Wonderful Wildlife!

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Animals in the wild hold a special fascination for young children. Use these activities to help them learn more about endangered and disappearing animals and how they can be a part of saving them.

Build a Zoo!

Exploring the sense of touch, writing

Little ones can make their own zoo with the magic of play dough! Provide colorful play dough, plastic toy animals, craft sticks, and index cards. Youngsters use the play dough to make enclosures for the animals. Then they "write" animal names and zoo signs on the index cards, tape them to craft sticks, and stand them up in the play dough. Remind youngsters that zoos help animals that might be struggling in the wild *and* give us a chance to see these beautiful animals up close!

Tip: These crafts look terrific on a bulletin board decorated with blue paper and green streamers (seaweed). Give your display the title, "Protect Endangered Animals!"

Super Sea Turtle

Developing fine-motor skills

Here's an arts-and-crafts project that spotlights an endangered species-the green sea turtle! Explain to your little ones that some animals are endangered. This means that there are not many of them left. Further explain that the green sea turtle is one of these animals that needs to be protected. Show students photos of the green sea turtle. (An Internet search will turn up many options.) Then have little ones celebrate this endangered animal with an engaging craft!

Materials for each child:
- 9" x 12" sheet of green construction paper
- two 5" green construction paper circles
- 3.5" green construction paper circle
- Bubble Wrap cushioning material with large bubbles
- tempera paint: green, white, blue
- sponge piece
- glue

Setup: Cut a large teardrop shape from the sheet of paper to make the turtle's body. Then cut the two five-inch circles in half.

Steps:
1. Dab paint onto the Bubble Wrap to create a thick layer. Press the turtle body onto the Bubble Wrap, transferring paint onto the paper. Remove the paper and allow the paint to dry.
2. Glue the four semicircles to the body to create flippers.
3. Glue the circle to the body to create a head.

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Zoo Listen and Do!

Gross-motor skills, following directions

Ask students if they have visited a zoo and, if they have, what they saw there. For each animal named, prompt little ones to move like that animal. Then talk about how zoos help to preserve animals that are disappearing in the wild. Next, give each child a copy of the page provided. Then read aloud the directions below to encourage students to complete a zoo listen and do!

Directions:

1. Trace the letters *z-o-o.* That spells *zoo*.
2. Point to the rhino. Now color it. Certain types of rhinos are endangered. That means they are disappearing in the wild. Zoos can help endangered animals.
3. Circle the giraffe. Giraffes are the tallest animals in the world!
4. Color the tiger. Some tigers are endangered just like the rhino.
5. Find the monkey. What sound does the word *monkey* begin with? Write an *M* above the monkey.

Protect the Animals

Participating in a rhyming song

Emphasize to youngsters how important and special animals in the wild are by leading them in performing this action song!

(sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

On the land and in the sea,
Move right hand horizontally; then wiggle like waves.
Animals are wild and free.
Throw arms outward.
Running, flying, swimming too—
Hold up one, two, and three fingers.
One big herd or just a few.
Move hands far apart and then close together.
Please protect them, one and all,
Shake finger.
From the large down to the small!
Hold hand up high and then down low.

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Name _____

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