

Humans and Nature



People help make habitats healthy for living things every day! Work with students to understand the ways humans and other living things live together, and share stories about people working to improve local habitats.

Grade Level	K -2 and up
Activity Length	1-2 Class periods, 30 min each
Materials	Device for watching videos White board for discussion

SEEd Standards

Strand K.2: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS

K.2.1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information to describe patterns of what living things (plants and animals, including humans) need to survive.

K.2.2 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about patterns in the relationships between the needs of living things (plants and animals, including humans) and the places they live.

K.2.3 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about how living things (plants animals, including humans) affect their surroundings to survive.

Strand 1.2: THE NEEDS OF LIVING THINGS AND THEIR OFFSPRING

1.2.2 Construct an explanation by observing patterns of external features of living things that survive in different locations.

Strand 2.2: LIVING THINGS AND THEIR HABITATS

2.2.1 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about patterns of living things (plants and animals, including humans) in different habitats.



How to Use this Activity



Humans share habitats with all kinds of other living creatures and plants. Help students define what a habitat is.

Habitat: the natural or normal home of a living thing. If a living thing is in its natural home, the living thing can find the right kind of food, shelter and protection to survive.

Discuss how humans and other living things rely on each other in their habitats, and that humans have a unique role in the habitat in that they are able to protect and improve habitats.

Share the following pages with your students. You will likely have to read the pages for younger students. Watch the videos together and answer the discussion questions.

Using this lesson for Distance Learning Options:

Discuss habitat and how humans have a unique role in their habitat as they are able to both protect and improve habitats.

Copy and send out the following pages. Let the adults who help the students know that they will likely have to read the pages with the students and they should definitely supervise watching the videos. They can discuss the questions after watching the videos.

Activity Alternatives

Students who don't have access to videos can spend time outdoors, and draw or sketch plants that they find. They can also, with an adult's supervision, ask neighbors or relatives about what plants they like having in their yards and what plants they find a nuisance. Why do they think certain plants are a nuisance?

Students can also write a story or talk about a time when a human and an animal have helped each other in some way. It doesn't have to be a wild animal.



Humans and Good Wildfires



Wildfires can be scary, especially when they get close to humans' houses. While it is important that people make sure they don't start accidentally wildfires, not all fires that people make in nature are bad!

For over 13,000 years, Native American tribes such as the Hupa, Karuk, Miwok, and Yurok have created controlled fires in northern and central California. Humans carefully start these fires and watch them so that they don't spread too fast. These fires get rid of fallen trees, sticks, brush, and other things on the forest floor. When these indigenous groups are allowed to practice this kind of fire management practices, the wildfires that do happen are smaller and less likely to destroy homes.



Learn more about these good fires: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E542gY7uROs>

1. What is a prescribed burn?
2. What should you do if you are sensitive to smoke from prescribed burns?

Did you know? Some plants need fires in order to grow. The giant sequoia trees in California rely on forest fires to grow. Fires make room in forests for the trees to grow, allow sunlight and water to reach ground level for the seedlings, and heats up sequoia cones, which releases the seeds.

Learn more about these trees: <https://rb.gy/y7u6sc>

1. What happens to Giant Sequoia tree cones when the fire heats them up?
2. How long can Giant Sequoia trees live?



Humans and Noxious Weeds



When humans travel to different places, plants travel with them. People bring new plants with them on purpose and on accident. Some of these plants are good for the new habitat, but some are very bad. We call these harmful plants noxious weeds.

In order to protect the local native plants and the insects and animals that eat them, people work together to pull up all of the noxious weeds so native plants can survive.

Watch the following video. It is from Nevada, but the weeds and the problems with them are very much the same in Utah! Please, before you become a Weed Warrior, make sure that you ask an adult before touching any plant. Some plants are dangerous to handle.

<https://www.sierranevadajourneys.org/snjblog/weedwarriors>

Did you know... The Natural History of Museum of Utah organizes noxious weed pulls to help the native species near the museum grow healthy and strong.

Learn more about the weed pull and about local plants and other fun nature activities at:

<https://nhmu.utah.edu/summer-at-home/neighborhood-naturalists/wildflower-and-weeds>

Humans and Honeyguide Birds



Sometimes animals and humans work together to survive in their habitats. This is called **mutualism**. Each species gets something from the other species that helps them survive. Think about humans and dogs. Before dogs were pets, they helped humans travel, hunt, and protect themselves. In return the dogs got companionship, protection, and food.

The honeyguide is a species of bird that lives in Africa. Some types of honeyguides will lead humans to bee colonies. They wait for humans to open up the beehives and take out the honey. Once the humans are gone, these birds will eat the grubs and beeswax that humans leave behind. When the humans and honeyguides work together, everyone gets a delicious honey treat!



Learn more about the honeyguide here:
<https://rb.gy/dcbtbs>

Did you know... Honeyguides don't need humans to live, but when they work with people, they have an easier time getting food. Humans have an easier time finding honey. How do you think that this **mutualistic** relationship started?

Can you think of any other stories where humans and animals work together to survive successfully in a habitat?