



# ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Discussion relating to endangered animals



## GRADES 3 - 6

### KEY WORDS

- economics
- endangered

### STANDARDS

- SCI.3.2.5
- SCI.3.2.6
- SCI.4.2.5
- SCI.4.2.6

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn to think critically by comparing and discussing two opposing viewpoints.
- Students will learn that humans have caused animals to become extinct or endangered by destroying natural habitats, using pesticides, overhunting, using skins, feathers, or other animal parts for clothing or fashion accessories, and keeping exotic animals as pets.

### PROCEDURE

- Give students a copy of the two arguments or read them aloud to the class.
- Assign certain students to act as Board Members and make a decision about the conflict.
- Hold a discussion with the class using the following example questions:
  - Do you feel you have enough information to make a decision? If not, how would you gather the necessary facts?
  - How would each side benefit if their proposal were chosen?
  - How do you know which statements are facts and which are opinions?
  - Can you give examples of situations that have occurred near your home that are similar to this one? What were the results?
  - Would it be possible to compromise and have the eagle refuge and the lumbering operation coexist on the same land? What additional information about timbering practices and the habitat needs of bald eagles would you need in order to make this decision?
- Be sure to stress that there are no easy or correct responses due to the nature of this discussion.

### RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Watch for student participation during the discussion.
- Have students write a short paragraph about their thoughts following the discussion.



# ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



## EXTENSIONS

- Have students research a local environmental issue and reach out to local or state political representatives.
- Conduct an aluminum can or paper recycling drive. Discuss the connection between recycling and the preservation of wildlife habitat. Consider donating any funds you raise to one of the conservation organizations you investigate.
- Have students design a logo or poster to help publicize environmental issues affecting endangered species. Work in groups and display them around your school.





# ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Read the following arguments and discuss them with the class.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

These arguments were presented before the County Board of Supervisors in support of or against a proposal to lease county land to a lumber company:

Lumber Company President:

“My company is expanding its operation. We want to build a sawmill north of town and lease the timber rights to the 100 square miles you recently incorporated. With this land, we will be able to establish a permanent base of operation that would employ at least 150 people in your county. The money that the county receives from the lease and taxes will pay for more community services. A lumber mill in the area will bring other companies that use wood to make their products. The owner of a large furniture company has already told me he would be interested in building a small factory next to one of our sawmills.”

Wildlife Biologist:

“This land has the most wintering bald eagles in the world. Since our national symbol is an endangered species, this area is important habitat. This means that the government could make this area a bald eagle refuge. Buildings and operating this refuge will create at least 75 jobs. If the timber operation is allowed in the area, logs jamming the river will destroy fishing grounds. When trees are cut, silt will run off into the rivers, decreasing stream quality and killing fish. The fish are an important food source for wintering eagles. There will be destruction of eagle roosting sites, and the general noise of a logging operation would disturb the eagles. I strongly urge you to establish a bald eagle wildlife refuge in this area so that future generations will be able to view our majestic national symbol.”

