

Lesson 1: Learning from the Past

Theme

Human activities can significantly impact wildlife, for better or worse. Wildlife species are considered a renewable resource that must be used and conserved wisely.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the timeline of wildlife conservation history in America, with a small lens focus on the effects of European colonization on wildlife in New England. Students will learn about the issues posed by the overexploitation of natural resources and the effects of wildlife regulations and restoration.

Corresponding Activities for this Lesson

- Tragedy of the Commons

Materials

- Bowls
- Tokens, beads, or beans (something small to represent fish for Tragedy of the Commons activity)
- Black bear skull
- Beaver skull and pelt
- Wildlife conservation history laminated cards

Lesson *(This lesson can be taught multiple ways, depending on the age group):*

- 1. Explain to students that today we will be learning about the history of people and wildlife in America, but with a special focus on Rhode Island. Tell students that to start things off, they will be working together to create a living timeline of events.**
 - There are 17 events total that span from pre-1600 to present day. Events are given a number, and also include the date of the event with pictures. On the back of the cards, there are a few sentences describing the event.

- 2. For younger children: Distribute the cards to students around the room. Read aloud the descriptions of each event. After reading each description, ask the student who has the corresponding event card to stand and line up along one side of the room. Ask each student to describe the photos that are on their cards.**
 - As you work your way through the timeline, ask students if they have ever heard of any of these events. How do they feel about each one? Do any of the events make them feel sad? Happy?
 - When you reach the bear and beaver events, pass around the bear and beaver artifacts for students to explore.
 - After the timeline has been completed, ask the students to explain the event on their card in their own words, using one sentence, to review the timeline they have built together.

- 3. For older children: Distribute the cards to students around the room. Ask students to read aloud the descriptions of each event, going in order. After reading each description, ask each student to stand and line up along one side of the room.**
 - At the end of the timeline, ask each student to read the questions on their card to quiz their classmates on the main points of the event.

- 4. After students have completed the timeline activity, follow up with the Tragedy of the Commons activity to illustrate the effects of overexploitation of wildlife resources.**