

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION: A CALLING OF THE HEART

4th-6th Grade Discussion Guide

Developed by: Emily Nienhaus-Stahl

SCIENCE CATEGORIES

Wildlife, Medicine, Sustainability, Ethics

TIMEFRAME

2 lessons, 30 minutes each

MATERIALS

Veterinarian and Animal rehabilitator activity photos (attached on pages 9-10), Worksheets (2 total), Internet access (optional)

KEY WORDS

Veterinarian, Rehabilitation, Habituation, Imprinting, Impact, Prejudice



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Observe and research anatomy and characteristics that give each species its unique needs, and how it might affect their rehabilitation.
- Explore veterinary medicine and wildlife rehabilitation decision making processes.
- Determine how they can support wildlife rehabilitation and lessen their impact on wildlife by the choices they and their families personally make.

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

In this activity group, the class will use role-play to get an idea of what veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators do when an animal arrives at the hospital, and examine whether or not our preconceived impressions of wildlife are true.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM VIDEO 1:

"Into the Outdoors @ Home: Veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators both offer care for animals. How are these jobs similar and how are they different?"

- Typical veterinarians:
 - work with a few species,
 - do preventative care like vaccines and health checks
 - diagnose degenerative diseases in pets
 - prescribe medications
 - do emergency surgeries when pets are injured or in danger of disease



- Wildlife rehabbers:
 - work with over 150 species
 - train with other rehabbers
 - provide med care and specific feeding schedules
 - care and cleaning regimens (to keep animals healthy and keep from spreading diseases or parasites)
 - spend 70-80 hour work weeks in the summer to care for baby animals through feeding every 15-30 minutes and keeping them clean
 - have to raise money for their work as well as educate people on how to respond to injured wildlife. They put in a lot of hours for not much pay, because they want to help wildlife and make the world a better place
 - care for animals for a short time to get them ready for release
- According to Amanda Falch, who is a licensed wildlife rehabber and also a veterinarian:
 - These are very different professions that intersect at the point of caring for an injured animal.
 - Rehabbers have to help identify the animal and determine by phone if it needs care, then decide how to provide that through nutrition and teaching young animals how to find food and shelter and how to identify their own species and exhibit social behaviors.
 - Wildlife rehabbers have to pay attention to the physical and mental care of each animal so they are healthy in both ways when they return to the wild.
 - Vets do surgeries for injured wildlife, but with a difference than working with pets. Wildlife don't want to be with humans, and this puts them under more stress. Vets keep things calm and quiet during treatment. Fortunately, wild animals have a drive to heal and get out to the wild, so they heal quickly.
 - Most animals here have been negatively impacted by humans, and helping them to lessen that impact means a lot to vets like Amanda.
- Why do wildlife hospitals exist? Yvonne Wallace Blane described it in this way: "Why did one nest of rabbits become a center that cares for over 2,000 injured animals in a year? Because there was a need."
 - Through word of mouth they were taking in 600 animals at a time. To get help, they developed an internship program to train rehabbers and help them to get their licenses to do rehab.
 - You can become a rehabber by contacting a local wildlife hospital and asking what's required. You would need training and licenses and a sponsor who is confident in the skills you've learned from them to help you advance to becoming licensed.
 - The sponsor puts their name on the line for you when you're training to be a rehabilitator, because they are responsible legally for the person they are sponsoring.
 - Volunteers help to do the other tasks that go into running the hospital, like tending to the office, phones, transporting animals and caring for the building and grounds to help trained rehabilitation staff to focus on the animals.
- Advice from rehabbers: "be the person who makes the difference and know that every life matters." Yvonne Wallace



VOCABULARY

VETERINARIAN - a person qualified to treat diseased or injured animals.

REHABILITATION - the action of restoring someone to health or normal life through training and therapy after imprisonment, addiction, or illness or the action of restoring something that has been damaged to its former condition.

HABITUATION - the diminishing of a physiological or emotional response to a frequently repeated stimulus, such as a wild animal no longer being afraid of humans.

IMPRINTING - (of a young animal) comes to recognize (another animal, person, or thing) as a parent or other object of habitual trust.

LEARNING PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION:

In this activity we will explore the challenges that Wildlife First Responders face when rehabilitating wildlife. Before doing the activity, view the video in class titled, "Into the Outdoors @ Home: Veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators both offer care for animals. How are these jobs similar and how are they different?"

