

# Love Wildlife

## WILDLIFE-AT-RISK: TURTLE ADVOCACY

### LESSON #2 FOR GRADES 6-8

The following offers one of five lesson plans that pair with the five-part **Wildlife-at-Risk** video series by Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre.

Use the accompanying **Wildlife-at-Risk: Turtle Advocacy Workbook for Lesson #2** to complete the lesson.

## Ontario Curriculum Links

### **Grade 6 Science Understanding Life Systems**

*Specific Expectations: 1.1, 2.1, 2.5, 3.5*

### **Grade 6 Social Studies People and Environments**

*Specific Expectations: B2.1, B2.2, B2.3, B2.4, B2.5, B2.6*

### **Grade 7 Science Understanding Life Systems**

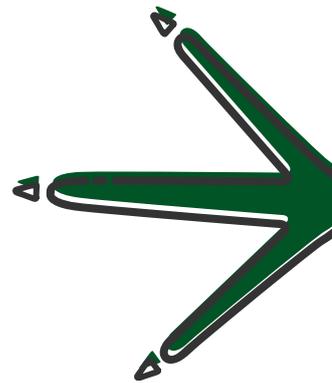
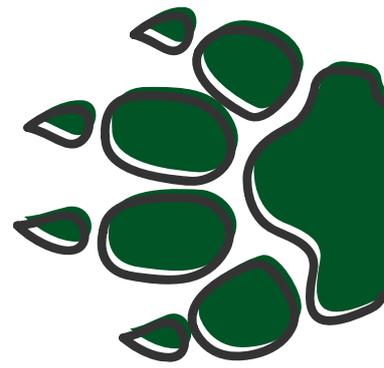
*Specific Expectations: 2.1, 2.5, 3.8*

### **Grade 7 Geography Physical Patterns in a Changing World**

*Specific Expectations: A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.5, A2.6*

### **Grade 8 Geography Global Settlement**

*Specific Expectations: A3.3, A3.5, A3.6*



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**SHARE** 25 MINUTES

Watch **Wildlife-at-Risk Episode 2: Turtle Advocacy** by Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre on YouTube.

### YOUR VOICE

Invite students to find a quiet place to sit, in a comfortable position and take three deep breaths. Tell students that in a moment they will be practicing compassionate listening. This is a chance for them to fully listen to a person speaking, without interrupting, giving advice, or rehearsing what they want to say next.

Explain to students that they will be in pairs. Student A will have 1-minute to speak, while Student B listens. After 1-minute, Student B thanks Student A for sharing and will reflect back what they heard in 1-2 sentences. Student A confirms or clarifies what Student B heard. Student B reflects back any clarifications and asks if Student A is feeling complete in their sharing. If yes, the students switch roles.

Place students in pairs (or self-select pairs). Have a verbal agreement among students that what is shared stays between the two partners. Then offer the following prompt for sharing: *Think about a situation where your voice was not heard. Share what happened, who you were with, how you felt, and what you wanted to have happen in that moment.*

After each student has had a chance to share, offer the following prompt and repeat the compassionate listening activity: *Share about a time when someone stood up for you. What was the situation? Who were you with? Who stood up for you? How did it feel to have someone advocate for you?*

Once the pairs have finished sharing, invite students to express how it felt to have someone listen to them in this exercise without interrupting. Ask how it felt to know they were understood. Finally, ask students to make a list of any beings - both human *and* more-than-human - whose voice is often ignored or silenced in society. Ask students why these voices might be left out.

*Remote Learning Adaptation: Students may be placed in breakout rooms in a virtual classroom, phone/video chat with a friend, or share with someone in their household.*



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## CONNECT 50 MINUTES

**MATERIALS NEEDED: WRITING UTENSIL, SMALL PIECES OF SCRAP PAPER (3 PER STUDENT PLUS SEVERAL ADDITIONAL BLANK PIECES)**

The voices and needs of wildlife are often ignored both intentionally and unintentionally by those making decisions that directly impact them. As wildlife are left out of these decisions, harmful actions occur such as habitat loss, poaching, etc.). This leads to population declines and their species becoming at-risk of extinction. Turtles - the namesakes of Turtle Island - are one group of beings whose voices are regularly left out.

### **NOTICE AND ACT**

Hand out three pieces of scrap paper and a writing utensil to each student. On the first piece of paper, ask students to write the name of a being from the list they generated at the end of the 'Share' activity. On the same piece of paper, ask students to write a crisis that this being could face in a large crowd (i.e., injury, illness, etc.). On the second piece of paper, write 'Map Turtle' on it and a crisis that *they* could face (i.e., hit by car, dehydrated, wetland filled in with concrete, etc.). On the third piece of paper, write 'Blanding's Turtle' and a crisis. Gather the paper from students, keeping three separate piles; one for any being, one for Blanding's Turtles, and one for Map Turtles.

