



Discovering Alabama

Teacher's Guide

Wildlife History

Suggested Curriculum Areas

History
Social Studies
Environmental Studies

Suggested Grade Levels

4 – 12

Key Concepts

Conservation
Habitat
Natural Heritage

Key Skills

Research
Analysis
Critical Thinking

Synopsis

Our nation is rooted in a rich, natural heritage that helped give rise to American democracy and define our national identity. Central to this heritage is the history of our society's changing relationship with wildlife.

This video gives an overview of that history, with emphasis on early periods of wildlife decline in America and Alabama's significant role in wildlife restoration. The state's diverse natural habitats and committed conservationists have brought Alabama recognition as a national leader in wildlife resources. The video also traces the contributions of hunters in creating the concept of conservation, establishing laws for wildlife protection, and funding programs for wildlife restoration. The video is especially suitable for use with other *Discovering Alabama* programs, such as "Alabama Forests," "Sipsey Wilderness," "Locust Fork River," "Black Warrior River," and "Cahaba River Watershed," in teaching the Alabama Course of Study for history and social studies.



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA



Discovering Alabama is a production of the Alabama Museum of Natural History in cooperation with Alabama Public Television. For a complete list of titles in the *Discovering Alabama* series, as well as for information about ordering videos and accompanying Teacher's Guides, contact us at either: *Discovering Alabama*, Box 870340, Tuscaloosa AL 35487-0340; phone: 205-348-2036; fax: 205-348-4219; or email: orders@discoveringalabama.org. Also visit our website: www.discoveringalabama.org.

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Before Viewing

1. In today's increasingly urban society, many children rarely encounter native wildlife outside zoos or other commercial exhibits. Conduct a survey to find out what native animals your students have seen in the wild. How many students have seen such game species as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, raccoon, quail, or mallard duck? How many students have seen such non-game species as the red-tailed hawk, pileated woodpecker, king snake, grey fox, or Alabama's state bird, the yellow-shafted flicker? You might also learn how many in your class have seen such rare animals as the black bear, gopher tortoise, red fox, red-cockaded woodpecker, or the nation's symbol, the bald eagle. Discuss the locations and settings—forests, rivers, farms, etc.—where students have seen different species.

2. Have students work in small groups to: a) develop a list of animals they believe lived in Alabama at the time of European exploration, and b) describe what they think wild animals need for suitable habitat, i.e., habitat that will sustain healthy reproducing populations and long-term species survival. Ask each group to decide whether wildlife habitat in America has declined or improved since the emergence of twentieth-century industrial society.

3. Introduce the video by explaining that it presents a history of America's changing relationship with wildlife and the special role that Alabama has played in wildlife conservation.

While Viewing

Have students listen for information on the changing status of wildlife habitat since the turn of the century. Were their initial assessments correct?

Video Mystery Question: Since the European settlement of America, how

have hunters been both a major threat and a major benefit for wildlife? (Answer: In nineteenth-century America, prior to laws for wildlife protection, uncontrolled hunting was a significant factor in the decimation of many wildlife populations. By the twentieth century, concerned hunters were helping to lead efforts for a new awareness and for new laws to protect wildlife.)

After Viewing

1. Briefly review the list of native animals your students have seen in the wild. Have the class work in small groups to cite new information presented in the video that pertains to any of these animals, to wildlife habitat, or to the changing status of wildlife in America. Share and discuss.
2. Remind students that the video describes how hunters, sportsmen, and conservationists have been central to the protection and restoration of native wildlife. Inquire whether your students were aware of this fact and if they think that the general public might know this information. Ask the students for their thoughts on whether present-day hunters might be aware of the important role of such groups as the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society.

Extensions

1. View the *Discovering Alabama* programs "Geological History," "Alabama's Natural Diversity," and "Alabama Forests," which present additional information about the native habitats of the state. Discuss connections to this video.
2. Invite members from local hunting, fishing, and environmental organizations to visit the class and discuss their concerns about wildlife. If possible, have them view this video prior to their visit to become familiar with what the class is studying.

Philosophical Reflections

To hunt or not to hunt? That is the question. Popular arguments in support of hunting include that hunting is a compassionate practice because many species would suffer a worse fate from harsh weather, starvation, and disease unless their numbers are periodically thinned; that hunting is an honored American tradition with numerous economic, recreational, and social benefits to our society; and that hunting is both a rite and a right of human existence, historically integral to the proper order of humans and nature.

