

Animal Scramble

Unscramble the animals!

aeffgir -

adelopr -

ilno -

aeepllz -

ekmnoy -

hnopty -

egirt -

aeehlnpt -

aber -

aceeht -

aberz -

aealny -



Animal Scramble

Unscramble the animals!

aefgri - giraffe

adelopr - leopard

ilno - lion

aeggilz - gazelle

ekmnoy - monkey

hnopty - python

egirt - tiger

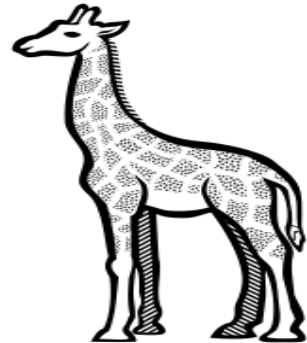
aehlnpt - elephant

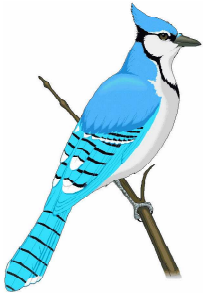
aber - bear

aceeht - cheetah

aberz - zebra

ahny - hyena



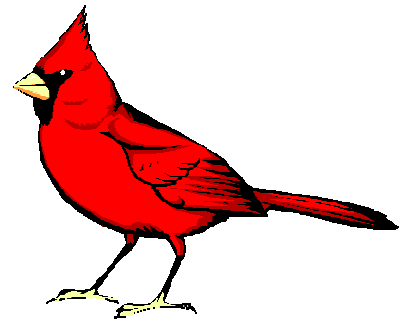


Houston Birds Word Search

H R I C L N B E H P H E S N I
F B E L A L O C G U U E S H A
V E A K U R N R M H U D T L E
K Z G E C I D M E P M A A W R
L B J D F E I I W H E K R L T
H A J D P N P C N K D C L O A
Y J L A G I B D W A G I I L R
R O O B A B S A O H L H N W N
G G I W V O H X T O L C G P V
P R M G L R D O V E W T L L X
D J W L M B T D K Q L J K V I
D R I B G N I K C O M D U Z P
V R O G R U O I J G S O D U W
B L A C K B I R D T E R G E W
W A G T N G C C B D G G B D R

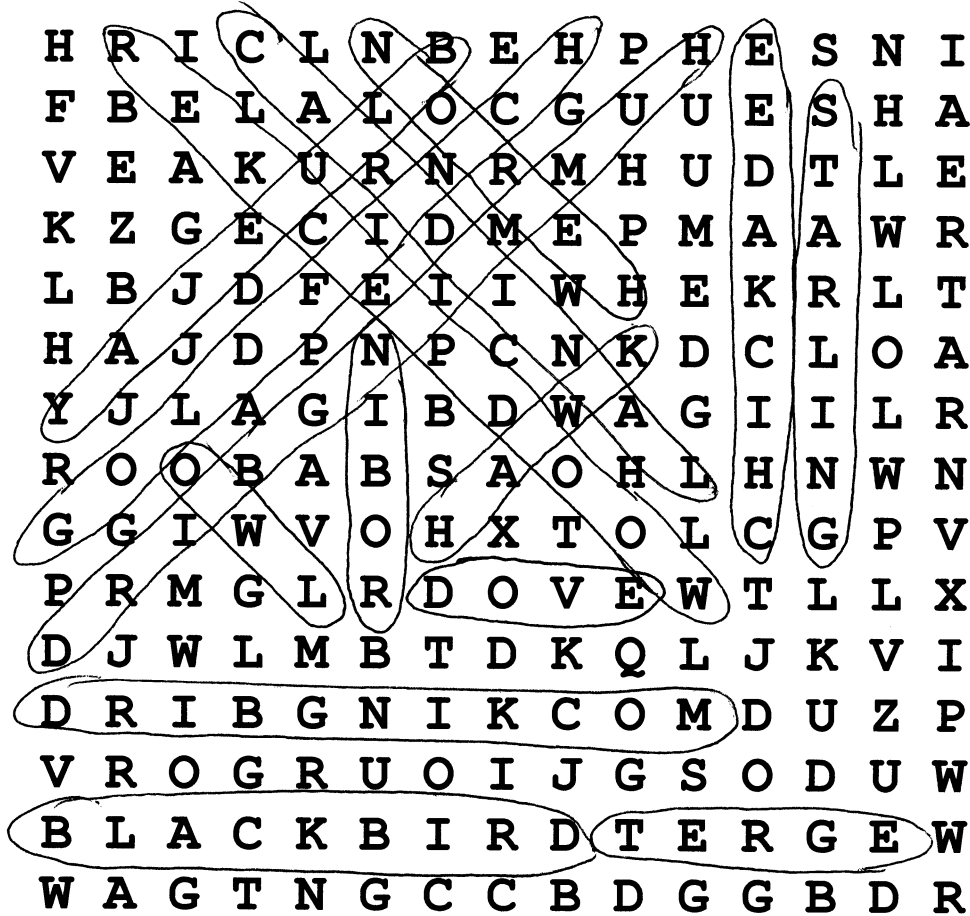
Find the following words:

Blackbird
Blue Jay
Cardinal
Chickadee
Dove
Egret
Goldfinch
Hawk
Heron
Hummingbird
Mockingbird
Owl
Robin
Starling
Woodpecker



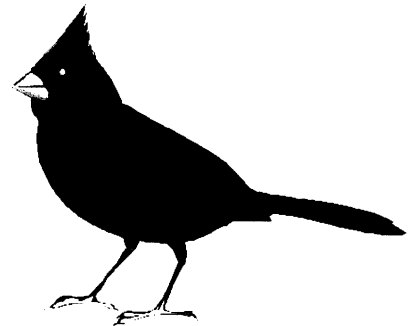


Houston Birds Word Search



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- Blackbird
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- Woodpecker



Extinct Animals in the last 100 years - Resource Sheet

Arabian Ostrich (bird) – lived on the Arabian Peninsula and was over hunted. The last sighting was in 1966 in the country of Jordan.

