

Predators, NOT Pets

Teacher's Lesson Plan
Time: 40 minutes



Introduction:

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge's mission is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected big cats with an emphasis on tigers, lions, leopards, and cougars. Our vision is through public education we can work to end the Exotic Animal Trade, making sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek no longer necessary; together, we can preserve and protect these magnificent predators in the wild for our children's future.

This lesson plan provides students the ability to identify what a predator is, why Turpentine Creek has to rescue and care for them, and that they are meant to be in the wild, not kept as pets.

Background:

Currently there are more tigers in backyards as pets (~5,000) in the United States than in the entire wild in Asia (~3,800). By teaching our students early on about how wildlife should be treated, we can make a huge impact on their survival. This lesson plan was developed to aid educators in teaching students the difference between domesticated and wild animals, why wild animals are not good pets, and what we can do to help save wildlife for the future. By learning how to protect wildlife, we can make a difference in animal welfare, saving animals from a life of abuse and neglect.

Title: Predators, NOT Pets

Theme: Predators are dangerous animals who hunt for their food, and use their skills as a predator for survival. Wild animals do not lose their natural hunting instincts and protective nature when taken out of the wild, and placed into captivity. Wild animals deserve a life of freedom. However, when people try and keep them as pets, they lose their fear of humans, cannot care for themselves, and cannot be released into the wild. Sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek save these animals from people who do not care for them, and provide them with the most natural life possible in captivity free from human contact.

Objective: Identify differences between predators and pets, and wild versus domesticated animals. Students will understand the issues facing exotic pet ownership, and what they can do to help protect wildlife for the future.

Resources: Lesson plan for appropriate grade level, printed activity books, and vocabulary list
Please feel free to use any worksheets appropriate for your classroom

Teacher Materials: dry erase board and marker, pictures or videos of animals, crayons/markers, pencil.

*Worksheets are for educational, classroom or personal use only, and should not be shared publicly, reproduced, or posted Online at any time. Please contact TCWR's Education Department at: education@tcwr.org with questions or concerns.



Procedure 5th grade:

5-ESS3-1

- 1) Ask students to brainstorm what kind of native predators live in the wild where they live and form a list. What do these animals need in their environment to survive?
- 2) As a **community**, how can we work together to help **protect** the wildlife around us?
- 3) Have your students complete the natural habitat drawing and discussion on their own, without outside help. **Worksheets 3-4**
- 4) Research project: Have each student work together or individually to research their favorite predator and complete the research sheet in the activity pages. **Worksheet 5**
- 5) Ask students to compare a predator and a pet. How are they the same? How are they different? **Worksheet 6**
- 6) After brainstorming, discuss with students that wild animals are often kept as pets. Ask them if they think it is a good idea to keep an animal that can hurt you? **Worksheet 7**
- 7) Add to the list examples of characteristics of predators, what they need for survival, and the dangers of owning them as a pet.
- 8) Compare the different environments that tigers live. Are they being protected? **Worksheet 8**
- 9) Have students think about what places in their community have wild animals in captivity. What are these places called, and how do they protect wildlife or domestic animals? Reading assignment, **worksheet 9**
- 10) Why are some tigers in the United States not protected? **Worksheets 10-12**
- 11) Vocabulary quiz: Use the vocabulary list to fill in the blanks in class or as a homework assignment.
- 12) Allow students to work individually or as a group. They may use their vocabulary list to describe the pictures, color the picture sheets, and you should read the instructions as a class before getting started.

Discussion:

- 1) What is something new that you learned about animals?
- 2) Should wild animals be kept as pets? Why?
- 3) How can we help save wild animals?
- 4) Where should wild animals be kept in captivity?
 - a) A zoo or sanctuary
- 5) What kind of animals are good pets?
- 6) What is the problem with having different laws for every state?

