

Reading Nonfiction 2



Animals in the News

Sports Spectaculars

Inventors and Inventions

Historic American Places

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PREVIEW

ANIMALS IN THE NEWS

LESSON 1: Bring Back the Grizzlies**LESSON 2:** Eagles Back from the Brink**LESSON 3:** Penguins at Risk**LESSON 4:** The Great White Shark

When you complete this unit, you will be able to answer questions like these:

- *Why does the great white shark never stop swimming?*
- *How can you tell the difference between a bald eagle and a vulture?*
- *What recent disaster threatened an entire species of penguins?*
- *How many square miles does a grizzly bear need for “roaming room”?*

PRETEST

Write **T** or **F** to show whether you think each statement is *true* or *false*.

1. ____ A pesticide called DDT was banned because it damaged the eggs of some birds.
2. ____ In the past 200 years, the grizzly bear population in the western United States has decreased 98 percent.
3. ____ Great white sharks almost never lift their heads out of the water.
4. ____ Penguins lost their ability to fly millions of years ago.
5. ____ Oil spills from big ships can usually be cleaned up in a day or two.
6. ____ Scientists think the great white shark doesn't enjoy the taste of human flesh.

Pretest answers: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. T

LESSON 1

BRING BACK THE GRIZZLIES

Before reading . . .

The Bitterroot National Forest in Idaho is historic “grizzly country.” But not even one grizzly bear has been sighted there in 70 years. This lesson presents arguments for and against restoring the grizzly to its former home.



Since 1975, the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) has been on the federal government’s list of threatened species. “Without the grizzly,” one official said, “we’ve got a watered-down ecosystem.” So the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed a plan to bring the grizzly back to the mountains of Eastern Idaho and Western Montana. This plan stalled in 2001 and remains in limbo.

The plan was to introduce five bears to the Bitterroot Mountains each year for five consecutive years. Wildlife experts point out that the grizzly has a slow reproductive cycle. They say it would take more than 100 years to reach the projected goal of 280 bears in the Bitterroot range.

Federal biologists say the Bitterroots provide an ideal habitat for the grizzlies. Its vast range provides plenty of room for the bears—each of which needs up to 600 square miles in which to roam. And the area is well-stocked with the foods that comprise 90 percent of a bear’s diet. These foods include tubers, wild truffles, glacier lilies, wild berries, ants, and grubs.

Certain safeguards were built into the plan. Only bears having no history of conflict with humans would be transplanted into Idaho. And each bear would be tagged and equipped with a radio tracking device. This would make it easier for wildlife management officials to monitor the bears’ movements.

A DWINDLING POPULATION

In 1806, explorers Lewis and Clark estimated that some 50,000 grizzlies roamed the western United States. Then came the trappers, hunters, ranchers, and homesteaders. Now, there are more than 500 bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem. There are another 500 or so in Glacier National Park in Montana. And about 50,000 grizzlies are thought to live in Alaska and Canada.

The grizzly reintroduction plan was not a sure thing, however. It had to first be approved by the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. And then \$2 million was needed to fund the first five years of the program. Finally, since the bears were not endangered, the federal government needed the approval Idaho and Montana.

Keep the Grizzlies Out!

The grizzly's return to Idaho was blocked by public protest, private lawsuits, and direct government intervention. Many elected officials in Idaho joined ranchers in opposing the proposal.

"Bears spend 99.9 percent of their time staying away from humans," said the coordinator of the bear recovery plan. "And if bears do see a human, all they want is to get away." Yet even so, he admitted that *some* "nuisance incidents" would be likely to occur with the bears' return. Such incidents, he estimated, could average 37 a year—with the grizzlies killing about six cattle and 25 sheep annually.

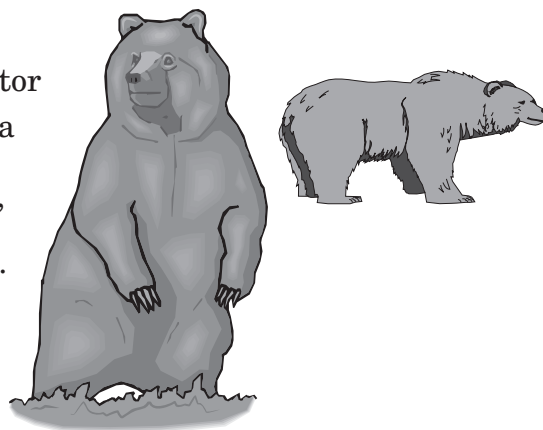
Many residents of central Idaho worried about the threat to human safety. Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne reacted to the plan in no uncertain terms. "This is perhaps the first federal land-management action in history likely to result in the injury or death of members of the public."

Some environmentalists argued against the plan as well. They said it *didn't go far enough* to protect the grizzlies. If they had their way, the status of the grizzly would be upgraded from "threatened" to "endangered." Under that designation, the grizzly would have automatic protection under the Endangered Species Act.