Atitlan Grebe (bird) – was a water bird that lived in Guatemala. It lost its main source of food (crabs and fish) and was last seen in 1989.

Bali Tiger – lived on the Indonesia island of Bali. It no longer had habitat to live in and was over hunted. It was last seen in 1937.

Barbary Lion – lived in northern Africa. It was a large lion. It lost its habitat and was over hunted. They are found only in zoos currently. The last of these lions in the wild was seen in 1921.

Bubal Hartebeest – was a type of antelope that lived in northern Africa. Over hunting was the biggest reason for its extinction. The last one died in a zoo in Paris in 1923.

Bushwren (bird) – a small bird that lived in New Zealand. A new predator brought to New Zealand caused their decline. The last seen bushwren was seen in 1972.

Canarian Black Oystercatcher (bird) – was a shorebird that lived on the Canary Islands in Spain. Disturbance by people and predation by rats caused its extinction. It was last seen in the 1940s.

Cape Verde Giant Skink – was a reptile that lived on the Cape Verde islands. It lost its habitat and was also hunted for food and “skink oil”. It was declared extinct in 1914.

Caribbean Monk Seal – was a seal that lived in the Caribbean sea and in the Gulf of Mexico. It was hunted for food and blubber. It was last seen in 1952.

Carolina Parakeet (bird) – was a parrot that lived in the eastern United States. It lost its habitat and was hunted for its colored feathers. It was last seen in 1918.

Caspian Tiger – lived in Russia. It was killed to clear the land about 100 years ago and the last one was seen in the 1950s.

Caucasian Wisent – was a bison that lived in eastern Europe. It lost its habitat. Poaching (illegal hunting) also caused the numbers of these animals to decline. The last wisent was killed in 1927.

Colombian Grebe (bird) – was a water bird that lived in Colombia. Predators and loss of habitat caused the grebe to go extinct. The last sighting was reported in 1977.

Crescent Nail-tail Wallaby – lived in Australia. The red fox that was a predator of the wallaby probably caused the extinction. The last was seen in the 1950s.

Golden Toad – lived in the tropical forests of Costa Rica. Fungus wiped out many of them and extra warm dry climate also brought their extinction. The last ones were seen in 1989.

Grand Cayman Thrush (bird) – lived on the Grand Cayman Island. It lost habitat as forests were cut down and hurricanes came over the island. Bird collectors also killed them. It was last seen in 1938.

Guam Flying Fox – was a small fruit bat that lived in Guam. It was hunted for food by people and by brown tree snakes. It was last seen in 1967.

Hawai'i 'O'o (bird) – lived in the island of Hawaii. It was hunted for its feathers or captured as a song bird. It was last seen in 1934.

Heath Hen (bird) – was a prairie-chicken that lived in north east New England. It was heavily hunted for food when the colonists came to America. The last heath hen was seen in 1932.

Japanese Sea Lion – was a seal lion that lived near Japan and Korea. It was hunted for its skin and oil. They were also captured for the circus trade. The last time a Japanese Sea Lion was sighted was in 1974.

Javan Tiger – was a small tiger that lived in Java in Indonesia. Its habitat was also heavily hunted. It was last seen in 1972.

Kaua'i 'O'o (bird) – was a small bird that lived on Kaua'i Island in Hawaii. Rats, pigs and mosquitoes that carried diseases to the birds, brought them to extinction. They were last seen in 1987.

Laughing Owl – was an owl found in New Zealand. It lost much of its habitat as the land use changed in New Zealand. It was last seen in 1914.

Laysan Rail (bird) – was a small bird that lived on the Laysan Island in Hawaii. Rabbits were introduced that destroyed their habitat. It became extinct in 1944.

Little Swan Island Hutia – was a guinea-pig-like rodent to live on the Swan Islands in the Caribbean. It lost most of its habitat during a hurricane in 1955. House cats eventually killed the remaining hutias.

Palestinian Painted Frog – was a frog that lived in marshes in Israel. It lost its habitat when the marshes Lake Huleh were drained. It was last seen in 1955.

Paradise Parrot – was a colorful parrot that lived in Australia. It was over hunted by bird collectors and lost its habitat due to over grazing and land clearing. It was last seen in 1927.

Passenger Pigeon (bird) – was once a common bird that lived in North America. It was hunted for food. It was last seen in 1912.

Pyrenean Ibex – was a small member of the goat family that lived in the Pyrenees Mountains. Overhunting led to its extinction. The last one died in 2000.

Roque Chico de Salmor Giant Lizard – was a lizard that lived on the Canary Islands. It was hunted by feral cats and was also used for scientific usage. It disappeared in the 1930s.

Round Island Burrowing Boa – was a snake that lived in Mauritius. Loss of its small habitat led to this boa's extinction. It was last seen in 1975.

Ryukyu Wood-pigeon (bird) – was a pigeon that lived south west of Japan. Its tropical habitat was destroyed. It was last seen in 1936.

