

Endangered, Threatened, or Extinct Mollusks

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Subject: Science
Skills : research
Duration: ongoing
Group size: one class
Setting: classroom
Vocabulary: endangered, threatened, extinct, mollusk,
SC Science Standards: Grade 6-8 – IA1b2, IA1C1,2, IA2c, IA7a. Grade 8 – IIA3a.b.c.

Objectives

Students will learn:

- 1) what **endangered, threatened, and extinct** means;
- 2) what **mollusks** in your area are endangered or threatened and what mollusks have become extinct;
- 3) why mollusks become endangered, threatened, or extinct; and
- 4) what we can do to help them.

Background

In 1973, the United States passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This act makes it illegal for Americans to import or trade any endangered or threatened animal or product made from an endangered or threatened animal unless it is used for an approved scientific purpose or to enhance the survival of the species (Miller, 2000). The word endangered means threatened with extinction. Species that are endangered have so few individuals remaining that the species as a whole could soon become extinct in all or most of its natural range. The word threatened means that the species is still abundant in most of its natural range but

could soon become endangered because of its decline in number. The word extinct means that the species has completely disappeared from its natural range altogether. When people think about endangered, threatened, and extinct animals, those that are cute and fuzzy usually come to mind, such as the panda bear and Florida panther. But species both big and small are becoming endangered, threatened, and extinct everyday, including insects and mollusks. This research activity will focus on the mollusks that are endangered, threatened, and extinct and the steps we can take to help reverse the situation.

Materials

- mollusk reference books (list provided on page #)

Procedure

Have the class define the words endangered, threatened, and extinct. Ask them what words mean the opposite of endangered, threatened, and extinct. Make a list of all the animals and plants they can think of that are either endangered, threatened, or extinct asking for ideas of why these animals and plants may be in decline. Reference books that are available in the room or library can give students ideas for animals that can be included in these lists. Also have them search through books to find mollusks that are endangered, threatened, or extinct. Have each student pick a mollusk that is

endangered, threatened, or extinct and research the species. Not only should they research the basics about the species, but also why it is in decline and what each person can do to help the loss of all mollusk species. Below are three internet sites you can go to find more information about mollusk conservation:

- <http://arches.uga.edu/~amylyne/COA/COAconsendlist.html>
- <http://endangered.fws.gov/>
- <http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/pubs/specieslist.html>