However, on March 22, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the grizzlies in Yellowstone represented a recovered population and no longer met the definition of threatened or endangered. The bears' threatened status throughout the United States is being reviewed.

WHY THE BITTERROOTS?

The proposed relocation site is a 5,785-square-mile area in the heart of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. This land is in east-central Idaho and adjacent Montana. It is the largest remaining expanse of federal land in the lower 48 states. And it is also one of only six places in the United States suitable for grizzlies.



COMPREHENSION

Use proper names from the reading to answer the questions. Don't forget that proper names must be capitalized!

1. What federal agency proposed the bear relocation plan?

2. Which two 19th century explorers saw thousands of grizzly bears in the western United States?

3. What federal act protects animals in danger of extinction?

4. In which two states is the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness located?

5. What two national parks in the lower 48 states are still “home” to grizzly bears?

FACT OR OPINION?

Write **F** or **O** to show whether each statement is a *fact* or an *opinion*.

1. ____ The U.S. Secretary of the Interior should be more concerned about polar bears than grizzly bears.
2. ____ In the past 200 years, about 48,000 grizzlies have disappeared from the lower 48 states.
3. ____ It is cruel to force a grizzly to wear a radio tracking device.
4. ____ There might still be a few undiscovered grizzlies living in Idaho's wilderness.
5. ____ If vegetables comprise 90 percent of a grizzly's diet, the rest of its diet must include meat, fish, and insects.

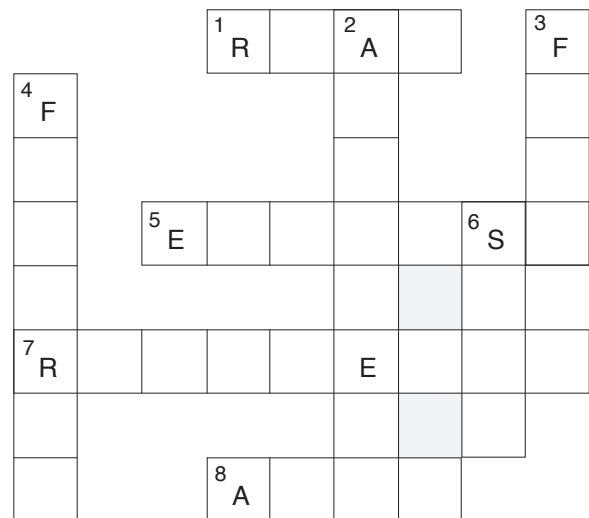
6. _____ Normally, grizzly bears want nothing to do with humans.
7. _____ States that are adjacent must border one another.
8. _____ A “watered-down” ecosystem is missing one or more important elements.

PUZZLER

Use the clues to help you solve the crossword puzzle. Answers are words that complete the sentences.

ACROSS

1. Each bear needs 600 square miles in which to _____.
5. The relocation site is a huge _____ of federal land.
7. Many _____ of central Idaho worry about human safety.
8. A bear’s diet includes _____ and grubs.



DOWN

2. Montana is _____ to the state of Idaho.
3. The first _____ years of the program would cost \$2 million.
4. The grizzly is on the _____ government’s list of threatened species for now.
6. The proposed _____ covers 5,785 square miles.

IRREGULAR PLURALS

Write the *plural* form (names more than one) of each word from the reading.

1. berry _____
2. sheep _____
3. grizzly _____
4. species _____
5. lily _____
6. agency _____

SPELLING

Circle the correctly spelled word in each group.

1. goverment government govermant
2. secretary secretery secratary
3. coordinater co-ordinator coordinator
4. nuisance nuisence nuicanse

EXTRA! Keep a vocabulary journal. Look up each word in the dictionary and write its meaning in your journal. Then use that word in a sentence of your own.

SENTENCE COMPLETION

Unscramble the **boldface** words from the reading to complete the sentences.

1. An **SOMESTYCE** _____ is the community of plants and animals that live together in a certain environment.
2. **BRUTES** _____ are thick underground stems such as potatoes.
3. A **SUNCAINE** _____ is something that causes trouble or bother.
4. An animal's **ANGER** _____ is the amount of open land it needs to comfortably move around.
5. To **NALPSTARTN** _____ an animal is to move it to another place.
6. There are only six **BLAUSTIE** _____ locations for grizzlies in the United States.

VOCABULARY

Circle a letter to show the meaning of the **boldface** word or words.