Santo Stefano Lizard – was a small lizard that lived on the Santo Stefano Island off the coast of Italy. Introduced predators (feral cats and snakes) did the most damage to the lizard population. It was last seen in 1965.

Schomburgk's Deer – was a deer native to Thailand. It lost habitat as the grassland was converted to farming land. It was also hunted. It was last seen in the 1930s.

South Island Piopio (bird) – was a common bird that lived in New Zealand. Its population declined due to rats and cats that came with human settlements. It was last seen in 1963.

Tasmanian Wolf – lived in Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea. It was over hunted and diseases probably also caused the wolves to die. The last Tasmanian Wolf died in captivity in 1936.

Thicktail Chub (fish) – was a common fish that lived in the backwaters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers in California. It lost much of its habitat due to the increased agricultural land use in California. It became extinct in the 1950s.

Toolache Wallaby - was a common wallaby found in Australia. Extensive hunting for their fur, along with predation by foxes and loss of habitat brought this wallaby to extinction. It was last seen in 1943.

Western Black Rhinoceros – lived in the savannas of central west Africa. Due to overhunting it was considered extinct in 2006.

Wake Island Rail (bird)- was a flightless bird that lived on Wake Island in the Pacific Ocean. It was overhunted during World War II when the Japanese hunted them for food. It was last seen in 1945.

Extinct and Endangered Animals Game

This game is best played in groups of 8-10 people.

Materials:

Chairs for all players MINUS one or tape to mark spots on the floor.

Setup: If you have individual chairs, make sure you have one chair for every player MINUS one. Set up the chairs in a circle. If you do not have individual chairs, use tape to mark spots on the floor to sit on – one spot less than the number of people in the group. Mark the spots in a circle. Everyone sits in a chair or on a spot except one person. This person stands in the middle of the circle.



How to play: This game is played just like “Fruit Basket,” except that instead of each player having a specific fruit, each player has an extinct or endangered animal. Let each player choose an animal that became extinct in the last 100 years (see resource sheet) or that is endangered or threatened. You can suggest animals if they cannot think of any animals. Depending on the number of the players, you can do this several different ways.









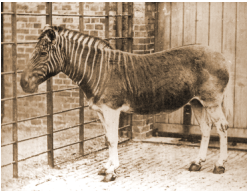

It may be easier to assign these animals (as Cub Scouts may not know that many extinct animals). Use the resource sheet as you assign the animals and tell the Cub Scouts why a particular animal became extinct or is endangered or threatened.

Have each player sit in a chair or on a spot on the floor – except one player. This one player will be left standing in the middle. He is “It”. “It” starts the game by calling out the name of two animals, like “passenger pigeon” and “Golden Toad”! As soon as he calls out these names, players sitting in the circle with those animal names would jump up and try to find a new seat (switching chairs/spots before the person in the middle takes one of their chairs/spots). “It” would also try as fast as he could to sit in one of the open seats. In the end, a player would be left without a seat. That player left without a seat would then call out another animal and the game continues.

At any time, the player in the middle also has the option of calling out “I’m Extinct!” When that happens, *all* players get up from their chairs and find a new one. Mass pandemonium and good fun ensues as everyone tries not to be left without a seat. The game continues until you want to stop.

Rules: You can set a rule that a player getting up from a chair must find a new one at least two seats away (to encourage players to get up and run around). Also, if you’re halfway through your game and realize that there’s one or two fruits that no one’s calling because everyone’s forgotten about them (like the Cub Scout that is the “Tasmanian Tiger”), you might want to remind everyone of everyone’s animal.

Extinct or Endangered? Answers

 <p>1. Houston Toad E – Endangered</p>	 <p>6. Passenger Pigeon X – Extinct – since 1914.</p>
 <p>2. Golden Toad X – Extinct – since 1989.</p>	 <p>7. Whooping Crane E – Endangered</p>
 <p>3. Kemper Ripley's Sea Turtle E – Endangered</p>	 <p>8. Giant Panda bear E – Endangered</p>
 <p>4. Tyrannosaurus Rex X - Extinct – a long time ago!</p>	 <p>9. Dodo bird X – Extinct – since 1750.</p>
 <p>5. Quagga X – Extinct – since 1883.</p>	 <p>10. Red cockaded Woodpecker E – Endangered</p>

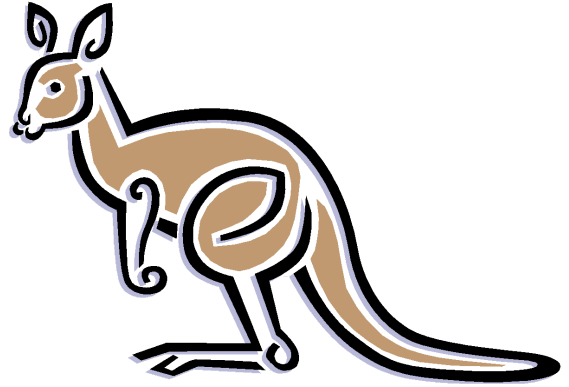
Animal Tag

Materials:

None

Directions:

Have the players in a scattered formation. Select one Cub Scout to be “it.” “It” names an animal, and all the players assume the identity of the animal as they move around. “It” also assumes the identity of the animal they named as they try to tag one of the animals, who then becomes “it.”



Example: “It” calls “Kangaroo!” and everyone must hop like kangaroos until someone is tagged and person who was tagged chooses a different animal.

At the Watering Hole

Materials:

None

How to Play:

Objective: Create an animal that must be able to walk to the watering hole and back.