Conclusion:

- 1) Wild animals should never be kept as pets. They are “**predators, not pets**”-say as a class together
- 2) We can protect wildlife by saving their natural habitat and keeping them wild.
- 3) Domesticated animals are okay to keep as pets, and need to be cared for just like we care for ourselves.
- 4) Sanctuaries are important to save wild animals from captivity, giving them forever care.



Vocabulary List

- Captivity: **not able** to roam free, need people to survive
- Carnivore: an animal that eats **only meat**
- Conservation: **protecting** of natural environment and wildlife
- Dangerous: able or likely to **cause harm** or injury
- Domestic Animal: tame or **friendly**, lives with humans, dogs, cats, farm animals
- Endangered Species: a type of animal seriously at risk of **disappearing forever**, becoming **extinct**
- Environment: **surroundings** or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives
- Exotic Animal: **not native** or from the area that it lives in, introduced by people
- Extinct: a species, family, or group of animals that **no longer exist** or are living
- Freedom: not being restricted, able to **move around freely** and easily, wild
- Herbivore: an animal that eats **only plants**
- Omnivore: an animal that eats **both** meat and plants
- Pet: a **domestic or tame** animal kept by people for companionship or pleasure
- Predator: an animal that kills other animals for **food** to survive or live
- Refuge: **Free** from harm, kept in captivity
- Sanctuary: a place of **refuge or safety** in captivity, providing care for wild animals
- Tame: a **not dangerous** animal or frightened of people, domesticated animals
- Welfare: health, **happiness**, and well-being
- Wild Animal: **not domestic** or tame, lives in natural environment, not with people



Draw your favorite predator below in its natural habitat.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a predator in its natural habitat.

Now draw your favorite domesticated animal and where it lives.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a domesticated animal and where it lives.

Natural Habitat Discussion: Before Research:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite predator? _____
- 2) Where do you think it lives? _____
- 3) What other animals might live there? _____
- 4) What do you think it eats? _____
- 5) What would happen if it lost its home? _____
- 6) Why is it not a good pet? _____

- 7) How can you help protect your favorite wild animal? _____

Pet Picture:

- 1) What is the name of your favorite pet? _____
- 2) Where does it live? _____
- 3) What does it eat? _____
- 4) Why is it different from a wild animal? _____

- 5) How is it a good pet? _____

- 6) How can you help make sure it is happy and healthy? _____

Once you are finished, you will discuss your picture with the class. Then complete research page below to check your answers and to learn more about your predator.



Predator Research



Name:

Teacher:

Instructions: Research your favorite predator and answer questions below

Animal Name:

Scientific Name:

Family Name:

Classification:

Endangered Status:

Habitat:

Lifespan:

What does it eat?

Picture of Animal

How big is your animal?

Interesting facts about your animal (2-3 complete sentences)

Citation:



Predator

Both

Pet

Label the tigers face words below, and learn how tigers use their unique bodies to survive.



What does the tiger use each body part for? Guess below, and check the answer sheet!

Eyes: _____

Ears: _____

Tongue: _____

Whiskers: _____

Nose: _____

Stripes: _____

Fur: _____

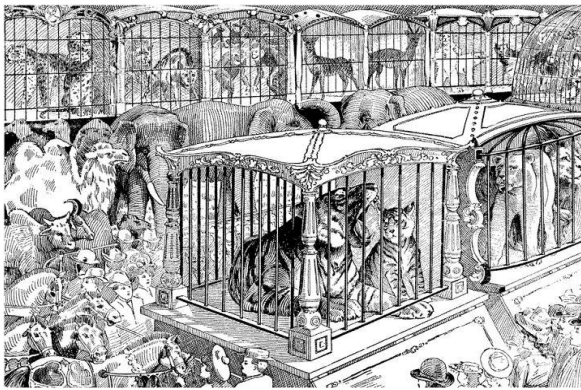
7 Teeth: _____

Wild vs. Captivity

In the 4 environments below, explain why or why not a tiger can be protected in its environment.



