CANADIAN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

30 - 45 minutes

Habitats Need Your Help

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Examine the habitat needs of wildlife.
- Learn about types of protected areas.
- Build a case for habitat and wildlife conservation.

Method

By examining habitat needs from wildlife's point of view students will explore the impacts of human development and activity and make the case for conservation.

Materials

- Access to the internet and/or other research materials
- Map of Canada's Conserved Areas

Background

Different species may live in the same ecosystem but have entirely different habitats. For example, a monarch butterfly relies on milkweed during its caterpillar stage, but a chickadee relies on tree cavities where it can nest.

Phantom Orchid, licensed under CC BY-SA

Generalist species can thrive in a wide variety of environmental conditions and can adapt more easily to changes in their habitat, while **specialist species** only thrive in a narrow range of environmental conditions. Coyotes, for example, adapt well and their adaptive abilities allow them a large range in Canada. However, if the tiny habitat of the phantom orchid is disturbed, they can be at risk of being wiped out.

If a species is thriving its habitat is probably healthy too. But when a creature or plant starts to disappear, something must be wrong with its habitat.

A **biodiversity hotspot** is a natural area that is home to a high diversity of species but is also so degraded it could vanish without careful management.

For additional resources visit:

CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/Education

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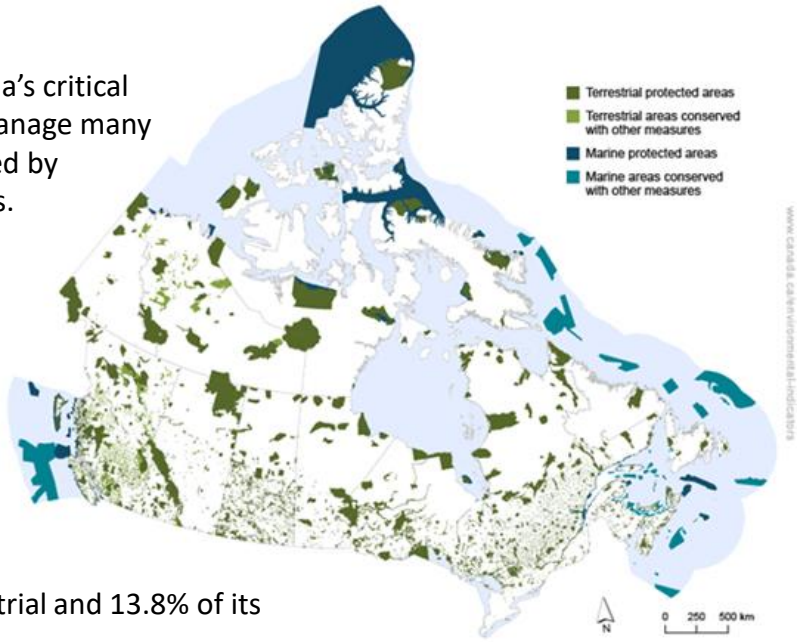
Protected Areas

Protected areas help conserve Canada's critical habitats. Governments create and manage many of these sites, but others are managed by organizations and private landowners.



They include:

- **National & Provincial Parks**
- **Migratory Bird Sanctuaries**
- **Biosphere Reserves**
- **World Heritage Sites**
- **Ramsar Sites**
- **Land Trusts**

As of 2019, 12.1% of Canada's terrestrial and 13.8% of its marine areas have been conserved.

Activity

1. Have students take on the role of a salamander, bear, oak tree, or even a less popular species such as a cockroach, slug or mosquito.
2. Have students research what type of food, water, shelter, and space their plant or animal needs. Is it a specialist or a generalist?
3. Have students how their species has, or has not, successfully adapted to live alongside humans. Is their species' population declining? If so, have students list the reasons why.
4. Introduce the concept of protected areas and have students conduct research to find out if there is a protected area nearby that conserves their species' preferred habitat. If possible, encourage them to visit the site and speak to an expert on the habitat and wildlife there.
    - What type of protected area is it?
    - What laws are in place to protect the area?
    - What types of activity and development are allowed, and which are prohibited?
5. From the perspective of their species, which depends on its habitat for survival, have students make a case for conservation of that species and its habitat. They can do this through a written report or develop their own conservation campaign with persuasive visuals and key messaging.
6. Have students share and discuss their research as a group.

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