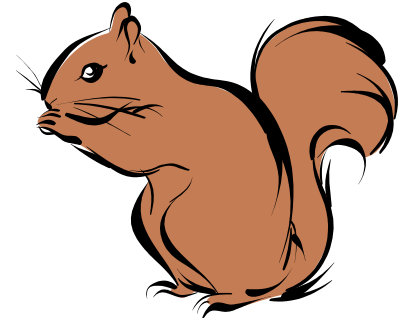
Divide Cub Scouts into small groups of 4-5 players, who must turn into animals with only 6 legs, but every player must be making part of the animal.

The “animal” must be able to walk to the “watering hole” and back, with only 6 legs touching the ground.

Players can do a piggy-back, wheelbarrow, or even limp on one leg, as long as their animal can walk. This is not a race, but a problem-solving activity. Have them also come up with a name for their animal and also create any sounds that this animal might make. If time permits, they could even create what type of habitat and diet this animal has.



Be Kind to Animals Opening



Materials:

Flag

Cubmaster or den leader:

Animals live all around us. We may have armadillos and alligators and squirrels that live nearby. What are some of your favorite animals that live in Texas or in the United States. [Share one of your favorite animals that live in Texas or in the United States.]

[Let the Cub Scouts share their favorite animals.]

One point of the Scout Law is the word “kind.” When I ask you to be kind, what does that mean? [Cub Scouts will have many answers to this question.]

Have you ever thought about what it means to “be kind to animals?” What do you think that would mean? [Cub Scout answers may vary, but they should mention – taking care of animals, feeding animals (if they are a pet), not bothering animals (if they are in the wild), not hurting animals, etc.]

Let’s be kind to the animals that live around us.

Join me in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Law.

Earth, Air, Water Game

Materials:

Small ball or bead bag or item that can be tossed per circle

Instructions:

1. Have Cub Scouts sit on the floor in a large circle. If you have more than 20 Cub Scouts, divide them into smaller groups.
2. One Cub Scout is "It" and stands in the center of the circle holding the small ball or bean bag.
3. "It" throws the ball or bean bag to any Cub Scout sitting in the circle and says either, "Earth," "Air," or "Water." Then they quickly start counting to 10. The person that they threw the ball or bean bag to has to respond. If "It" said, "Earth" – then the person who caught the ball has to name an animal that lives on land. If "Air" was said, then the person who caught the ball has to name an animal that spends time in the air. If "Water" was said, then the person who caught the ball has to name something that lives in the water. The names of the animals can't be used twice.
4. If the Cub Scout who catches the ball or bean bag correctly names an animal in the 10 second time period, then they get to be "It." If he does not, then the original "It" gets to continue.
5. This game can be played for a specific amount of time or until all players get to be "It," etc.



Eight Texas Endangered Animals

(text and photos condensed from the Texas Parks and Wildlife document entitled, "Endangered and Threatened Animals of Texas")



Mexican Long-Nosed Bat

The Mexican Long-nosed Bat is a large bat compared with most U.S. bat species. It measures about 2.75 to 3.75 inches in total length. It has a long muzzle with a nose leaf (see the picture) at the tip. Its long tongue can go out 3 inches and helps the bat feed on flower nectar.

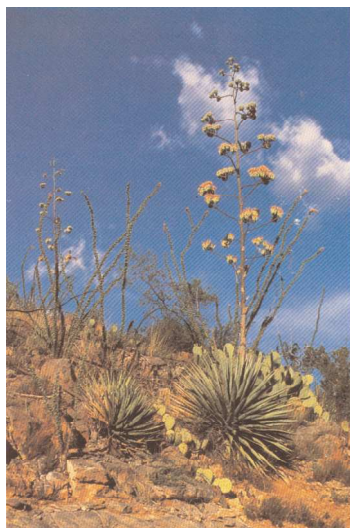
It lives in southwestern New Mexico, the Big Bend area of Texas, the Chinati Mountains in Texas and southward into central Mexico. In the daytime, Mexican Long-Nosed Bats live in caves, crevices, tunnels, abandoned mines and old buildings. They are often found in colonies at the openings of caves.



Mexican Long-Nosed Bat

Mexican Long-nosed Bats are thought to move from central Mexico into northern Mexico each year, with part of the population crossing the border into Texas and New Mexico. The young are born in Mexico during April, May and early June, then move northward with their mothers.

These bats are nectar feeders, emerging at night to feed on the showy flowers of plants such as agave plants (*Agave* spp.). They are very strong, highly maneuverable fliers, and like hummingbirds, are able to hover in flight while they feed. In Big Bend National Park, agaves begin blooming in mid-May at lower elevations and early June at higher altitudes. The bats arrive in Texas about one month after flowering of agaves has begun. After spending most of the summer in Big Bend, they leave the United States in late summer or early fall as the agaves go out of bloom.



Agave plant

Why are they endangered?

Although the Mexican Long-nosed Bat occurs throughout much of Mexico, There are indications of population decline both in the United States and Mexico. Many years of watching the numbers of Mexican Long-Nosed Bats was the reason that the bat was added to the list of endangered species in 1988.

The reasons for the lower number of bats are thought to be associated with loss of roosting sites and food sources. Food resources are lost by both land use change and wild agave harvesting. Colonial roosting species, such as many bats, are particularly vulnerable to disturbance and destruction of roosting habitat, since this can result in the displacement of large numbers of animals at one time. Just a few roost sites are known for this species that provide the proper roosting environment including temperature and humidity.