1) Tiger in the Wild



2) Tiger in a Circus



3) Tiger in a Sanctuary or Zoo



4) Tiger cub without mother

Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge's Mission Reading Assignment

Currently there are over 5,000 tigers in backyards as pets in the United States than in the entire wild in Asia, where there are only 3,800. By learning about how wildlife should be treated, we can make a huge impact on their survival and making sure they do not become extinct. There are 5 different types of tigers in the wild, and all of them are endangered. If they disappear, they can never be seen again in their natural habitat. Tigers are an important part of the ecosystem, creating a balance between all plants, animals. They are called an "umbrella species", by protecting tigers and their habitat, the other plants and animals are also protected.

Wild animals do not make good pets, and by keeping them in captivity, they can never go back into the wild. This is because they have not been taught by their mothers how to hunt or find territory, and would not have the skills to survive. Even when people have to take care of them, tigers are still wild, and extremely dangerous. They do not lose their instincts of being a predator. You cannot tame a tiger by raising it from a cub. Once a tiger gets bigger and bigger, many people who own them as pets no longer want to care for their dangerous animal. This is why Turpentine Creek is important, because they rescue animals who cannot go back into the wild, and give them a natural life in captivity.

The mission of Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge is to provide lifetime refuge for abandoned, abused, and neglected big cats with an emphasis on tigers, lions, leopards, and cougars. Our vision is through public education we can work to end the Exotic Animal Trade, making sanctuaries like Turpentine Creek no longer necessary; together, we can preserve and protect these magnificent predators in the wild for our future.

How you can help Turpentine Creek protect tigers, big cats, and bears is to share what you have learned with your friends and family, do not keep dangerous wild animals as pets, and do not visit places that let you touch or, play with, or pet dangerous animals like big cats. Only visit places that are real sanctuaries or zoos, rescuing animals and providing them with forever care, free from human contact. Remember that predators are NOT pets, and you can protect wildlife by speaking up for them.



Below is a map of the United States. Use the key, and color each state. If you live in the U.S. circle your state



Green: Washington (WA), Oregon (OR), California (CA), Arizona (AZ), Alaska (AL), Montana (MT), Wyoming (WY), Utah (UT), Colorado (CO), New Mexico (NM), Nebraska (NE), Kansas (KS), Minnesota (MN), Iowa (IA), Illinois (IL), Louisiana (LA), Ohio (OH), Michigan (MI), Kentucky (KY), Georgia (GA), South Carolina (SC), New Jersey (NJ), Maryland (MD), Connecticut (CT), New Hampshire (NH), Vermont (VT), New York (NY), Massachusetts (MA), Hawaii (HI)

Idaho (ID), North Dakota (ND), South Dakota (SD), Oklahoma (OK), Texas (TX), Indiana (IN), Missouri (MO), Mississippi (MS), Pennsylvania (PA), Maine (ME), Rhode Island (RI), Delaware (DE)

Blue: Arkansas (AR), Tennessee (TN), West Virginia (WV), Virginia (VA), Florida (FL)

Red: Nevada (NV), Wisconsin (WI), Alabama (AL), North Carolina (NC)



Color Key

Green states ban all dangerous felines as pets

Purple states have no ban, but require a permit to own dangerous animals

Blue states ban some exotic felines, but have regulation for native animals

Red states have no laws; people can have whatever they want

Discussion Reading: 50 states have 50 different laws if people can keep dangerous exotic animals as pets. Alabama, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Nevada have NO laws, and citizens can own whatever they want. There are not enough professionals like police officers and animal control to make sure they are being taken care of, and there are over **10,000** big cats like tigers, lions, leopards, mountain lions, and small cats that are kept as pets.

Currently there are over 7,000 tigers kept as pets in the state of Texas, and only 3,800 tigers found in the wild in Asia. Tigers are an endangered species, and will become extinct in the wild if we do not protect them. Predators are extremely dangerous animals, and are not tame or friendly when raised from a baby. They still have all of their natural instincts, sharp claws and teeth, and are very difficult to take care of. Many cats become abused and neglected because owners cannot handle their wildness, and cannot afford to feed or care for them properly.

