because plants and animals in an environment are dependant on each other to maintain a balance that works for everyone.

Wildlife Issues: Quagga Mussel



"What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts, soon happens to man. All things are connected."

- Chief Seattle

In Southern Nevada, managers of waterways are awash with worry. There is an alien invader in Lake Mead and the lower Colorado River system. Quagga mussels are a small mollusk, or shellfish, that foul the water, clog water systems, and endanger native fish populations. They are a cousin of the zebra mussel, but can do much more damage. The fact that the quaggas made a jump clear across the country, from the Great Lakes to Lake Mead, is astounding. It is most likely that they were brought here on a boat. Quagga mussels can attach themselves to almost anything, including boats, water pipes, and other equipment that spends some time in the water. Biologists say the mussels are here in Lake Mead to stay, but we can help prevent them from spreading to other waterways in the western U.S. Learn what to do by visiting www.ndow.org, or www.100thmeridian.org/. And don't move a mussel into other western waters!





Burrowing Owl



Have you ever heard of an owl that lives in the ground? The burrowing owl is America's only subterranean owl, and is a good runner with its extra long legs. It stands only 9 to 11 inches high and has a rounded head with large yellow eyes. Its tail is stubby and its wings appear shortened. This little owl usually catches its prey on the run, rather than on the wing like its larger cousins. Meals may include rodents, lizards, and insects. Underground burrows in the desert keep it insulated from extreme temperatures and protected from predators. As you might guess, these owls have to find burrows that have already been dug by other animals, such as gophers and badgers.

This ground-nesting owl prefers dry desert scrub areas and open conifer habitats at higher elevations. Often nesting in colonies, it is active year-round in the Mojave Desert, and produces its young from March to about July. It can be seen in urban areas, but the sightings are getting rarer. When approached, this bird may display a bobbing behavior to express its displeasure.

Animal Adaptations



The curved, hollow horns of the desert bighorn sheep, and the long, thin ears of the black-tailed jack rabbit are similar adaptations. They both help the animals to keep cool in the hot desert summer. The horns of the bighorn sheep are hollow not just to make them lighter, but also so that veins can run through the inside of them. The veins carry the blood through the hollow horn, which exposes the blood to air that can be cooler than inside the sheep's body. Then, when the blood goes back into the body, it can help to cool the animal down. The long, thin ears of the jackrabbit also have veins running up and down them. In the same way, the blood is exposed to moving air, which cools it down before it re-enters the rabbit's body.



Endangered Species—a Success Story

Long the majestic symbol of our country, the American bald eagle is about to become an emblem for conservation as well. The bald eagle has been on the endangered species list for over 30 years. But this year, it is proposed for delisting. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is going to make a final determination on the eagle's status no later than June 29, 2007. The delisting, supported by mainstream environmental groups, would represent a formal declaration that the eagle population has rebounded, having increased to more than 7,000 nesting pairs. This is due to recovery efforts by the Service, other federal agencies, Native American tribes, state and local governments, conservation organizations, universities, corporations and thousands of individual Americans. When the bald eagle was first listed, five regional recovery plans were created to guide the conservation process. The delisting criteria for all five plans were met or exceeded by the year 2000. If the bald eagle is delisted, all protections provided under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) would be removed. However, the bald eagle will continue to be protected by other Federal laws: the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Lacey Act. In addition, prescribed management guidelines for landowners and others would have to be used as a tool to ensure bald eagle protection after it is delisted.



Ringtail Cat

When is a cat not a cat? When it's a ringtail! Commonly called the ringtail cat, this animal is actually a member of the raccoon family. Another member of its family is the coati. Its scientific name, which is *Bassariscus astutus*, means cunning little fox, and it has traditionally been called "cat" because of its reputation as a mouser. It also has the agility of a cat, being able to turn its hind feet 180 degrees. The ringtail can also climb narrow canyon crevices, by "stemming" its back against one wall, and feet against the other. Its decorative tail serves as a balancing tool as well. The tail isn't its only similarity to the raccoon. Ringtails usually make their den in a tree hollow or a crevice in the rocks, but can occasionally be found in abandoned buildings. Ringtail cats are nocturnal, coming out at night and making use of their good night vision. They hunt mice, woodrats, ground squirrels and rabbits. They will also eat small birds, reptiles, insects and the fruit of desert plants. The ringtail is a little animal that may venture into our urban dwellings, but it's definitely not a housecat!



Project Wild

It's here! Project Wild workshops have now been scheduled. The first training opportunities will be mini-workshops for educators. Each workshop will take place on one day, with 7 1/2 contact hours for 1/2 CCSD PDE credit. They will serve as introductions to two Project Wild curriculums. Project Wild is scheduled for Saturday, May 19, 2007, from 8:00 am—5:00 pm at the NDOW Las Vegas office, 4747 Vegas Dr. Aquatic Project Wild is scheduled for Saturday, June 2, 2007, from 8:00 am—5:00 pm, at the same location. Registration is extremely limited, so call right away (702-486-5127 x 3502) if you want to explore this great curriculum that serves to conserve wildlife through education. Full two-day facilitator trainings are planned for the fall of this year and each one will be worth a total of 15 hours contact time. One Clark County School District Professional Development (PDE) credit will be offered at that time, as well as options for Nevada State Department of Education credit and university graduate credit. NDOW will be working through the Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP) to coordinate trainings.

"get WILD in
the classroom"

Do you know—the Four Laws of Ecology?

Barry Commoner's Laws of Ecology were published in *The Closing Circle* (Knopf, 1971). They are:

1. Everything is Connected to Everything Else. There is one ecosphere for all living organisms and what affects one, affects all.
2. Everything Must Go Somewhere. There no "waste" in nature and there is no "away" to which things can be thrown.
3. Nature Knows Best. Humankind has fashioned technology to improve upon nature, but such change in a natural system is, says Commoner, "likely to be detrimental to that system."
4. There Is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch. In nature, both sides of the equation must balance, for every gain there is a cost, and all debts are eventually paid.



Teaching about Wildlife

Storytime can be an integral part of teaching about wildlife and nature. Storytelling is truly an art that requires some theater as well as reading skills. Studies have found that the use of storytelling promotes creative play and exploration, especially when children get to partake in the story. Readings can take place indoors or out, and are best accomplished with a special place and time set aside for them. The use of props, created or real, can make the story come alive.

Felt boards are a great way to illustrate concepts while storytelling to little ones. Flannel boards use a board covered with flannel fabric, on which felt cutouts of objects and characters can be placed. Since the cutouts adhere without any adhesive, they can be moved around as the story progresses. Cutouts and backgrounds with desert animals and plants are available at Learning is Fun stores and through catalogs.

Remember, NDOW has resources you can check out for talking to your children about wildlife. See you in storytime.

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Wildlife Puzzle

Do you know these animals by their silhouette?



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

Answer to Wildlife Word Puzzle from Issue 1:

wild animals, habitat, Nevada, desert, arid, plants,

bighorn, reptile, mammal

a c k w z y x t r m g h f t
 j g d v g g b w n j e s a v
 y n u p l a n t s l o t x q
 u e l e b n c a h s i b c a
 e v h m f i u o w b b e g d
 l a m m a m g p a l f u e z
 i d q f t a d h m h n s l o
 t a o r l l v c o e e y l k
 p x r j i s f k a r i d r p
 e b k w a t y e t s n u x a
 r o m a s q e u w c g j n m

Answers: 1. Pronghorn antelope, 2. Coyote, 3. Snake, 4. Bighorn sheep, 5. Fish, 6. Bear, 7. Mule deer