



BLUEBIRD HABITAT GAME

Visualize how specific habitat requirements affect species rarity



GRADE 3

MATERIALS

- chairs
- two colors of paper

KEY WORDS

- habitat
- endangered

STANDARDS

- SCI.3.2.5

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn that certain species of animals have become extinct because they failed to produce enough young to keep pace with the death rate.
- Students will learn that humans have caused animals to become extinct or endangered by destroying natural habitats, using pesticides, overhunting, using skins, feathers, or other animal parts for clothing or fashion accessories, and keeping exotic animals as pets.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Bluebirds, an endangered species in many states, are very particular about the habitat that they live in and the type of food that they eat.
- Starlings are adaptable, eat many foods, and nest in many places.

PROCEDURE

- This game is similar to musical chairs.
- Set up two rows of chairs, back to back. Using two different colors of paper, mark these chairs randomly. The chairs will represent two types of nesting habitat.
- Assign students to be either bluebirds or starlings. Starlings can nest in any chair, but bluebirds can only nest in one chair color.
- Have students walk around the chairs, and then signal them to stop. Students must find a chair (nest).
- Students that could not find a nest, or are nested on the wrong color, did not survive the year.
- Remove a chair as a result of 'habitat destruction' and continue.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Discuss which species are still present at the end of the game, and how many there are.
- Have students consider which species is more successful and why bluebirds are endangered.

EXTENSIONS

- Try a variation of the game. Begin with two bluebirds and two starlings, but only one bluebird habitat and two starling habitats. For each bird that survives, add a bird of the same species to the game. Add a random habitat. Which species reproduces more quickly?
- Build a bluebird nest box to introduce students to endangered species conservation.

