



"WILD ANIMALS ARE WONDERFUL, BUT THEY'RE NOT PETS!"



Why This Booklet?

The Association of Sanctuaries(TAOS), a national nonprofit organization that accredits superior wild, farmed, and companion animal sanctuaries, developed this booklet with the aim of creating empathy and respect in children for wild and exotic animals in order to prevent their being kept as pets.

Facts regarding the keeping of wild animals as pets include:

People keep wild or exotic creatures as pets for a variety of reasons: as display or decoration, status or trophy, curiosity or novelty, baby or child substitute, or because they are "cute."

Breeders and pet stores play on the public's demand for baby wild animals, selling them as "pets." But when the novelty of having a wild or exotic pet fades or the animal's adolescent or adult demands become unmanageable, these creatures are relegated to cages in backyards, garages, basements, or worse.

Some are resold, reentering the exotic animals market to be resold to roadside zoos, become exotic meat, food for other carnivores, or trophies in canned hunts.

Only a few arrive at sanctuaries while many are abandoned or killed.

Whether large or small, native or exotic, captive bred or imported, wild animals kept as pets suffer immensely from confinement, improper diet, separation from their own kind, and surgeries performed to try to tame or make them less dangerous.

Estimates suggest that, depending on the species, up to 90% of wild and exotic animals do not survive the first year as a "pet."

For humans, the misguided attempt to make a wild animal a pet brings disappointment, heartbreak, and guilt, not to mention the risks of disease, injury, or death.

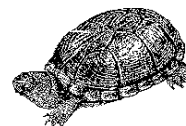
This booklet does not attempt to address all of these problems. Rather, it aims to engender in children respect and empathy for wild animals and their lives in nature in contrast to the limited lives they would experience as pets.

Introducing the Booklet

The reading level is set at about the 3rd grade, so younger children will need assistance or even to be read to while older children may read the booklet on their own. However, we recommend that, when the booklet is first introduced, it be read aloud in a group setting so that all members of the group can initially go over the written text and look at the images together.

To assist the children to identify the animals in the booklet's drawings, they are, from top to bottom:

Page 1: *snowy owl, raccoon, prairie dog, raccoon and baby raccoon, chipmunk (in bottom left corner).*





Page 2: *bear and baby bear in tree, prairie dogs, foxes*

Page 3: *opossum family, prairie dog, baby bobcat on limb*

Page 4: *cougar, badger, mud turtle.*

Please note: The following animals are also mentioned in the booklet, though their images are not included: a *tiger, monkey, parrot, snake, and wolf*. Further, these animals are only a sampling of the many wild animals unfortunately being captured, bred, and sold as pets.

After introducing the booklet and reading its text together, the following questions might be used to continue familiarizing the children with the booklet:

Which animal shown in the booklet is the smallest? Which is the largest?

How many birds are shown? What kind?

Which animal appears in the booklet three different times?

Which animals are mentioned in the booklet but whose images are not included?

Children might also be encouraged to look at the border around each page and to identify that it is made of images of trees, a visual suggestion that wild animals belong in their natural habitat whether it is a forest, desert, jungle, ocean, or pond, but not in our homes.

To further engage children, ask:

What do you think a tiny baby monkey or mountain lion cub would feel taken away from his or her mother?

Do you think an animal that naturally lives free in the jungle or the mountains would be happy in captivity?

Would a bird such as a parrot who loves to fly be happy living in a cage?

How would it be never to live with others of your own kind?

What do you think happens to “pet” lizards, turtles, snakes, or frogs fed a boring, incomplete diet of manufactured foods instead of the wild foods they eat in their natural homes?

Activities (See below for National Standards Addressed)

Drawing Activity

Draw an animal going about life in her or his natural home. Then draw the same animal showing his or her life in a cage as a pet. Present the two drawings to the other members of the group.

Writing Activity

Based on a drawing from the booklet or on the two drawings created in the drawing activity above, write a story about the animal. You can tell the story yourself, or you can let the animal tell his or her own story.

Drama Activity

Pretend that you are one of the animals mentioned or shown in the booklet. Act out for the group how you imagine life would be for the animal in his or her natural home versus life in a cage or a pen.

Research Activity

To find out more about the animals mentioned or shown in the booklet, as well as other wild animals, visit your school or community library for books and videos, and visit the following web sites:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/coloringbook/archive>

This site includes pages to print and color, plus more information on each animal.

<http://www.kidsplanet.org>

Sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife, this site is specifically designed for children.

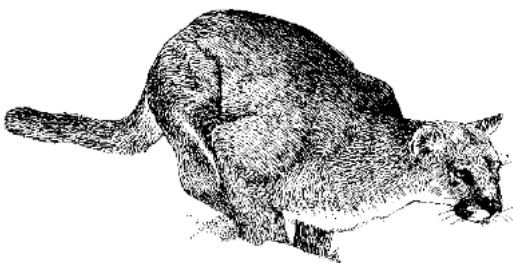


<http://wcs.org/7617>

The Wildlife Conservation Society has designed this site for children.

<http://www.thewildones.org/index.html>

A children's site sponsored by the Wildlife Trust.



<http://www.nwf.org/kids>

The National Wildlife Federation's site for children.

<http://www.indiana.edu/~animal/fun.html>

A fun site, sponsored by the University of Indiana, with interactive games focused on animal behavior. Suitable for both younger and older children.

<http://www.nwf.org/keepthewildalive>

An additional site sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation, useful for educators as well as younger and older children.

<http://www.enature.com/guides>

An site for older children with information on many different wild animals.

<http://www.wildlifesearch.com>

This site provides web links to information for older children on over 76 wild animals, including 11 that appear in the TAOS booklet.

National Standards Addressed by these Activities

National Language Arts Standards, sponsored by National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association:

Language Arts : NL-ENG.K-12.4 Communication Skills

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Language Arts: NL-ENG.K-12.8 Developing Research Skills

Students use a variety of technological and information resources(e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Language Arts: NL-ENG.K-12.12

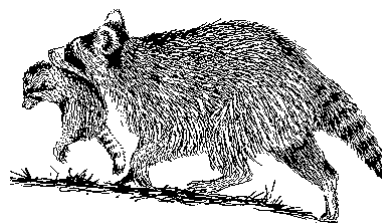
Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

National Science Education Standards published by National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council:

Sciences: NS.K-4.3 Life Science

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop understanding of

- The characteristics of organisms
- Life cycle of organisms
- Organisms and environments



Excellence in Environmental Education Guidelines for Learning (K-12)
published by the North American Association for Environmental Education:

Guidelines under Strand 1—Questioning and Analysis Skills, A) Questioning

Learners are able to develop questions that help them learn about the environment and do simple investigations.

Generate ideas and questions about objects, organisms, events, places, and relationships in the environment.

Identify questions they are likely to be able to answer by combining their own observations and investigations of the environment with existing information.

Pose questions based on experiences in their own community and local environment as well as from other sources, such as journalistic reports about the environment.

Additional Teacher Resources

www.nahee.org/research_evaluation/documents.asp#rnr2

The National Association for Humane and Environmental Education web site posts several articles especially helpful in working with children's attitudes to animals:

“Kindness and Compassion: Convincing the Boys”

“Wildlife through a Child's Eyes”

“Young Children's Beliefs about Animals”

<http://naaee.org>

The North American Association for Environmental Education's web site links to an array of resources for educators.

www.taosanctuaries.org

The Association of Sanctuaries (TAOS) web site provides additional information on the TAOS Project to Prevent Wildlife as Pets plus additional links to more information on the problems associated with keeping wildlife as pets.

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