

# CONSERVATION CARTOONS

*Students read and create cartoons about endangered and threatened species and discuss ways they can help protect species in their own lives.*

## SCIENCE STANDARDS

### CORRELATION

SC03-S4C3-01,  
SC04-S4C4-02,  
SC03-S4C3-05,  
SC03-S3C1-02,  
SC03-S3C1-01&02

## OBJECTIVES

Students should:

- Analyze conservation cartoons to understand their conservation message.
- Describe the range of opinions that surround many conservation issues.
- Develop their own conservation cartoons to reflect some of the issues surrounding endangered and threatened species conservation.

## BACKGROUND

Cartoons often provide insightful commentary on a broad array of issues. Conservation and endangered species issues are no exception. With this activity, students will interpret and analyze conservation cartoons, then create cartoons of their own to reflect some of the endangered species topics they have learned about in class and in the Desert Museum outreach program. They will also discuss ways that they can take action in their own lives to help protect endangered and threatened species.

## GETTING READY

- 1) Make a copy of *Student Handout - Conservation Cartoons* for each student.
- 2) Gather the other materials listed in the left column of the next page.

## SETTING THE STAGE

- 1) Ask the students to define conservation. (In this context, conservation refers to planned management of natural resources and changes in human behavior to protect and preserve species. Anything they suggest that has to do with preservation or protection of resources or species is appropriate.)
- 2) Ask if they think conservation is a term that only applies to endangered and threatened species. (no) Explain that there are regulations protecting many animals and plants, even if they are not on the Endangered Species List. For example, do they know that all species of Sonoran Desert reptiles and amphibians are regulated by the Arizona Game and Fish Department? This means they cannot be collected or hunted without a permit. (For more information on Arizona's wildlife regulations, you can contact the Arizona Game and Fish

Department at 520-628-5376 or 1-800-824-2456.)

- 3) Divide the class into groups of four students. Pass out a copy of *Student Handout - Conservation Cartoons* to each student. Explain that the leopard frog, green iguana, gila monster, and desert tortoise are listed or considered for listing as endangered or threatened.

## DOING THE ACTIVITY

- 1) Have the students read and analyze each cartoon. Write the following directions on the board:
  - a. As a group, identify and discuss the conservation message of each cartoon.
  - b. Give your opinion about each cartoon's message. Do you agree or disagree with the author's position? Why?
- 2) Tell the students that they will get to work as a group to design and create their own cartoon with a conservation message. Have them think about the endangered and threatened species they have learned about. Explain that they can create a cartoon that illustrates the issues surrounding why the species is endangered or threatened, opinions about the species, or ways that they think they can take action in their own lives to help conserve species.
- 3) Have each group design and create its own cartoons with a conservation message.
- 4) Have them present their work to the rest of the class. Discuss the meanings of the cartoons.
- 5) Display their cartoons in the classroom or around the school.

# CONSERVATION CARTOONS

## EXTENSION

Learning about issues of endangered and threatened species can often lead a person to feel despair about the prospects of protecting species into the future. But there are actions we can take in our own lives to help conserve species. Here are some suggestions for activities students can do at home or that you can do with your students.

- 1) Brainstorm ways they think they can make a difference for species conservation in their own lives. List them on the board.
- 2) Then list some of the suggestions found in the box “A Few Things You Can Do For Endangered Species” below. Maybe they will want to take one up as a class!

## MATERIALS

- a copy of *Student Handout - Conservation Cartoons* for each student.\*
- markers or colored pencils
- drawing paper
- other examples of conservation or endangered species theme cartoons you can find (optional)

These cartoons are courtesy of the Tucson Herpetological Society and artist Dennis Caldwell.  
[www.arts.arizona.edu/herp/clrbk.html](http://www.arts.arizona.edu/herp/clrbk.html)

