



KINDNESS AND PROTECTING WILDLIFE

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Kindness and Wildlife: How are they connected?

Every living thing on Earth is connected. We rely on plants and animals for sustenance for our minds and bodies, while they rely on us for protection. In addition, studies have shown that spending time out in nature is beneficial to all of us. One important benefit for children is that time spent outdoors reduces their negative thoughts about themselves, which promotes self-kindness as well as kindness towards others. But how are we reciprocating and making sure that we are protecting natural places and the wildlife that call those places home?

Now more than ever, as habitats shrink and change due to human encroachment, pollution, and climate change, it's important for all of us to think about how we can use resources in a way that is thoughtful and kind towards other people and animals. We must all do our part to make sure that wildlife doesn't just survive, but thrives. We can accomplish this through kindness: seeing the world through the eyes of wildlife. Being aware of what resources other species need to survive, and being thoughtful and kind in how we use those resources, is something we can do every day in order to protect wildlife and wild places.

Kind Actions for Wildlife

- Follow the 4 R's: Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle, and Refuse. When we use resources in an unsustainable way, fewer resources are available for other people and wildlife. By being mindful of how we are using resources and how other people and animals need those same resources, we can understand the larger impact of our actions. Educating colleagues about the proper way to recycle in your community is a great place to start, since more items are recyclable than people realize. Additionally, encouraging staff members to refuse to use items that are harmful to the environment, such as single-use plastic (bottles, straws, bags, etc.) is an easy, everyday action they can take.
- Create a wildlife-friendly habitat in your schoolyard. Providing a habitat for your local wildlife is a great way to teach students to understand, appreciate, and co-exist with the animals in their community. Large or small, every animal has a story to tell—emphasizing that all creatures deserve a safe habitat in which to live allows students to observe them in a natural setting, and to recognize the similar needs we all share.
- Leave wild animals wild. Wild animals are not pets and it is kinder to leave them in the wild where they belong. In instances when you find wildlife that appears to be orphaned or injured, it is best to contact a local licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice rather than try to help that animal yourself. Sometimes the animal may not even need our help and we may cause more harm by removing it, so it is kinder to seek the advice from a trained professional rather than take an animal from the wild.



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- ✿ Connecting with people is vital to protecting wild animals and their habitats. Conservation is not just about animals, it's about people, too! No matter where we live, we all need clean water and air, and reliable food sources—just like the animals. We are all affected either directly or indirectly when wild places and wildlife disappear. By being mindful about and respecting human needs, and by working together on all conservation problems, we can develop solutions that have a greater impact.
- ✿ Publicly recognize kind wildlife actions on your campus. Creating an environment in which conservation-minded actions are the social standard—and are celebrated and rewarded—will help make a change in our world. Protecting wildlife by conserving resources sometimes means making hard choices that may go against societal standards. For instance, every high school senior is excited about getting to drive themselves to school. However, carpooling with friends to reduce the amount of rampant CO2 emitted is the more wildlife-friendly choice. Recognizing high school students who have made this choice and have forgone this "rite of passage" is needed. Intentionally taking thoughtful and kind conservation actions yourself, and recognizing others who do the same, is important in fostering a community that takes kind actions for each other and wildlife.

Want to know more about Kindness and Protecting Wildlife?

Benefits of Nature:

- ✿ Get hooked on nature: Ben Klasky at TEDxRainier: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArhJLa4xbNk>
- ✿ Gregory N. Bratman, J. Paul Hamilton, Kevin S. Hahn, Gretchen C. Daily, and James J. Gross. Nature experience reduces rumination and subgenual prefrontal cortex activation. PNAS 2015 112 (28) 8567-8572; <http://www.pnas.org/content/112/28/8567.full>
- ✿ Nature Play: a guide for adults about the importance of getting children back outside. https://www.aza.org/assets/2332/aza_eguide_familynatureplay_update_r1v2.pdf

Actions for Wildlife:

- ✿ National Wildlife Federation's Garden for Wildlife Program includes tips, examples, and information on how to create and certify your schoolyard habitat. <http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Create/Schoolyards.aspx>
- ✿ Be Straw Free: This conservation campaign began with a nine year old concerned about plastic waste and its impact on the environment. It has now become a national campaign proving that everyone, no matter their age, has a powerful voice and can make a difference. <http://www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree>
- ✿ Recycling: For more information on recycling in Tucson, and to schedule a program or speaker for your workplace, visit <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/es/education>. In other regions, search your local government's website for information about your area. You can also find national information on environmental outreach and education here: <https://doee.dc.gov/education>



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Want to know more about Kindness and Protecting Wildlife? *Continued*

- ✿ Green your school: This article from the National Association of Elementary School Principals provides great insight for reasons why your school should become a green school and provides resources to help you:
www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/greenschoolsdigitalcopy.pdf
- ✿ Schedule a field trip to your local zoo! Through a field trip or education program at the zoo or in your classroom, students will be able to get up-close experiences with wildlife that may not be possible otherwise, sparking a lifelong appreciation and understanding for the animals that share our world.