Loss of food sources may be another threat contributing to the decline of the Mexican Long-nosed Bat. Agaves are an important food source, and are the primary blooming plants available in northern Mexico during their northern migration in the spring, and again in August when they move south. Harvest of agaves for the production of liquor, and in northeastern Mexico, for

preparation of "quiote," a traditional sweet, may be contributing to the decline of this important food source. When agaves are harvested, not only are they removed from the bats' present food supply, but future generations of agave plants also are eliminated. This is especially critical, since

a single plant grows for 10 to 20 years and flowers only once then dies. Other factors, such as wild fires and clearing of rangeland areas in northern Mexico may also reduce the food supply and thus affect bat populations.

What's being done to help?

Recovery efforts also include planting agaves along roadways in Northern Mexico. More than 50,000 agaves had already been planted in the last three years. Agaves are very important plants to control soil erosion, and help to speed up the natural succession process in degraded areas. Finally, recovery efforts include providing information to the general public and school children concerning the great diversity and importance of bats.

Louisiana Black Bear

The Louisiana Black Bear is one of 16 currently recognized subspecies of American Black Bear. They have five toes with short, curved claws on the front and hind feet. Adult males may weigh 300 to 400 pounds or more, and adult females 120 to over 180 pounds. Body length of adults ranges from 4 to 7 feet.

The Louisiana Black Bear was once a common inhabitant of forested regions of eastern Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Their last strongholds in eastern Texas were in the swamps and thickets of the Big Thicket Region of southeast Texas. Presently the Louisiana black bear primarily occurs within the boundaries of the state of Louisiana. There have been some 24 confirmed black bear sightings within eastern Texas since 1977.



Key habitat requirements of black bears include food, water, cover, and denning sites. Louisiana black bears typically inhabit bottomland hardwood forests but also utilize other types of forested habitats. Remoteness is an important part of black bear habitat.

Louisiana Black Bears are opportunistic feeders, eating almost anything that is readily available. Hard and soft foods like acorns and berries, dead animals, and insect larvae found in dead and decaying wood are typical food sources. However, agricultural crops like corn, wheat and sugarcane may also be utilized. Bears are considered to be very intelligent animals.

They are basically shy and secretive, and usually intentionally avoid contact with humans. Conversely, bears have a keen sense of smell, and will locate and feed on human garbage. This tendency can sometimes create problems with humans.

Why are they endangered?

Decline of this species, throughout its range, was due to depletion of populations through over harvest by humans, and to loss suitable forested habitats. Presently human population density with its high potential for human/bear conflicts is probably the most significant threat. Continued loss of forested habitat throughout eastern Texas, is a great threat to the black bear.

What's being done to help?

The Louisiana Black Bear was listed as threatened in 1992. The goals in helping the bears are to 1) minimize loss of more forested habitat, particularly mature bottomland hardwood forests, 2) Promote reforestation programs, 3) Monitor the movements of black bears the move into Texas from Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma, 4) Find ways to help the black bears that do come into Texas from other states, 5) help other states conserve the black bear and 6) help educate people about the Louisiana Black Bear and how people can help.

Red-cockaded Woodpecker

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker is an eight-inch long woodpecker with a solid black cap and nape, and prominent white cheek patches. The male has a tiny red streak behind the eye and near the ear (the cockade). The cockade is seldom visible in the field, making it difficult to distinguish males from females.



The Red-cockaded Woodpecker is found in mature pine forests of east Texas and the southeastern United States. It is the only species of woodpecker that excavates its cavities exclusively in living pine trees. In Texas, cavities have been found in longleaf, loblolly, shortleaf, and slash pines. Most cavities are found in trees 60 to 70 years of age or older. The tree must have enough heartwood (older, non-living, inner portion of wood) to contain the roosting chamber, since a chamber in sapwood (younger, living portion of wood) would fill with resin. Since heartwood is very hard, a large percentage of cavities are found in pines infected with a heart rot fungus called red heart. This fungus weakens the heartwood and makes cavity excavation easier. A cluster is a stand of trees containing and surrounding the cavity trees in which a group of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers nest and roost. Some things that cause these woodpeckers to die include infestation of the tree by bark beetles, winds breaking the tree and fire.

The Red-cockaded Woodpecker lives in groups which usually have two to six birds, although as many as nine birds have been observed. The group may consist of only a mated pair; a mated pair with their current year's offspring; or a mated pair, their current year's offspring and helpers. These helpers are one to three year old adult birds, typically sons of one or both of the breeders. A woodpecker group roosts and nests in a cluster of cavity trees. Major competitors for nest cavities include other woodpeckers (Red-headed, Red-bellied, and Pileated) and flying squirrels.

Why are they endangered?

The main threat to the survival of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker is the decrease in the quality and quantity of old growth pine forest nesting habitat, primarily due to the cutting down of trees for timber.. Because of this bird's requirement for older mature pines, habitat loss takes a long time to rectify. It may take 60 to 70 years to begin to provide suitable nesting habitat. Southern pine beetle infestations have been found to be a major cause of cavity tree loss in Texas. This is particularly true during southern pine beetle epidemics, such as the one that occurred on the Sam Houston National Forest in 1983 following Hurricane Alicia. Another threat to Red-cockaded Woodpecker cavity trees is damage from meteorological events like hurricanes, tornadoes and sheer winds. A large-scale sheer wind event that occurred in February, 1998, on the Sabine National Forest resulted in loss of the majority of cavity trees

What's being done to help?

