

Plan(et) B

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

- To explore natural animal habitats and what we can do to look after them.
- To look at the impact humans have on animal environments and what this means for the planet.
- To think about animals in captivity and whether we can meet their needs.
- To identify ways we can help wild animals.
- To understand why we should care about wild animals.

RESOURCES

- Interactive PDF 'Plan(et) B' to guide pupils through the activities

Due to the topics covered in the Compassionate Class programme, it is important to consider how different children may react. For more information on creating a safe teaching and learning environment, see guidance on pages five to seven of the Teacher Overview downloadable at: rspca.org.uk/ccresources.

These activities could be delivered in the same lesson or spread over a few sessions, depending on the needs of your students. We have not specified timings to allow for flexibility for different settings.



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STIMULUS:

This session will help children to understand how human behaviour can both directly and indirectly harm animals through destruction of habitats, pollution and dropping litter. You can also explore some ways that children and their families might be able to take steps to reduce their impact on the planet and protect wildlife.

Ask the children to name some animals from different groups; domestic, wild, farm, and exotic. Using **slide two**, introduce the word 'extinct' and ask the class if they can tell you what it means. Explain that extinction of a species occurs when there are no more of that type of animal on the planet in the wild.

Use the images on the next slides to encourage them to think about what it might be like if there were no animals on the planet. You can show additional pictures depending on the animals your children suggested earlier.

Explore some of the following questions to the capabilities of your group.

- What would the planet be like if it had no animals? Think about the benefits that animals bring to our lives.
- What could cause wild animals to become extinct? For example, too many predators, not enough food, damage to habitats and environments, pollution
- What do humans do that might impact wild animal survival? For example, cutting down forests and damaging habitats, dropping litter, plastic in the sea, hunting

Record their answers on **slide eleven**. You can ask them to expand on their answers to these questions at the end of the session to measure learning.

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STIMULUS (CONTINUED)

One of the things that children can directly identify with and influence in their own lives is that of pollution and rubbish. Explore with the class how they think littering might affect animals. Is the litter safe to eat? Would they like to live with litter in their home? Adding this personal element will encourage understanding of why litter is not good for animals.

You could also introduce the concept of deforestation. Explain that our need to use paper in the classroom and oil in the foods we make can sometimes affect where animals live. We can influence this by thinking about what we buy, for example looking for items made from recycled or sustainable materials and avoiding products which contain ingredients that may destroy animals' homes..

HOMEWORK

Pupils could see what is in their homes and how they can throw it away in a way that doesn't impact animals. If the children aren't able to pass on their knowledge, a list of options could be sent home for parents to tick to see if they can make any changes, e.g. re-using plastic bags, cutting up plastic ring holders, and recycling rubbish when possible.

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ACTIVITY

This activity looks at a simple life cycle to see what could happen if one animal in a food chain dies.

Slides 20-21: Using the images of the animals from these slides, ask the class which animal eats which food.

Explain that a life cycle is the way in which different animals rely on another to survive. Use the example on the slide to demonstrate, and then cover one animal and ask the class to imagine this animal has become extinct.

Explore with the class which animals are then affected by this animal being extinct. For example, if it is the fox that you have removed, discuss how the rest of the animal population might grow but with some possible issues.

The growing population of mice and rabbits will eat all of the fruit, grass and leaves - leaving nothing behind. What will happen when the mice and rabbits have no food to eat?

The owl will have lots of rabbits and mice to eat since the foxes are gone. But when the rabbits and mice are dying from lack of food, what will the owls eat then?

Remove another species from the chain and see if they can work out what will happen this time.

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DISCUSSION

Slide 21: Lead a discussion about what would happen if humans destroyed a lion's habitat. Would it be ok to keep these animals in zoos so they don't die out? Could they ever be bred so they could be released? Can their needs be met in captivity?

Slide 22: Use this slide to discuss what the RSPCA think about how we should care for animals. Explore whether the children think we have a responsibility to care for animals, by not littering, by protecting their home and by helping them when they are sick or injured.

Slide 23: Ask children to suggest wild animals they have seen in their local area, or when spending time outdoors. Ask them to think about how these animals rely on each other and on plants to survive. Apart from food, what else do some of these animals need to be happy and healthy? Suggestions might include trees and nesting material for birds, earth to dig underground for rabbits and badgers, safe hiding places for mice.

Slide 24: Lead a discussion about what a wild animal is and use some of the examples you might have discussed earlier in the session.

