

Mission Monday Activities

ENDANGERED SPECIES AWARENESS

Below are a few fun activities you can do to help bring awareness and even take action yourself to help endangered species!

INDOOR

ENDANGERED ART

Research endangered species at home either online or by reading a book on the topic. Choose a plant or animal that is on the endangered or threatened species list and choose a fun art project to do highlighting that plant or animal. Then display your art for others to see or even take a photo and post to social media bringing awareness to the species' endangered or threatened status. Here is an endangered species highlight and a fun art example to get you started!

ENDANGERED SPECIES HIGHLIGHT

To get you started, we'd like to spotlight a species of focus for our partners at Cheyenne Mountain State Park and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Cheyenne Mountain is one of 13 Colorado State Parks that offers Agents of Discovery Missions, so if in the area, take the challenge. <https://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/CheyenneMountain>

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET

Scientific Name: *Mustela nigripes*

Status: Federally Endangered, State Endangered



Widely considered the most endangered mammal in North America, the black-footed ferret is making a comeback in Colorado and other parts of the West after being rescued from the brink of extinction in the mid-1980s. Black-footed ferrets are considered an endangered species by both the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Colorado Parks & Wildlife.

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Follow the link below for more information about Black-footed Ferrets!

<https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/SpeciesProfiles.aspx>

SUNCATCHER CRAFT

Supplies:

- Contact paper
- Multiple colors of tissue paper
- black or dark-colored construction paper
- scissors
- clear tape

What to do:

- Making the frame: Cut a simple shape out of a sheet of black paper. If your shape is symmetrical, fold the paper in half first, then cut half of your shape out along the folded edge.
- Cut the inside of the shape out. Trace along the inside edge of your shape to create a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border. Poke a hole in your shape, then cut along your lines. Save the border and discard the inside shape.
 - If your border is symmetrical, keep it folded, cut out the inside shape, then unfold it.
- Cut out your Endangered Species: using the black construction paper, draw an outline of your animal or plant and cut out the shape.
 - Be sure your plant or animal shape is small enough to fit inside the paper frame.
- Cut or tear colored tissue paper into smaller pieces.
 - Try to use at least two different colors.
 - Aim to make the pieces about 1 to 3 inches.
- Set up your contact paper. Cut off a sheet of contact paper a little larger than your border. Peel off the backing, and set it down on the table, sticky-side up. Tape down the corners so that it stays put.
- Place the border down onto the contact paper. Try to center it as much as possible so that you have a little bit of contact paper all around the border
- Fill in your border. It's time to get creative again! Take your colored pieces of tissue paper, and start filling in the border. Try to overlap the tissue paper pieces.
- Once you are finished placing all the tissue paper, then lay the cut-out shape of your endangered species plant or animal on top of the colored tissue paper.

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- Cover your suncatcher with another sheet of contact paper. Cut off another sheet of contact paper. Peel away the backing and set it down on top of the suncatcher. Run your fingernail along the outside edges of the border to seal everything.
- Cut the sun catcher out. Leave a slight border of contact paper around it, about 1/8-inch. This will help hold the sun catcher together.
- Hang your suncatcher in a bright window. Poke a hole in the top of your suncatcher and thread a piece of string through it. Tie the ends of the string together to make a loop. Hang the sun catcher in a bright, sunny window.
- Take a picture and post to social media #MissionMondays and tag Wonders of Wildlife.

OUTDOOR

HOW'S YOUR HABITAT?

One of the first steps in assessing the status of an endangered species is to survey the plant or animal's habitat. Assess if the necessary resources are available and to determine a possible cause for the species' decline. Conduct a simple survey of your backyard or neighborhood habitat. There may be an opportunity to improve your habitat in a way that could support or entice a local endangered species to move into your area!

Supplies:

- Camera or mobile device
- Pencil and paper or notepad

What to do:

- First, do some simple research to find out what, if any, endangered or threatened species live in your region. Find out what habitat they need and any information about what has caused the species to decline.
- Next, choose the habitat you are going to survey. You can survey your yard, neighborhood, or nearby park. Ask for help from your parent or guardian if you need transportation.
- Once you're in your habitat, take some time to watch and search for animals or signs of animals like fur, scat (poo), feathers, tracks (footprints), nest, or burrows.
- Upon spotting an animal or animal sign, snap a picture and record what you observed.
- While looking for animals, make observations about the presence, absence, or condition of the following resources:
 - Water source
 - Food sources (this will depend on the animals observed)

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- Shelter or cover
- Space or available area for animals to spread out and avoid being crowded.
- Pollution, litter, or man-made (unnatural) objects, or debris.
- Use the sample questions below to think about your habitat and whether it appears to be in good condition or if there are any improvements that could be made.
 - Did you observe multiple different animals, or just one or two?
 - If only a few animals were present, what could that mean?
 - How would you describe the type of habitat?
 - Is it forested with lots of trees?
 - Open with only grass?
 - Was the grass kept mowed or allowed to grow?
 - Did you notice any flowers?
 - Did you see any insects or birds around the flowers?
 - Is there a significant water source like a stream, lake, or pond nearby?
 - Does water quality appear to be healthy?
 - Did you observe any animals in or around the water?
 - Is there shelter or cover areas where wildlife could hide or get out of view?
 - Finally, if there are any endangered or threatened species in your region, could your habitat support them?
 - Is there a specific habitat characteristic that a particular endangered species requires which could be added or increased in your local habitat?
 - Often simply cleaning up a habitat of pollution and creating more shelter options can make it more inviting for a different species and could even help support a local endangered species!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

MAKE YOUR HOME WILDLIFE FRIENDLY

- Secure garbage in shelters or cans with locking lids so wildlife can't get access.
- Feed pets indoors and lock pet doors at night to avoid attracting wild animals into your home.
- Keep your cat indoors. Roaming house cats kill birds and other wildlife such as field mice, frogs, squirrels, and lizards. Putting a bell on your cat helps, but keeping the cat inside is better.
- Disinfect bird baths often to avoid disease transmission.

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- Place decals on windows to deter bird collisions. Millions of birds die every year because of collisions with windows. You can help reduce the number of collisions simply by placing decals on the windows in your home and office.
- Participate in or hold your own local trash clean-up to help protect the habitats of endangered species and other wildlife.
- Don't put hazardous substances down the drain or in the trash. Things like paint thinner, furniture polish, and antifreeze can pollute our water and land, impacting people as well as wildlife.
- Remove invasive weeds that displace wildlife habitat. Plant native trees and bushes with berries or nuts that provide birds and other creatures with food and a place to live.