Despite the problems facing the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, recovery efforts are proceeding on federal, state and private properties in Texas. Overall Red-cockaded Woodpecker populations across the region are mostly stable or increasing as a result of active management through habitat improvements (removal of midstory vegetation, and prescribed burning), insertion of artificial cavity inserts (nest boxes placed on the inside of the tree), and relocation strategies. State and federal agencies are working with private landowners interested in developing Red-cockaded woodpecker conservation and habitat management plans for their property.



Eastern Brown Pelican

This is a unique shore bird with a 6-foot wingspread and 18-inch bill with pouch along the underside. A brown pelican weighs about 9 pounds and is a graceful flyer. Its feet are webbed to provide power while swimming in or under the water.

In the past, the Brown Pelican was found in large numbers along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from South Carolina to Florida and west to Texas. Today, the birds occur throughout their historic range but their numbers have been greatly reduced.

Today, Brown Pelicans are found along the Texas coast from Chambers County on the upper coast to Cameron County on the lower coast. Most of the breeding birds nest on Pelican Island in Corpus Christi Bay and Sundown Island near Port O'Connor.

It is quite an experience to watch a Brown Pelican feeding. Soaring overhead, the bird spots a fish near the surface and keeps it in sight. Rotating into a dive, the pelican plunges 30 to 60 feet bill-first into the water. The impact of hitting the water with such force would stun an ordinary bird, but the Brown Pelican is equipped with air sacs just beneath the skin to cushion the blow. As it enters the water, the loose skin on the underside of the bill extends to form a scoop net with an amazing capacity of 2.5 gallons. If the dive is successful, the pelican quickly drains the water from its pouch and tosses its head back to swallow the fish.



Why are they endangered?

Brown Pelican numbers in Texas began to decline sharply in the 1920's and 1930's, when adult birds were killed and nesting colonies destroyed by fishermen, in the mistaken belief that pelicans compete with man for food. Even more damaging, however, was the widespread use of DDT and similar insecticides beginning in the late 1940's. These insecticides were used on farmlands across the United States and in coastal areas to control mosquitoes. DDT does not usually kill adult birds, but it does interfere with calcium metabolism. The result is that the birds lay thin-shelled eggs that break during incubation or are too thin to protect the embryo. Pelicans are fish eaters, and fish are great accumulators of all toxic chemicals that get into coastal waters. The pelican's favorite food, Menhaden, a small filter-feeding fish, trap plankton for food. The plankton absorbed DDT residues from runoff. Thus, the concentration of DDT and Endrin in the environment had a devastating impact on the reproduction of Brown Pelicans, along with other top-of-the food-chain birds such as Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and Peregrine Falcons.

What's being done to help?

Recovery of these species has been steady since the early 1970's, when DDT and Endrin were banned in the United States. In Texas today, the major threats to the continued recovery of the Brown Pelican appear to be human disturbance and loss of nesting habitat. Pelicans need safe places to nest, away from predators and man.



Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle

The Kemp's ridley is the smallest member of the sea turtle family. Kemp's ridleys have large, somewhat triangular heads and powerful, massive jaws.

Kemp's ridley adults are generally only found in the Gulf of Mexico. Juveniles have been reported most commonly in the northern Gulf of Mexico between Texas and Florida. Juveniles are also found along the eastern seaboard of the United States as far north as Nova Scotia, Canada.



Shallow waters are preferred habitat for juvenile and adult Kemp's ridleys. Hatchlings spend many months as surface drifters in the open ocean (pelagic phase). Recent evidence suggests that they may be found in surface water areas where drifting material, such as floating marine vegetation and debris, accumulate. These areas are called convergence zones or drift lines. Little is known regarding how long they drift, what they eat, or how they get back to the coast. Studies have shown that, after the pelagic phase, body size of Kemp's ridley is related to water depth. For example, the smallest juveniles are found in shallow waters of bays or lagoons, often foraging in less than 3 feet of water, whereas larger juveniles and adults are found in deeper water.

The diet of juvenile and adult Kemp's ridley turtles consists primarily of crabs, shrimp, snails, bivalves, sea urchins, jellyfish, sea stars, fish, and occasionally marine plants. Crabs are a preferred food and several species are eaten.

Why are they endangered?

The Kemp's ridley population crash that occurred between 1947 and the early 1970's was probably a result of the combination of intensive annual harvest of eggs and the death of juveniles and adults in shrimp trawl nets. Kemp's ridley eggs were (and still are in many places) considered a delicacy to eat. Between about 1947 and 1966 people dug up truckloads of eggs and sold them in the towns and cities of Texas and Mexico. Since many of the eggs were either taken by people or eaten by predators, there was a drastic decline in the turtle population. Also, they were taken for meat by commercial fishermen in the northern and northeastern Gulf of Mexico.

What's being done to help?



Since the principal nesting beach is in Mexico, the continued, long-term cooperation of two nations is necessary to recover the species. A joint United States-Mexican management program is underway which includes nesting beach protection and incubation of eggs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided assistance at the Rancho Nuevo nesting beach since 1978. Continued assistance to Mexico is needed to ensure long-term protection of the major nesting beach, including protection of adult turtles and enhanced production and survival of hatchlings. Education efforts and beach nest protection work in Mexico is supported by a partnership which includes the Gladys Porter Zoo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, National Marine Fisheries Service and the seafood industry, along with others from the U.S. and Mexico. It is hoped that through education of children, the conservation message will be spread throughout local communities. Regulations went into effect in the United States in 1990 and in Mexico in 1993 which require commercial trawlers to install Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) on their boats. This device guides turtles and other

large objects out of the net through an escape opening in the net. Hopefully, the use of these devices in the Gulf of Mexico by the shrimp fleets of the United States and Mexico will substantially reduce mortality associated with net entanglement.