ACTIVITY 1: ANIMAL HOSPITAL

You're the Wildlife First Response medical team and you have to research what kind of care the animal needs for its unique kind. In groups of 3-5 students, you'll get a picture of an orphaned animal that looks like it needs help. Two of you are intake veterinarians, the others are the animal rehabilitation care team. Make a plan for how you'll care for this animal until it can be released. Use the worksheet to fill in your plan information.

1. What injuries might this animal be prone to that you should check for? Examples might be falls from a nest, injuries from pet cats or dogs, ingesting or poisoning from man-made objects in the environment, being hurt by cars or other man-made objects.
2. What diseases are common and uncommon for this animal.
3. Might this animal have bacteria, parasites or pest bugs like fleas or lice that you have to be concerned about hurting this animal or spreading to others. What decontamination would you have to do for these pests, and how could you keep the pests from spreading to other animals?
4. What are the nutritional requirements of the animal?

5. What kind of shelter and bedding does the animal need to feel secure and rest?
6. What other safety concerns do you have to plan for to keep the animal and the staff safe?
7. How will you prevent habituation, provide mental stimulation to keep the animal from getting bored, provide socialization with its own kind (if needed) to imprint on its own species and get it ready to return to the wild?

ACTIVITY 2: DISPELLING PREJUDICE TO UNDERSTAND WILDLIFE

Summary: In this activity the class will search for videos of animals that show them in a different light than what they've experienced, as being cared for by humans.

Either in class time or at home, students will search their video platform of choice for videos of wild animals that show them differently than the way they may be prejudiced to think of them. Often adults non-verbally communicate their dislike of wildlife by calling them pests, reacting in fear or disgust or chasing them away. Children see these reactions and may develop a fear or dislike of wildlife before they have the opportunity to form their own opinions through wildlife observations. In order to develop a feeling of connection to wildlife and concern for their well being, each person needs to have positive experiences with wildlife. Ideally, the class would have a live presentation with some wild born education animals (sometimes called Wildlife Ambassadors.)

But if these programs are not available for your school, this activity can stand in place of a live animal program.

Instructions for Wildlife - Human Interaction Video Search:

People tend to fear what they don't know, or even hate them. But meeting someone in person and getting to know them could change your mind. While we might not be able to get some wild animals to the classroom, we can look for wild animals in videos and observe their behavior and personalities. You will use your video platform of choice to search for videos by typing in the searches featured below.

During your search:

A. Be aware that what people post on the internet is not always the right thing to do, or the most ethical thing to do. "Wild animals should stay wild" is what the wildlife experts tell us. The animals often become depressed, sick or destructive in captivity, or could hurt you or other pets. With that being said, we are going to do a search that would help us get to know how these animals that we sometimes fear (and who naturally fear) act when they have become habituated to humans.

B. Remember, if interacting with these animals looks fun to you, you can find out how to get involved with a wildlife rehab hospital in your area! Do not take animals out of the wild.





C. With the knowledge of these ethics in mind, look for videos with the following searches, and think about how your feelings about the type of animal changes before and after viewing the video. Write a few notes on the worksheet before and after viewing the videos.

D. Type these phrases into your search bar and view one or two videos on each search:

- "Taking care of an opossum"
- "Taking care of a skunk"
- "Taking care of a woodchuck"
- "Taking care of a squirrel"
- "Taking care of a raccoon"
- "Taking care of a crow"

CONCLUSION:

To conclude this unit, review the worksheets the students produced. Give students feedback and ask questions based on what they wrote, asking them to fill in details or asking them how they arrived at their conclusions.

EXTENDING THE LESSON (Options for extended/additional activities and lessons)

- Look up your local animal hospital to be aware of where they are so students are prepared to go deeper into their interest if they want to be active in having a positive impact on animals to lessen the negative impact that human activities have on them. Compile a list for the class.
- Volunteer project: Contact a nearby animal hospital or animal shelter and find out what kinds of supplies they need. Organize a drive for items the hospital needs by partnering with the families in your school or businesses like a local grocery store. Wildlife hospitals often have "wish lists" and donation links on their websites.
- Use Video 2 for the Wildlife First Responders episode and associated activities to explore this topic deeper. "Into the Outdoors @ Home: Humans share this planet with wildlife. What are some of the ways that we can protect and care for wild animals?"