The RSPCA considers 'wild animals' to be those that are not living with humans; see if they can think of any. Help them with clues that incorporate those such as badgers, birds, seals, pet snakes and anything else they can come up with. The RSPCA's concern is whether humans cause suffering.

Human activities such as building new houses on top of wildlife habitats and littering can cause suffering or affect wild animals in many different ways.

Sometimes we see wild animals being kept by people. Where might we see a wild animal?

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DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

Slide 25: Giving wild animals what they need in captivity, e.g. zoos, can prove challenging. The best captive environment mimics elements of an animal's natural surroundings in the wild. In some captive environments, it's best not to keep certain wild animals at all, as their needs cannot be met. This includes primates as pets, large animals such as elephants and marine wildlife such as whales or dolphins.

All animals, including wild animals, should be safe from harm and suffering.

The RSPCA believes wild animals should not be kept in circuses or for entertainment purposes as their needs cannot be met in these situations.

The RSPCA treats injured, orphaned and sick wild animals in its wildlife centres and aims to return them to the wild.

TASK

Split the class into groups, and give each group a picture of an animal in its natural habitat. Each group should discuss what habitat their animal lives in and what their needs are. Feel free to prompt them by using the internet.

Ask the children to consider what would happen to that animal if their habitat was taken away from them. If they have seen this animal up close, encourage them to think about whether this was in the natural habitat or in captivity. In what ways might this alternative habitat not be suitable for the animal? You can apply this discussion to any animal. For example, ask the class what would happen to squirrels if you took away parks and trees. Where would they forage for seeds and nuts? Where would their nest be? Can they build a nest without materials? Either print off answers from the internet or if they are able, try to draw or write them down.

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SESSION SUMMARY

Invite the pupils to revisit their initial responses recorded on **slide eleven**.

See if they can remember points from the lesson and hopefully you should be able to add more to your list.

If you have time you could also add the following questions into the discussion.

- What would the world be like without humans?
- Who owns the planet?
- What do wild animals give us?

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EXTENSION RESOURCES

To take the learning from this discovery session further, you could explore our suggested extension activities.

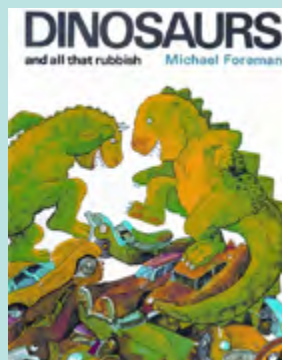
Books

© A. E. T. Browne & Partners 1992



Zoo
by Anthony
Browne

© Michael Foreman 1994



**Dinosaurs
and all that rubbish**
by Michael Foreman

© Colin Thompson 1992



**The Paperbag
Prince** by
Colin Thompson

Online Resources

- Explore the effects of pollution and rubbish on wild animals such as badgers, gulls, seals and hedgehogs by watching this **RSPCA video**. Consider organising a litter pick with your class. Use the **RSPCA's 'Living with' leaflet series** to look at ways that humans and wild animals can share habitats, and learn how to meet the welfare needs of specific wild animals
- Explore the RSPCA's resources about **animals kept in captivity** and find out about their views on **circus animals**. Children could write and perform a TV advert or create a poster to demonstrate their understanding
- If you want to inspire your class with more films about animal welfare, take a look at the RSPCA's YouTube channel **[youtube.com/rspcauk](https://www.youtube.com/rspcauk)**

Advocacy Activities

WHAT NEXT?

If this is your first Discovery activity, pick another stimulating activity to complete with your pupils.

If you've already completed at least two Discovery activities, choose an Advocacy activity that will provide your pupils with an entry for the Compassionate Class competition. We have included suggested Advocacy activities below which link to this Discovery activity.

IF YOU LIKED THE 'PLAN(ET) B' DISCOVERY ACTIVITY, WHY NOT TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

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Ask the class to consider differences in the way we would have to live if we were the size of insects? Why are insects important? Then, either;

- Children research, imagine and design a world where humans are the size of insects. Create miniature clay people and stage photos of them with everyday objects or write stories or drama productions using them
- Share images of miniature models and materials on the school website and ask viewers to consider the human impact on animals, and how imagining themselves in miniature has helped them view insects differently

A WETTER WORLD

Imagine what would happen if the land flooded. Work together to create an underwater city. How will humans, land animals and sea creatures all exist and live together in the same environment?

- Consider ways of communicating the dangers that humans can pose to wild animals to the school community. Ideas could be expressed through creating a giant mural, cardboard scene with recycled materials, diorama, or writing a play