Houston Toad

The Houston Toad is a terrestrial amphibian associated with deep sandy soils within east central Texas. Since Houston Toads are poor burrowers, loose soils are required for burrowing. The toads burrow into the sand for protection from cold weather in the winter (hibernation) and hot, dry conditions in the summer (aestivation). For breeding, including egg and tadpole development, Houston Toads also require still or slow-flowing bodies of water that persist for at least 30 days.

The Houston Toad is a year round resident where found, although its presence can most easily be detected during the breeding season, when males may be heard calling.



Why are they endangered?

Habitat loss and alteration are the most serious threats facing the Houston Toad. The change of wetlands for urban and agricultural uses eliminates breeding sites. Draining a wetland, or converting a temporary wetland to a permanent pond, can eventually cause the Houston toad to decline or be eliminated entirely. Conversion to permanent water makes them more vulnerable to predation by snakes, fish, and other predators. but also Periodic drought is also a threat, particularly long-term drought such as that experienced during the 1950s. Drought may result in the loss or reduction of breeding sites as well as greater death of toadlets and adults.

High traffic roads are a barrier to Houston Toad movement, and toads are sometimes killed on roads. Other linear features such as pipelines and transmission lines can create barriers between foraging, hibernating, and breeding sites, especially if native vegetation has been removed. The invasion of the Red Imported Fire Ant makes it harder to ensure the long-term survival of the Houston Toad. These toads occur in small, scattered populations, and may be more seriously affected by fire ants than species that are more common and widespread. Fire ants kill young toadlets (less than 7-10 days old) moving out of the breeding pond into the surrounding land habitat.

What's being done to help?



The Houston Zoo received its first Houston Toad eggs in 2007. The reasons that the zoo received the toad eggs were to 1) safeguard the Houston Toad in case something caused them to go extinct in the wild. The second reason was for the toad to be reintroduced into new habitat. The third reason is to protect and release the toads after they are a certain age. The fourth reason is for research. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department are the organizations charged with conserving the toad and work with partners such as Texas State University, the Environmental Defense Fund, and the myriad of private landowners who recognize the need for and appreciate having the little toad around. Knowing the situation is grim, everyone

is responding with active stewardship increasing the chance for long lasting positive changes for the species.

Black-Footed Ferret



Black-footed Ferrets are tan in color with distinctive body markings, including a black face-mask, dark “saddle” on the back, black feet and legs, and a black-tipped tail.

The Black-footed Ferret once inhabited extensive areas of the Great Plains ranging from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains east to Nebraska and from southern Canada south to Texas. Ferrets rely on prairie dogs for food and shelter. Because of this, active prairie dog colonies provide potential habitat for Black-footed Ferrets.

Black-footed Ferrets hunt primarily at night, so they are rarely seen. They live in burrows made by prairie dogs. Prairie dogs comprise about 90 percent of the ferret’s diet, although they also eat rabbits, mice, voles, ground squirrels, pocket gophers, birds, and insects.

Why are they endangered?

In Texas, the prairie dog population has declined, so the Black-footed ferret population has declined as well. When the prairie dogs are not there to be the food for the ferrets, then the ferret population goes

down. When rangeland is converted to cropland, when prairie dog towns are eliminated, when cities grow, then you will lose the black-footed ferret population. Disease has also been a reason that the prairie dog population has gone down.

What’s being done to help?

State and federal, are beginning to reintroduce Black-footed Ferrets to the wild. Reintroduction efforts have begun in Wyoming, and other states plan to follow. The first releases are planned on public land and will be experimental, as researchers learn the best ways to return Black-footed Ferrets to their native habitat. Black-footed Ferrets are also being maintained and bred at several zoos and other facilities around the country. In Texas, efforts are being made to inform landowners and the general public regarding the importance of conserving and managing prairie dogs.



Ocelot

The Ocelot is a beautiful medium sized spotted cat with body dimensions similar to the bobcat. A key feature is the parallel stripes running down the nape of the neck. The under parts are white spotted with black. The Ocelot's long tail is ringed or marked with dark bars on the upper surface. The backs of the rounded ears are black with a white central spot.

In Texas, Ocelots occur in the dense thorny shrub lands of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Rio Grande Plains. Over the years, the Ocelot population declined primarily due to loss of habitat and predator control activities.

Ocelots normally begin their activities at dusk, when they set out on nightly hunts for rabbits, small rodents, and birds. They move around during the night, usually within a well-established home range.

The extensive shrub lands of the Lower Rio Grande Valley have been converted to agriculture and urban development over the past 60 years. Much of this land, particularly the more fertile soils, has been cleared for production of vegetables, citrus, sugarcane, cotton, and other crops. Unfortunately for the Ocelot, the best soil types also grow the thickest brush and thus produce the best habitat. Only about 1% of the South Texas area supports what is currently defined as optimal habitat. Road mortality is a more recent reason for decline. As Ocelot habitat in South Texas becomes fragmented by bigger highways with faster traffic, Ocelots have become increasingly vulnerable to being struck by vehicles while crossing roads.

Conservation of remaining habitat, and maintenance or creation of brush corridors connecting these habitats, is necessary for survival of the Ocelot population in Texas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, The Nature Conservancy, and many local landowners have been working to protect, acquire and restore Ocelot habitat in the Rio Grande Valley. Restoration generally involves revegetating previously cleared areas with native trees and shrubs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Department of Transportation are also working together to try and reduce Ocelot road deaths by installing Ocelot underpasses under roads where Ocelots are known to frequently cross.