RELATED LINKS

- Fellow Mortals Wildlife Hospital in Lake Geneva, WI. fellowmortals.org
- Preparation for Animal Hospital Activity (provides info on medications for which students may ask about. vetspace.2ndchance.info/bird-health-articles/a-wildlife-rehabilitators-guide-to-medications

WORKSHEET FOR ANIMAL HOSPITAL ACTIVITY:

Developed by: Emily Nienhaus-Stahl



Animal: _____ Date: _____

1) Injury description: _____

2) Intake exam notes: _____

3) Disease/pest concerns: _____

4) Nutritional requirements: _____

5) Enclosure set up plan: _____

6) Safety/handling notes: _____

7) Rehabilitation plan: _____



Please fill in every interaction with the animal on the Animal Care History Record including surgeries, medication, feeding, cleaning, weight monitoring and any observations through the day that caregivers need.

Animal Care Record for: _____

Date/Time	Attending Vet/Caregiver	Treatment	Details (types and amounts)
<i>Example: 5/12/22 1:30pm</i>	<i>Dr. Jane Smith, C.G. Sarah Jones assisting</i>	<i>Cleaned and irrigated laceration, 5 stitches, antibiotic topical</i>	<i>Dissolving stitches, Nitrofurazone topical antiseptic</i>

WORKSHEET FOR WILDLIFE - HUMAN INTERACTION VIDEO SEARCH ACTIVITY

Developed by: Emily Nienhaus-Stahl



Video Search Keywords	Your impression of the animal BEFORE viewing the video	Summary of video: what did it show you?	Your impression of the animal AFTER viewing the video
Example: "Taking care of a rat"	Rats are: creepy, dirty, animals that people are afraid of because they can attack you if they get in your house.	A girl had a pet rat and told about its characteristics and habits, and how she takes care of it. The rat was tame.	Rats are: intelligent, clean, affectionate animals that are gentle and loyal as pets that are cared for properly.
"Taking care of an opossum"	Opossums are:		Opossums are:
"Taking care of a skunk"	Skunks are:		Skunks are:
"Taking care of a woodchuck (groundhog)"	Woodchucks are:		Woodchucks are:
"Taking care of a squirrel"	Squirrels are:		Squirrels are:
"Taking care of a raccoon"	Raccoons are:		Raccoons are:
"Taking care of a crow"	Crows are:		Crows are:

VETERINARIAN AND ANIMAL REHABILITATOR ACTIVITY PHOTOS

Developed by: Emily Nienhaus-Stahl



Before doing this activity, it may be useful to view the booklet on the Fellow Mortals website, which details signs of treatable conditions.

Booklet can be found at fellowmortals.org/help-wildlife/wildlife-insights

CAN YOU IDENTIFY WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE ANIMALS IN THE BOTTOM ROW?



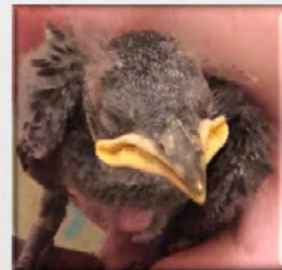
White-tailed deer (head trauma)



Green heron (head trauma, dehydration)



European starling (emaciated, dehydration)





**PATIENT 1: BABY OR FLEDGELING BIRD
(that cannot stand)**

From Web Article Caption:

Nestlings (left) are mostly featherless and helpless birds that should be returned to their nests, if possible. Fledglings (right) are mobile and well-feathered. Fledglings may not be able to fly for the first few days after leaving the nest, but their parents still look after them and are usually nearby. Fledglings rarely need help. Photo of Mountain Bluebird nestling by Anne Elliot via Birdshare: (left); American Robin fledgling by Alex Lamoreaux/Macaulay Library.

Photo and text found on allaboutbirds.org/news/i-found-a-baby-bird-what-do-i-do/, retrieved 1/30/22



**PATIENT 2: BABY OPOSSUMS
(mother died from car collision)**

Expert from web article:

If you find a small opossum that has been separated from its mother and its body is more than 8 inches long (not including the tail) it is old enough to be on its own! If it smaller than this or injured, it will need assistance.

Photo and text found at: waldenspuddle.org/help-for-baby-opossums/ retrieved on 1/30/22



**PATIENT 3: BABY GREY SQUIRREL
(found alone over 2 hours)**

Baby was found on the ground the morning a storm. Presumed that it fell from the nest from high winds. Its eyes are not opened, nor was it crying out anymore for its mother when it was found.

Photo found at: waldenspuddle.org/help-for-baby-squirrels/ retrieved on 1/30/22



The following National Common Core Standards can be met teaching:

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION: A CALLING OF THE HEART

4TH GRADE:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7** Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9** Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.10** By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4.A** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1** Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4** Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

5TH GRADE:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7** Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9** Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10** By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies,



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.5.4

science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7

Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.4

Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

6TH GRADE:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.



CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4

Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS:

5TH GRADE:

5-ESS3-1 Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment. Performance Expectation Grade: 3-5 5