In opposition to hunting, common concerns are that hunting is a dangerous activity that is no longer necessary for obtaining food, clothing, or other material needs; that hunting often results in the wounding and suffering of many animals; and that modern modes of hunting, with sophisticated weapons and machinery, are indicative of a widening rift between humans and nature.

There are reasonable and caring advocates on both sides of this debate. But for some people, the issue is less a question of whether animals should be hunted or killed and more a question of whether it is appropriate to hunt for sport. To these people, the core concern is the phenomenon of enthusiastically killing wildlife for recreation, for fun. What beliefs or assumptions about humans and nature might justify killing wildlife for enjoyment? What beliefs or assumptions might argue that such a practice is inappropriate?



Nature in Art

Artistic renderings of wildlife have long been a favorite pursuit of outdoor lovers from William Bartram, one of the first naturalists to document native species of the American South, to John James Audubon, for whom the Audubon Society is named. Earlier this century, the "Duck Stamp Act" (mentioned in the video) enabled nationwide sales of hunting stamps with renderings of ducks and waterfowl by many of America's best wildlife artists. You might wish to invite local wildlife artists to bring examples of their work to your class.

Community Connections

1. Consult local authorities to develop a description of the natural features and habitats of your county. Use nature field guides and other helpful sources to compile a listing of plant and animal species native to your county and to determine the status of each.
2. Obtain the National Wildlife Federation's School Yard Habitat Information Kit (see **Complementary Aids and Activities**). With the knowledge gained about the native diversity of your local area, have students consult this guide in planning and establishing a school yard habitat program.
3. The video tells how environmental groups like the Sierra Club have joined with sportsmen groups like the Boone and Crockett Club to promote conservation. Explore whether such cooperation exists in your community. Have students develop a questionnaire and conduct a survey of whether such local groups are similar or dissimilar in their beliefs, attitudes, and concerns about wildlife and other environmental issues. Invite interested local groups to collaborate with your class in determining the status of local native habitats and species. Divide the class into teams, with each team assigned to develop part of a report (writings, photographs, etc.) of their findings for publication in the local media.

Complementary Aids and Activities

Project WILD, Activity Guide, Grades 7–12, 2d ed., "Checks and Balances" and "The Hunter." Available through Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 64 N. Union St., Montgomery AL 36130; 334–242–3623.

School Yard Habitat Information Kit.

Available from the Alabama Wildlife Federation, 3050 Lanark Rd., Millbrook AL 36054; 800–822–9453.

World Wide Web sites with information on conservation programs in Alabama:

Alabama Game & Fish

www.dcnr.state.al.us/agfd

Alabama Wildlife Federation

www.alabamawildlife.org/

Audubon International

www.audubonintl.org/

Sierra Club

<http://sierraclub.org/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

www.fws.gov/

Additional References and Resources

A History of American Wildlife by Hal Borland (1975).

The Hunter in Conservation, Council for Wildlife Conservation and Education, Inc., 1 Mile Hill Road, New Town CT 06470.

"On the Morality of Hunting" by Ann S. Caussey. *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 11, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 327–343.

"Sport Hunting: Moral or Immoral" by Theodore Vitali. *Environmental Ethics* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 69–82.

Beyond Prejudice: The Moral Significance of Human and Nonhuman Animals by Evelyn B. Pluhar (1995).

The Value of Life: Biological Diversity and Human Society by Stephen R. Kellert (1996).

Earth Keeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources by Loren Wilkinson (1980).

Parting Thoughts

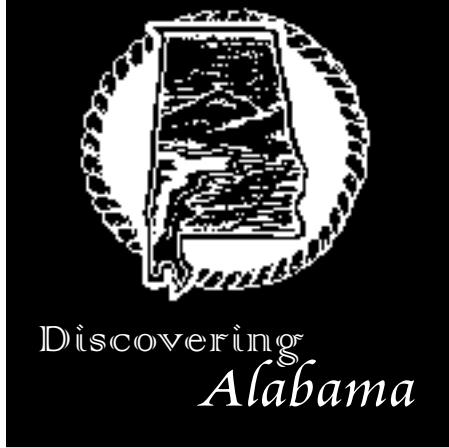
Across America today, hunting is a subject of increasing controversy that is compounded by the fact that humans are uniquely prone to contradiction. Some would say it is contradictory to oppose the hunting of wild animals while at the same time showing no concern for the unnatural conditions often associated with raising and processing commercial livestock. Likewise, it seems contradictory to support hunting as a compassionate means of helping wildlife while at the same time being unwilling to support wildlife habitat programs that do not offer hunting opportunities in return.

