



Lesson 1: Learning from the Past

Theme

Human activities can significantly impact wildlife, for better or worse. Wildlife species are considered a renewable resource that must be used and conserved wisely.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the timeline of wildlife conservation history in America, with a small lens focus on the effects of European colonization on wildlife in New England. Students will learn about the issues posed by the overexploitation of natural resources and the effects of wildlife regulations and restoration.

Corresponding Activities for this Lesson

- Tragedy of the Commons

Materials

- Bowls
- Tokens, beads, or beans (something small to represent fish for Tragedy of the Commons activity)
- Black bear skull
- Beaver skull and pelt
- Wildlife conservation history laminated cards

Lesson *(This lesson can be taught multiple ways, depending on the age group):*

- 1. Explain to students that today we will be learning about the history of people and wildlife in America, but with a special focus on Rhode Island. Tell students that to start things off, they will be working together to create a living timeline of events.**
 - There are 17 events total that span from pre-1600 to present day. Events are represented on two sets of cards. One set is designed for younger students; events

are numbered, and also include the date of the event with pictures. The other set is designed for older students; events are dated and include some discussion prompts.

- Depending on the number of students, assign pairs or individuals to one of the 17 events in the lesson outline.
2. **For younger children: Ask everyone to work together to hold up their cards and stand in order from number 1 to 17. When students have arranged themselves in order, ask the group or individual holding each card to describe the pictures on the card and maybe take a guess what is going on in the picture.**
 - After students have described what is on their card, explain the event. Descriptions of each event can be found in the notes section of the PowerPoint.
 - As you work your way through the timeline, ask students if they have ever heard of any of these events. How do they feel about each one?
 - When you reach the bear and beaver events, pass around the bear and beaver artifacts for students to explore.
 3. **For older children: Give the students some time to learn about the event they were assigned and gather information on it. This may require the use of additional resources such as books or websites.**
 - Information on the events does not need to be written down as long as after the allotted time the student has a good understanding of their event.
 - Alternatively, students could work together to create a bulleted list of facts or a graphic organizer to share information about their event.
 - Bring everyone back together as a group to arrange their events in order. Ask each group to teach their peers about their event as the experts on that event. Support or supplement information as needed.
 4. **After students have completed the timeline activity, follow up with the Tragedy of the Commons activity to illustrate the effects of overexploitation of wildlife resources.**