



Zoos Helping Endangered Species

Suggested Grade Level 6

Objective

Research what veterinarians working in zoos are doing to prevent extinction of endangered animals using the impact of climate change on polar bears as one example.

Materials

- AVMA Poster
- Internet Access

Procedure

National Standards:

Language Arts

- Research issues
- Writing skills

Science

- Scientific inquiry
- Populations and ecosystems
- Resources and environments

- The teacher begins by asking the students questions about the weather in their area and how it has changed over the past few years (e.g., warmer summers, less rain fall). Next, the teacher shows a picture of Antarctica with the glaciers melting (Discovery Channel-Planet Earth) and asks the students if they know what this means? The teacher tells the students that this is an example of climate change.
- The teacher shows the **Ice World** segment from the **Planet Earth Series** (disc two). In addition to showing the plight of Antarctic penguins, the video clip shows the threats Arctic polar bears face (especially challenges from climate change.)
- Ask students to use the Internet to research the work that zoos and veterinarians are doing to save polar bears. One Web site to review is the St. Louis Zoo:
www.stlzoo.org/animals/abouttheanimals/mammals/carnivores/polarbear.htm.
- Discuss student findings and how the methods currently being used to protect polar bears could be applied to other endangered species.
- Ask students to write a two-page essay on what they have learned about endangered species and climate change.

Ideas to extend this lesson

Ask students to imagine how climate change is impacting or may impact animals in their community. *How would it affect those animals if climate change continues to happen rapidly? How can their community help to protect those species?*