Arrange the class so there is a large space in the middle where students can move around. Tell students that they will be acting out a scenario of eating lunch at the school or local restaurant. If they are handed a blank piece of scrap paper, they will go into the middle and begin miming an action (no talking) that represents something that might happen in the scenario. If a student receives paper with a name, they will enter the scene as that being. This student will start by blending in and after a few seconds begin acting out their crisis. Students will then have to respond to the crisis, without talking.

Start the scenario by handing out a blank piece of paper to a student. After a few seconds, hand out another blank piece of paper and so on until there are 6-7 students acting in the scene. Then hand out a piece of paper with the name of a being on it with an appropriate crisis.

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Watch the scenario unfold for a minute or so until the crowd notices the being and helps them. Stop the scene and ask students the following:

*When did you notice the being needed assistance? Do you think they were looked after adequately? What might have been done differently? What was the experience like for the student who needed help?*

Reveal that the next scenario is an outdoor music performance. This time, students are allowed to speak. Repeat the activity, handing out several blank pieces of paper to students who did not participate in the first scenario. After 6-7 students are acting in the scene, give a student a 'Blanding's Turtle' paper and have them act out their crisis in silence. Watch the scenario unfold for a minute or so until the crowd helps them. Stop the scene and ask students the following:

*When did you notice the turtle needed assistance? Do you think they were looked after adequately? What might have been done differently? How do we tend to react to wildlife who interrupt our lives? What was the experience like for the student who needed help?*

Reveal that the final scenario is a busy city street. Students will act in silence and *are not allowed* to help the next turtle in crisis. Repeat the activity, handing out several blank pieces of paper to students. After 6-7 students are acting in the scene, give a student a 'Map Turtle' paper and have them act out the crisis, *this time speaking*. Watch the scenario unfold for a minute or so. Stop the scene and ask students the following:

*When did you notice the turtle needed assistance? How did hearing the voice of a being usually silenced in society make you feel? How did hearing an animal in distress and ignoring them make you feel? What are our ethical responsibilities toward these beings? What was the experience like for the student who needed help?*

Invite students to note any reflections on **Pages 2-3** of their **Workbook**.

*Remote Learning Adaptation: Only complete the 'Blanding's Turtle' and 'Map Turtle' exercises in a virtual classroom. Ideas for crises can be shared in the chat. Roles for each scene can be privately messaged to students.*

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## NURTURE KINSHIP 50+ MINUTES

MATERIALS NEEDED: DEVICE WITH INTERNET AND LIBRARY ACCESS/BOOKS

### NAMING TURTLE ISLAND

Watch the YouTube video titled '[The Creation Story](#)' by the [Onondaga Historical Association](#) to learn how 'Turtle Island' was named by the Haudenosaunee. Note that there are different creation stories among the wide expanse of Indigenous communities that explain the naming of Turtle Island.

Indigenous peoples were the first people to meet turtles on Turtle Island. They referred to these turtles in the original languages that were - and are - spoken on this land. For example, Kahrhakón:ha A'nó:wara refers to a Wood Turtle in Mohawk. Miskwaadesi refers to a Painted Turtle in Ojibwe. Today, the same species that have lived here for millennia are commonly known by English names, given by European settlers who claimed to have 'discovered' the species and named the species after themselves or a fellow European. Take for example, the Blanding's Turtle; a species-at-risk.

### NAMING TURTLES

Students will research and answer questions about the Blanding's Turtle as well as one other turtle or tortoise-at-risk globally who have been named after a person, using **Pages 4-7** of their **Workbook** for guidance.

There are many forms of harm - some physical and some emotional. Ask students how these names could be harmful to Black and Indigenous communities? Is it fair to keep this common name, knowing it can cause harm?

Write a letter (or an email) to the [International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature](#), [Linnean Society of London](#) and/or any local naturalist society to advocate changing the name of a turtle-at-risk who is currently named after a person. In each letter, encourage students to include the following:

- The current name of the turtle and who they were named after/by.
- Why the current name is harmful.
- Who should rename the species and why.
- The best qualities of the species and why they deserve a different common and/or scientific name.

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LOVE WILDLIFE 100 MINUTES

MATERIALS NEEDED: SCRAP PAPER, POSTER PAPER, WRITING UTENSILS, MARKERS, DEVICE WITH INTERNET

Unless we help turtle populations grow, there will be few turtles left to carry a new name that honours the turtle *and* honours the Indigenous peoples who first lived alongside the species.

### WHY ARE TURTLES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION?

Using the data on **Pages 8-9** of their **Workbook** from Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre, have students list the reasons for turtle admissions from most to least common on **Page 10** of their **Workbook**. Ask students if these same challenges are taking place in their community. Are there any challenges turtles face that are not on the list? Have students add these additional factors in their **Workbook (Page 10)**.

Take students into the schoolyard or into the community and look for factors that could be negatively impacting turtles (see **Page 11** of their **Workbook** for a list of factors). Ask students which other species might be affected by these factors and note these on **Page 11** of their **Workbook**. Invite students to draw a map in their **Workbook (Page 12)**, indicating where those factors are located. Students may add any additional challenges for turtles they come across.