Big cats are predators not pets! Wild animals that are born in captivity can never be released into the wild. They depend on people to feed and care for them, and would not know how to survive on their own. Keeping tigers and other wild animals as pets does not help their conservation in the wild.

To help big cats and other wild animals in captivity, the laws must change so people can no longer own them as a pet. Only zoos and sanctuaries who know exactly what large predators should be able to care for them. A real zoo or sanctuary will never go inside with a predator, play with their babies, or use them for entertainment. They provide the best care possible for animals that cannot be released into the wild. We can protect them by not keeping them as pets, and not going anywhere that lets you play with baby animals or makes them perform.



Map and Reading Discussion Questions:

1) What do you think is the problem with 50 different laws for big cat ownership?

2) Why should predators not allowed to be kept as pets?

3) Name 3 reasons why predators are dangerous:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4) Can you think of reasons why tigers are endangered?

5) How can we help protect tigers and other endangered species?

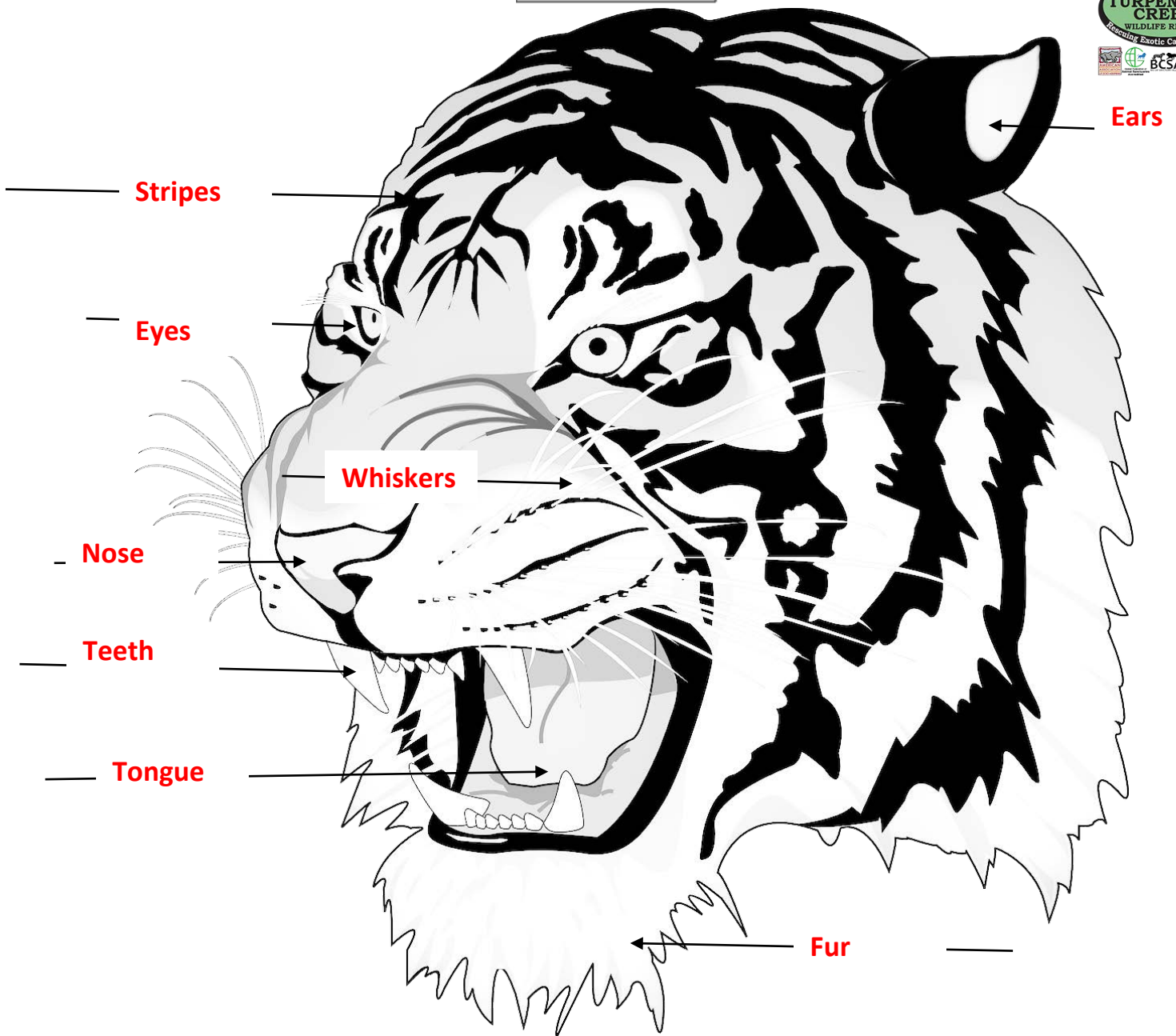


Fill in the blanks below using your vocabulary sheet

- A _____ should never be kept as a pet. They should live in their natural _____ or surroundings, not with people.
- An _____ eats plants and meat, while a _____ only eats meat. _____ only eat plants.
- Animals that are not native to an area are called an _____.
- _____ are animals that are at risk of disappearing forever. If they disappear, they are called _____, and no longer exist.
- Animals that are in _____ depend on people to survive, and are not free to go anywhere they want. They should be kept in a zoo or _____.
- _____ animals are good pets, they are friendly and are happy to live with humans. They are _____ and not dangerous.
- All animals should be given _____, and not be restricted to move around in both the wild and captivity.
- A _____ is a companion animal, people keep as a companion to be happy. Exotic animals are _____, and should not be kept as a pet.
- _____ protects the natural environment for wildlife, and keeps the Earth clean and safe.
- Animals that kill other animals for food is called a _____.
- The most important thing for any living being is it's _____, which is health, happiness, and well-being.