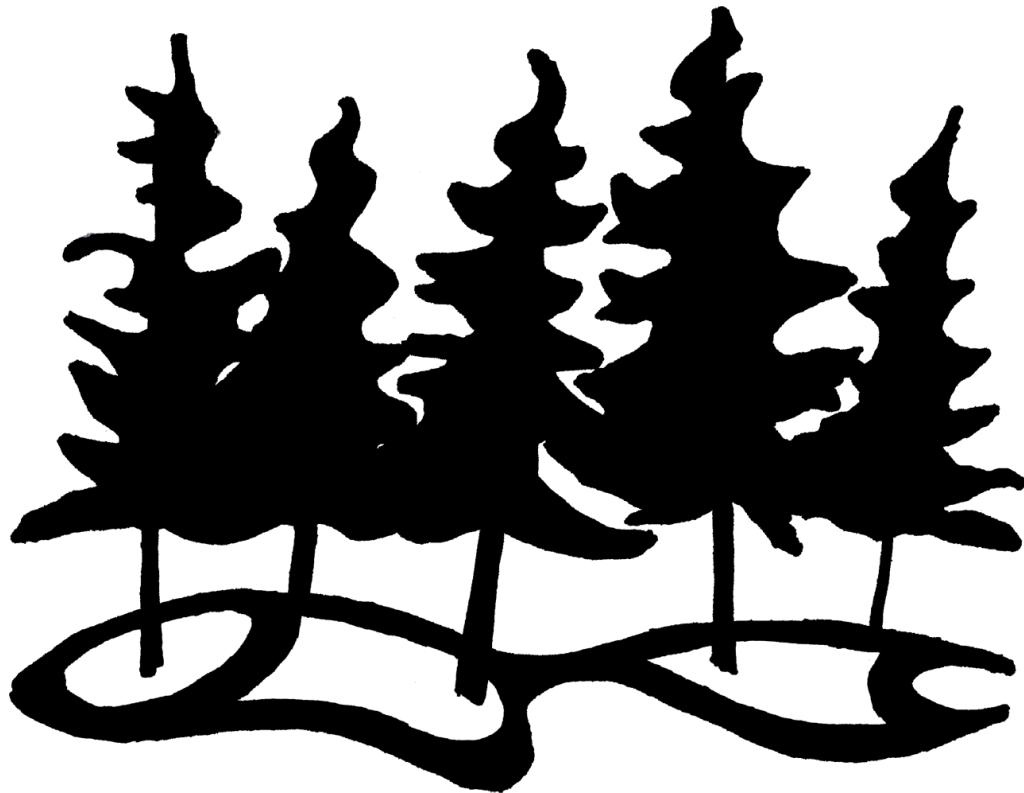
In the Forest Tag

Materials:

None

Instructions:

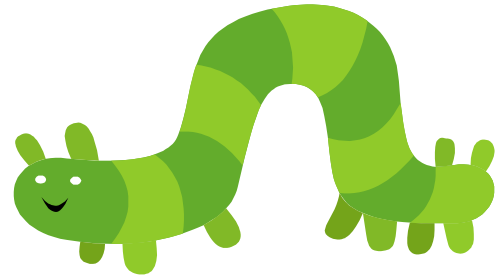
1. Designate a fairly small area for the game to be played.
2. Choose one person to be "It."
3. This is played like regular tag, but a player can be "be safe" by crouching down and naming a plant or animal that lives in the forest.
4. As long as the same person is "It" there can be no naming repeats. If a person can't think of a plant or animal, and is tagged, that person becomes "it" and all plants and animals can be used again.



Inchworm Relay Race

Materials:

Masking tape (for marking lines)
Large ball (for each team – only for game variation)



Mark a starting line and a finish line ten to twenty feet apart.

Form at least two teams.

On the start signal, the first Cub Scout mimics the movement of an inchworm by bending over and putting their hands and feet on the ground. The Cub Scout "walks" their feet forward as far as they can go, then "walks" their hands forward, then their feet, then hands, and so on.

When he reaches the finish line, the next boy goes.

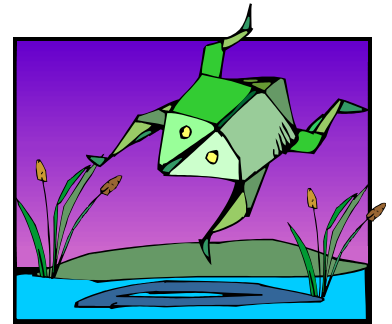
Variation: The Cub Scouts use their heads to push a ball as they imitate an inchworm. When a Cub Scout reaches the finish line, they toss the ball back to the next player.

Jumping Frog Origami

Materials:

4x6 index card (1 per Cub Scout)

Pencil, marker or crayon for drawing eyes



Directions:

For each of the folds, make sure you crease them well.

1. Fold down right top corner. Unfold.
2. Fold down left top corner. Unfold.
3. Fold backward as shown by dotted line. Unfold.
4. Push down at the center of "X" and bring sides to meet in the middle.
5. Push down top triangle.
6. Fold up two points of the top triangle.
7. Fold sides of card to the center.
8. Bring the bottom edge up almost to the top and fold.
9. Fold down top layer.
10. Turn the frog over. You may want to draw eyes.

Stroke the back of frog to make him jump.