1. Idaho's governor reacted to the plan **in no uncertain terms**.
 - a. as if he hadn't quite made up his mind
 - b. in a way that couldn't be misunderstood
 - c. using technical terms no one understood

2. The grizzly bear has a slow **reproductive cycle**.
 - a. rate of producing offspring
 - b. unwillingness to mate in certain years
 - c. very long term of pregnancy
3. The Bitterroots make an ideal **habitat** for the grizzly.
 - a. habits that ensure long life
 - b. custom of returning to the same place
 - c. place where an animal is usually found
4. Some **environmentalists** are not in favor of the bear relocation plan.
 - a. those who work to protect natural resources
 - b. people who pollute the environment
 - c. important government officials
5. Five bears will be introduced each year for five **consecutive** years.
 - a. guaranteed by the chief executive
 - b. in order without a break
 - c. in an every-other-year pattern
6. Wild **truffles** and glacier lilies are part of the grizzly's diet.
 - a. chocolate candies
 - b. small pigs
 - c. underground fungus

SYLLABLES

Divide the words from the reading into *syllables* (separate sounds).

intervention	biologists	federal	introduce
homesteaders	automatic	habitat	

1. _____ / _____ / _____ _____ / _____ / _____
 _____ / _____ / _____ _____ / _____ / _____
2. _____ / _____ / _____ / _____
 _____ / _____ / _____ / _____
 _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

LESSON 2

EAGLES BACK FROM THE BRINK

Before reading . . .

In the early 1970s, the bald eagle was on the brink of extinction. People feared that our proud national symbol might one day vanish entirely. But now this once endangered bird is becoming a fairly common sight along the Potomac.



A PROUD SYMBOL

The eagle has long been used as a symbol of power, courage, and freedom. In 1787, the newly formed United States took the bald eagle as its emblem. Its picture is on the Great Seal of the United States, the president's flag, some coins, and paper money. The U.S. emblem shows the bald eagle with outspread wings and a shield on its breast. It holds an olive branch in one foot and a sheaf of arrows in the other.

Numbers Are Rebounding

Sightseers have always loved to visit Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate on the Potomac River. And these days, if they're lucky, they may see something unexpected and wonderful there—a bald eagle swooping out of the trees!

After the near extinction of the bald eagle, such sightings are becoming more common around Chesapeake Bay. In 1970, there were only 80 to 90 breeding pairs in the region. Today, there are about 600 pairs as well as hundreds of chicks. This recovery began when bald eagles were listed as an endangered species in 1973. But the revival of these fierce raptors may decline again if their habitat shrinks.

The director of the Center for Conservation at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, has issued a grim warning. He says that the bald eagle's future is directly threatened by real estate development. The truth of his contention is obvious. Where mansions, docks, and boats crowd the shoreline, there are no eagles. On undeveloped stretches of the shore, however, eagles roost in the trees and dive for fish.

When the United States was founded, there were as many as a half-million eagles in North America. By 1963, there were fewer than 500 breeding pairs in the lower 48 states. The

decline was mainly attributed to the loss of prey and habitat. Another significant factor was the widespread use of DDT—a pesticide that causes female eagles to lay brittle eggs. DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, beginning the recovery. But have the bald eagles *fully* recovered?

The fact is that the sensitive eagles just don't mix well with humans. Can they withstand the growing human population along the Potomac? Only time will tell.

North American Eagles

There are only two eagle species that live in North America—the bald eagle and the golden eagle. Except for the California condor, eagles are the largest American bird of prey. The condor, however, is a vulture. You can tell a flying eagle from a vulture by looking at its head. The eagle's head is large and covered with feathers. The vulture's head is small and bare.

The Bald Eagle

Except for a few white spots, young bald eagles are gray or smoky brown. The head, neck, and tail do not turn white until the bird is three or four years old. Feathers grow on the legs to within an inch of the toes. The bill, feet, and bare parts of the legs are bright yellow. Males and females have the same coloring.

A male bald eagle weighs about eight pounds and is about 35 inches long. It has a wingspread of about seven feet. Females are usually larger. Their length may be as great as 42 inches, and their weight about 12 pounds. The female's wingspread is about eight feet.

Adapted for Hunting

The bald eagle has a strong bill and powerful claws, or talons. The bill is nearly as long as the head. The upper half of the bill curves down sharply over the lower. The eagle uses its strong toes and talons to grasp its prey. It eats meat, including many small mammals, reptiles, and birds. But fish is perhaps the favorite meal of the bald eagle.

SHOULD FEDERAL PROTECTION BE RELAXED?

In June 2007, the federal government officially removed the bald eagle from the list of endangered and threatened species. The eagle population in the lower 48 states had climbed to a new high of 9,789 breeding pairs. The highest population of eagles is in Minnesota followed by Florida and Wisconsin. The bald eagle population will be carefully monitored over the next 20 years.

COMPREHENSION

Use information from the reading to help you answer the questions.

1. What two eagle species live in North America?

2. What parts of a bald eagle are bright yellow?

3. Along what river has the population of eagles increased?

4. What is the status for the bald eagle as recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

5. In what year was the bald eagle selected as the emblem of the United States?

6. About 200 years ago, how many eagles were thought to live in the United States?

ALPHABETICAL ORDER

List the words from the reading in alphabetical order on the lines below.

vulture	symbol	condor	recovery	swooping
factor	extinction	reptiles	significant	revival

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

5. _____

10. _____