- Turpentine Creek is a _____, providing forever care to exotic animals in captivity, keeping them safe from harm.



Teacher Key



Eyes: Tigers have very good eye sight, and use their eyes to hunt and find food.

Ears: The spots on the back of their ears look like eyes, so other predators do not sneak up on them.

Tongue: Their tongues feel like sand paper, and help the big cat eat its food by removing fur.

Whiskers: They are very sensitive, and allow cats to feel how big the space around them is.

Nose: Tigers do not use their nose to smell for food, but to communicate with other animals in the wild.

Stripes: Used for camouflage, or helping the tiger blend in with its surroundings, it makes them look smaller.

Fur: Mammals have fur to keep them warm, and also protect them from being hurt.

Teeth: Tigers use their teeth to kill their food, and can feel the heart stop beating through their teeth!

Teacher Key: Fill in the blanks below using your vocabulary sheet

- A **wild animal** should never be kept as a pet. They should live in their natural **environment** or surroundings, not with people.
- An **omnivore** eats plants and meat, while a **carnivore** only eats meat. - **herbivore** only eat plants.
- Animals that are not native to an area are called an **exotic animal**.
- **Endangered Species** are animals that are at risk of disappearing forever. If they disappear, they are called **extinct**, and no longer exist.
- Animals that are in **captivity** depend on people to survive, and are not free to go anywhere they want. They should be kept in a zoo or **sanctuary**.
- **Domestic** animals are good pets, they are friendly and are happy to live with humans. They are **tame** and not dangerous.
- All animals should be given **freedom**, and not be restricted to move around in both the wild and captivity.
- A **pet** is a companion animal, people keep as a companion to be happy. Exotic animals are **dangerous**, and should not be kept as a pet.
- **Conservation** protects the natural environment for wildlife, and keeps the Earth clean and safe.
- Animals that kill other animals for food is called a **predator**.
- The most important thing for any living being is it's **welfare**, which is health, happiness, and well-being.
- Turpentine Creek is a **refuge**, providing forever care to exotic animals in captivity, keeping them safe from harm.