**VOCABULARY**  
**Conservation**  
**Endangered**  
**Threatened**

## A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR ENDANGERED (OR ANY) SPECIES

1. Educate yourself. Then teach your fellow schoolmates, families, and friends about species conservation. Make up your own materials or borrow information from local libraries. There are lots of resources you can use!
2. Conserve resources in your own life. Turn off lights when you are not in a room. Turn off the tap when you are brushing your teeth. Carpool or ride a bike. Recycle as much as you can. All the resources we use come from somewhere. Most of the time they come from places where species make their homes. By using fewer resources, we keep species homes intact.
3. Make your campus a safe place for wildlife. Planting native trees, shrubs, and wildflower gardens provides shelter and food for local wildlife that would otherwise be displaced by development.
4. Look in your own “backyard.” Do some research to see if there are any habitats important to endangered species near your school. Does your school own land that is habitat for an endangered species?
5. Write a letter. You can support listing of an endangered or threatened species by writing to the Secretary of the Interior. Let your representatives or senators know you support protection of species and their habitat.
6. Write to local or school newspapers. You can reach a lot of people and let them know about important conservation issues.
7. Find out about conservation plans in your community. For example, in Pima County, people are working on the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. See how you can get involved.

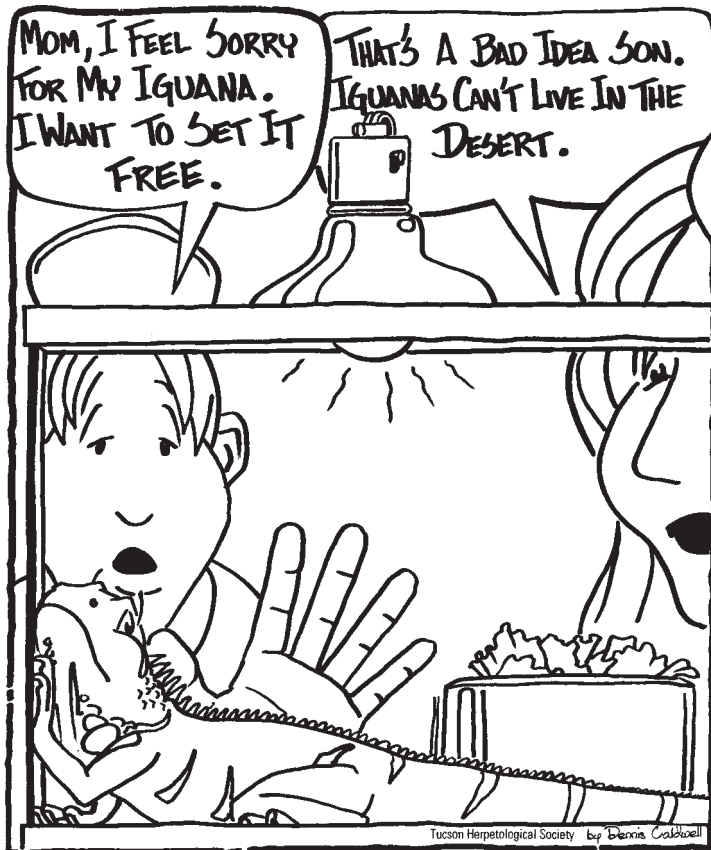
# CONSERVATION CARTOONS - STUDENT HANDOUT



Never bring a tortoise home as a pet. In Arizona it's illegal to remove a tortoise from the wild and illegal to rerelease any animal back into the wild. Relocated tortoises will not survive in unfamiliar surroundings and may carry disease that could spread to wild tortoises. Never pick up a tortoise. As a natural defense it will urinate when molested. This is water that the tortoise has stored. In the desert this tortoise could die of thirst before his next drink.



With only 10% of its former habitat left, whole populations of Leopard Frogs in the Southwest are continuing to disappear. Because of threats like heavy metal poisoning, acid rain, and introduced non-native species including bullfrogs, sportfish, and crayfish, Leopard Frogs are in danger of extinction. It's up to us to eliminate these threats and to protect these fragile riparian areas.



Never release pets into the wild. Besides being illegal in most states, captive animals carry diseases and parasites that may be fatal to wild animal populations. Most pets have lost their instincts for survival and soon die of thirst, starvation or predation. If any do survive, they may become a pest or out compete native wildlife, endangering sensitive species.



Despite the Gila Monsters ferocious name and the fact that it is venomous, the Gila Monster is actually very slow moving and docile when left alone and never a threat to humans. Every year as urban development encroaches on the desert, more of these rare and legally protected animals are buried alive by bulldozers and run over by cars on our busy roads. You can help Gila Monsters from being run over, by helping your parents watch the road when driving through desert areas.