

DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER

Marine Mammals in the News

Grade Level: 6th-8th

Objectives: Students will be able to identify and explain current events in the news that pertain to marine mammals. Students will also be able to identify ways in which humans impact these animals, or are impacted by these animals, in positive or negative ways.

Florida Sunshine State Standards:

Science

SC.G.2.3.4 The student understands that humans are a part of an ecosystem and their activities may deliberately or inadvertently alter the equilibrium in ecosystems.

SC.H.1.3.1 The student knows that scientific knowledge is subject to modification as new information challenges prevailing theories and as a new theory leads to looking at old observations in a new way.

Language Arts

LA.A.1.3.4 The student uses strategies to clarify meaning, such as rereading, note-taking, summarizing, outlining, and writing a grade level-appropriate report.

LA.A.2.3.2 The student identifies the author's purpose and/or point of view in a variety of texts and uses the information to construct meaning.

LA.C.3.3.3 The student speaks for various occasions, audiences, and purposes, including conversations, discussions, projects, and informational, persuasive, or technical presentations.

National Science Education Standards:

Content Standard F (5-8) - Science and Technology in Society Science influences society through its knowledge and world view. Scientific knowledge and the procedures used by scientists influence the way many individuals in society think about themselves, others, and the environment. The effect of science on society is neither entirely beneficial nor entirely detrimental.

Background: Marine mammals are always a hot topic in the news. News stories about marine mammals range from the threats facing wild populations to stranded marine mammals to brand new scientific discoveries. These stories often capture the attention of the public, raise awareness about marine mammals and sometimes become the center of a debate due to the often-controversial nature of the marine mammals. By becoming informed on these topics, students will be able to better understand marine mammals and the issues that surrounding issues. This increased understanding can also equip students with the knowledge necessary to conserve these magnificent creatures. Refer to the ***Threats to Dolphins and Whales*** and ***Manatee*** information files for more information about marine mammal issues frequently spotlighted in the news.



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Materials:

For each student:

- **Marine Mammals in the News** handout
- Sample article
- Highlighter
- Dictionary

Teacher Prep Notes: Examine various print publications and/or Internet news sites to familiarize yourself with the marine mammal topics currently in the news. Select a short sample article to model the process with students. Make copies of the **Marine Mammals in the News** handout and sample article for each student. If desired, you may direct your students to appropriate resources in order to help them find their own articles. Depending on the skill level of the students, it may be preferable to have students search all on their own. This will give them experience browsing various publications, and will give them an opportunity to critically analyze the source and determine its credibility.

Procedures:

1. Ask students to share the resources they might use in order to learn more about current events in their school or community. Students may suggest local marquee, websites, posters, television, Internet, radio, or even word of mouth.
2. Have students discuss which of these resources would be the most reliable.
3. Discuss that some of these same resources can be used to find out about current events across the country, and even across the globe. Just like with local resources, one must make sure that the source of the information is reliable. Not only that, but it is important to identify whether the article is presenting facts or the opinion of the author.
4. Explain to students that they will focus on marine mammals in the news.
5. As a review, have students list animals that are considered marine mammals.
6. Ask students to share past news events that focused on marine mammals. Students may recollect stranding events, discoveries of new species, noise pollution, or the fishing industry, among other topics.
7. Distribute the **Marine Mammals in the News** handout, and review the process with the students.
8. Distribute the sample article to students, and ask them to identify the source. Instruct students to read the article, highlighting or underlining main ideas and supporting details. As the students read, they should also list any words they do not understand.
9. Ask students to use the dictionary to define any words they do not know.
10. Students should then reread the article, highlighting or underlining any additional points they missed the first time.
11. Have students summarize the article according to the instructions provided.
12. Model the presentation for students. Remind them of proper public speaking techniques, and emphasize that students should be presenting information and not just reading off their paper.



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13. Assign students the task of finding their own article and completing a write-up. Make sure students receive feedback from today's activity before their assignment is due.
14. Schedule a date for students to complete their write-up and present their article. Make sure to allow students enough time to find an article from a reputable source!

Wrap Up: Ask students to list four new things that they learned from listening to the presentations given by their peers.

Taking it Further:

- Ask students to follow up on the news story they originally presented.
- Re-assign this task on a regular basis so students constantly find new information.

Resources:

- American Cetacean Society “Issues” Page <http://www.acsonline.org/issues/index.html>
- The Underwater Times www.underwatertimes.com : This website contains links to articles pertaining to marine life. These links come from a variety of publications—some more reputable than others—but is a good start for finding articles!