At the halfway point of the allocated outside time, gather the students together. Invite students to close their eyes if it feels safe and comfortable and to listen quietly for 15 seconds. Students may then open their eyes and share if they heard any wild animals. As they continue searching for factors impacting turtles, ask students to consider which other beings in this area have a voice that is often ignored.

Lastly, have students take a look at all the challenges in their **Workbook (Page 11)** that they noticed in their schoolyard/community and to circle the one they believe is impacting turtles the most.

### COUNCIL FOR THE NATURAL WORLD

Explain to students that there is a Council for Natural World that listens to the concerns of more-than-human beings and makes a plan for humanity to help.



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Divide the class into five groups: Group 1 is The Council for the Natural World, Group 2 are turtles, Group 3 are birds, Group 4 are mammals and Group 5 are amphibians.

Gather each group together and hand out scrap paper and writing utensils. Each group will then complete the following tasks:

- Group 1: The council will create a statement to open council and a statement of compassion to outline how they will do their job to take care of all beings. See **Page 13** of their **Workbook** for prompts on creating statements.
- Groups 2-5: Students will follow the prompts on **Page 14** of their **Workbook** to help decide what concerns and hopes they will present to the council.

When groups are ready, have the class sit together in a circle, with group members sitting next to each other. Begin the proceedings by having one council member read the opening statement and another read the statement of compassion. A third council member will take notes.

Next, one representative from each wildlife group will share what has happened to them, what is likely to happen and what they want to have happen. After a representative has shared, the council members will reflect back what they heard. Groups may offer clarifications as needed.

After all groups have shared, the council will offer gratitude to each group for their courage to speak up. To do so, invite each council member to read a line from the gratitude practice on **Page 14** of their **Workbook**.

The council will then decide on a 5-step action plan for all of humanity to help turtles (and all connected beings), based on what the groups shared. The council may look at what communities are already doing to inspire the plan (see **Page 15** of the **Workbook** for examples). Each group, including the council, will choose one action in the plan and create a poster highlighting the action and the beings supported by the action. Place posters in the school where many students will see them.

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*Remote Learning Adaptation: This activity can be completed in a virtual classroom, where separate rooms are provided for each group to prepare for the council meeting. One student from each group can screen share a blank document to keep track of notes.*

## REFLECT 15 MINUTES

Invite students to answer the reflection questions on **Page 16** of their **Workbook** either orally or in writing.

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### **Lesson Sources**

#### **Your Voice**

Baraz, J. & Lilyanna, M. (2016). *Awakening Joy for Kids* (pp. 136-139). Parallax Press.

#### **Notice and Act**

Lundy, K. (2020). *Teaching Fairly in an Unfair World* (pp. 61-62). Pembroke Publishers.

#### **Naming Turtle Island**

KANIENKEHA (n.d.). *Turtle, wood*. Kanien'kéha Endangered Language Initiative. <http://kanienkeha.net/animals/reptiles/kahrhakonha-anowara/>

The Ojibwe People's Dictionary. (2021). *miskwaadesi*. The Ojibwe People's Dictionary. <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/miskwaadesi-na>

#### **Council for the Natural World**

Work that Reconnects. (2017, December 1). *Council of All Beings*. <https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/council-of-all-beings/>

#### **Naming Turtle Island**

Onondaga Historical Association. (2016, April 28). *The Creation Story* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSzDM7Jmg94>



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### **Credit**

Written and designed by Jess Pelow

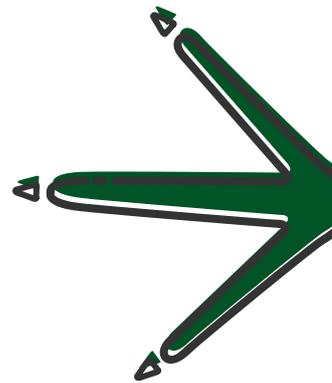
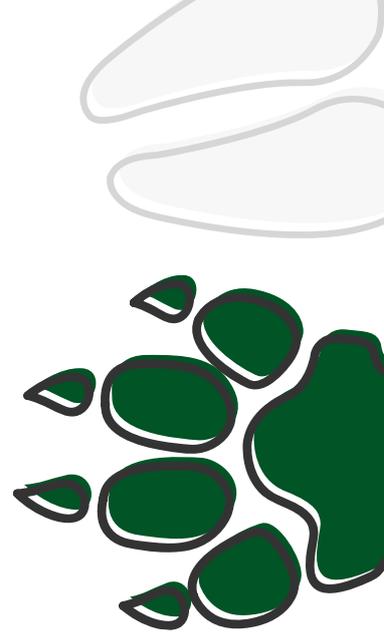
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**TD Friends of the  
Environment Foundation**



Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre is a registered charity that rehabilitates sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife in southeastern Ontario. We are located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee.

If you are in conflict with wildlife or find a wild animal who may need care, please call us for advice at 613-354-0264 or contact your nearest wildlife hospital.

Donate at [sandypineswildlife.org](https://www.sandypineswildlife.org) to support our work.

