

# Picketing for Plovers

Nebraska  
Rare Species  
Educator Packet  
grades 5-12

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students will (1) learn about threatened and endangered species and what causes species to become threatened and endangered, (2) learn ways humans can help threatened and endangered species populations recover, and (3) help educate their classmates, school mates, family, and friends about Nebraska's endangered species.

## **METHOD**

Students study Nebraska's threatened and endangered species and use the information gathered to make a "picket" sign encouraging others to help conserve and save their species.

## **MATERIALS**

- poster board - one per group of 2 students
- markers, crayons, or paint
- small wooden stakes
- access to internet or other research materials

## **BACKGROUND**

There are a wide variety of reasons why an animal may become threatened or endangered. Habitat loss, habitat degradation, and historically

Subject Areas: Science, Environmental Education, Language Arts, Art

Duration: Procedure (Parts 1 & 2): 50 minutes; Procedure (Part 2): 30-40 minutes

Group Size: any

Setting: indoors

Vocabulary: threatened, endangered, Endangered Species List

unregulated hunting are the most common. Often before a species is listed as threatened or endangered, it is first listed as an "At-Risk Species." This means that although the species is not threatened or endangered, it is headed in that direction. If the species' population continues to decline, it is then listed as threatened. Following careful analysis and much research, the species is listed as endangered if the population drops to a point where it would be extremely difficult for the population to recover without help.

There are nearly 9,000 species in the U.S. listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federally Endangered Species list. Fourteen of these species are in Nebraska.

In addition to the federally listed species, there are also Nebraska state listed species. All federally listed species are on the Nebraska State List. However, all Nebraska listed species are not on the Federal list. For example, Saltwort (*Salicornia rubra*) is on the Nebraska State Endangered Species List due to its limited range within the state. Saltwort is not on the Federal list and is, in fact, common on the East Coast.

Nebraska has 27 state listed threatened or endangered species; and 14 federally listed threatened or endangered species.

For a complete list of Nebraska's threatened and endangered species, see the included list or visit [www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/nongame](http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/nongame).



## **PROCEDURE, PART I**

1. Start the activity by asking students to define the terms “threatened,” “endangered,” and “extinct.” Ask students what causes species to become threatened, endangered or extinct. Spend some time having a class discussion about the causes of animals becoming endangered or extinct (habitat loss, natural disasters, unregulated hunting).

2. Ask students if they can name any threatened or endangered species. You may have students point out that there are federally listed threatened and endangered species and state listed species. Species which are listed at the state level may or may not be listed at the federal level. All federally listed species, however, are on state lists.

## **PROCEDURE, PART II**



Blowout Penstemon

3. Ask students to get in groups of 2 students. Have each group research one of Nebraska’s threatened or endangered species.

Give each group time to research their species. They should determine the following things:

- scientific name of the species

- range (include all ranges if the species migrates)
- habitat (i.e. wetlands, prairie, pine forest)
- food
- predators
- why the species is considered threatened or endangered (habitat loss, unregulated hunting, etc.)
- what is being done to help the species recover

## **PROCEDURE, PART III**

Give each group a piece of poster board (preferably at least 2 ft. by 3 ft.).

Ask groups to create a “picket” sign for their threatened or endangered species. The sign should encourage people to “Save the Species,” “Help the ...” or “Don’t be a Tweetle... Save the Burying Beetle,” “Be a Lover, Save the Plover,” etc.)

Once groups have completed their sign, attach the sign to the wooden stakes. You may want groups to include a report detailing all the information they learned about their species to the back of their picket sign. Hang the signs around the classroom or around the school grounds.

## **EXTENSIONS**

1. Have students go on a parade through the school holding their picket signs and shouting for their species.

2. Have students create a U-Tube video about their species and why they care about threatened and endangered species.

3. Hold a school-wide fund drive (i.e. penny drive or collecting cans for cash) to donate to an organization devoted to helping threatened and endangered species.

## **EVALUATIONS**

1. Have a classroom discussion about endangered species, why species become threatened or endangered, and what students can do to help species recover.

2. Ask student groups to write a report on their species detailing all the information in Part 2 of the activity.

3. Pose the question to the class: If we could only save one of Nebraska’s threatened or endangered species, which should it be? Have a classroom debate with each group representing their species. Each group should explain why their species is in the “most need” of conservation and protection.

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## RELATED WEBSITES

Rare Species Nebraska  
[www.rarespecies.nebraska.gov](http://www.rarespecies.nebraska.gov)

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
[www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/nongame](http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/programs/nongame)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Educator and Kids  
[www.fws.gov/angered/kids/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/angered/kids/index.html)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska Field Office  
[www.fws.gov/nebraskaes](http://www.fws.gov/nebraskaes)

## BOOKS & PRINTED MATERIAL

Almost Gone: The World's Rarest Animals (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science 2) by Steve Jenkins  
ISBN-13: 978-0060536008

Will We Miss Them? Endangered Species by Alexandra Wright , ISBN-13: 978-0881064889

Can We Save Them? Endangered Species of North America by David Dobson. ISBN-13: 978-0881068221

The Atlas of Endangered Species: Revised & Updated by Richard Mackay. ISBN-13: 978-0520258624

Through Endangered Eyes: A Poetic Journey into the Wild by Rachel Allen Dillon, ISBN-13: 978-0893170677

## PERMISSIONS & CREDITS

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## Nebraska State & Federally Listed Threatened & Endangered Species

SPECIES NAME	FEDERAL LIST	STATE LIST
<b>BIRDS</b>		
Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Endangered
Whooping Crane	Endangered	Endangered
Interior Least Tern	Engendered	Endangered
Piping Plover	Threatened	Threatened
Mountain Plover		Threatened
<b>MAMMALS</b>		
Black-footed Ferret	Endangered	Endangered
Swift Fox		Endangered
River Otter		Threatened
Southern Flying Squirrel		Threatened
<b>FISH</b>		
Pallid Sturgeon	Endangered	Endangered
Topeka Shiner	Endangered	Endangered
Sturgeon Chub		Endangered
Blacknose Shiner		Endangered
Lake Sturgeon		Threatened
Northern Redbelly Dace		Threatened
Finescale Dace		Threatened

SPECIES NAME	FEDERAL LIST	STATE LIST
<b>MUSSELS</b>		
Scaleshell Mussel	Endangered	Endangered
<b>PLANTS</b>		
Blowout Penstemon	Endangered	Endangered
Colorado Butterfly Plant	Threatened	Endangered
Saltwort		Endangered
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid	Threatened	Threatened
Ute Ladies'-tresses	Threatened	Threatened
Ginseng		Threatened
Small White Lady's Slippers		Threatened
<b>REPTILES</b>		
Massasauga		Threatened
<b>INSECTS</b>		
American Burying Beetle	Endangered	Endangered
Salt Creek Tiger Beetle	Endangered	Endangered