Deeper problems often exist at the very core of our beliefs. For example, "morally-based" beliefs against hunting sometimes ignore scientific facts about animals in the wild. On the other hand, "scientifically-based" arguments for hunting sometimes ignore legitimate moral and philosophical questions about why and how hunting is pursued. The point is that the issue of hunting is more complex than one might suspect from listening to popular arguments (see *Additional References and Resources* for articles on the hunting issue).

Meanwhile, as the hunting controversy is fueled by angry passions, let's not lose sight of the genuine need for compassion, both for animals and for one another. Regardless of your personal decision of whether or not to hunt, an ethical choice is one that is grounded in thoughtful consideration of how best to be a good steward of the wonders of nature. As food for thought, many Alabamians might enjoy reading the thirty guidelines for stewardship provided in the book, *Earth Keeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources* (see *Additional References and Resources*).

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. For families who choose to hunt, I relate a word of wisdom offered by wildlife officials with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources: Introduce your children to enjoying and understanding the outdoors first. Forced preoccupation with making a kill or bagging a trophy can rob a youngster of the full experience of knowing and appreciating the world of nature.





Activity/Information Sheet

Wildlife History

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE BIRD AND MAMMAL game species of Alabama:

beaver
blackbird
bobcat
bobwhite quail
common moorhens
coots
coyote
crow
ducks
fox
geese
groundhog
mallard ducks
merganser
mourning dove
nutria
opossum
purple gallinule
rabbit
raccoon
rail
snipe
squirrel
starlings
teal
white-tailed deer
wild hogs
wild turkey
woodcock

CERTAIN ANIMALS THAT ARE RARE TODAY were historically considered game animals. The following four species are now protected from hunting through the designation of a closed season. *Italics* indicate threatened or endangered animals.

alligator
Florida black bear
mountain lion
ruffed grouse

FOR A COMPLETE LIST of Alabama's Rare Species Inventory, visit the Alabama Natural Heritage Program at www.heritage.tnc.org/nhp/us/al.

Alabama beach mouse
Allegheny woodrat
American oystercatcher
American swallow-tailed kite
American white pelican
Appalachian Bewick's wren
Appalachian cottontail
Bachman's sparrow
Bachman's warbler
bald eagle
bank swallow
black rail
black scoter
black skimmer
black tern
black-necked stilt
Brazilian free-tailed bat
brown pelican
cerulean warbler
clapper rail
common barn owl
common ground dove
common merganser
common raven
common tern
Cooper's hawk
dickcissel
eastern spotted skunk
Florida panther
fulvous whistling duck
glossy ibis
golden eagle
gray kingbird
gray myotis bat
greater sandhill crane
greater white-fronted goose
grey fox
gull-billed tern
Henslow's sparrow
hooded merganser
Indiana bat
lark sparrow
Le Conte's sparrow
least bittern
least tern
lesser golden plover
little brown myotis
loggerhead shrike
long-billed curlew
long-billed dowitcher
long-tailed weasel
manatee
marsh rabbit
meadow jumping mouse
merlin
Mississippi sandhill crane
mottled duck
northern myotis
northern yellow bat
oldsquaw
osprey
painted bunting
Perdido Key beach mouse
peregrine falcon
pied-billed grebe
pileated woodpecker
piping plover
prairie vole
Rafinesque's big-eared bat
red knot
red-cockaded woodpecker
reddish egret
red-tailed hawk
red-throated loon
royal tern
sandwich tern
seaside sparrow
Seminole bat
snowy plover
solitary vireo
song sparrow
southeastern American kestrel
southeastern bat
southeastern pocket gopher
southeastern snowy plover
Stoddard's yellow-throated warbler
Swainson's warbler
tundra swan
white ibis
white-eyed vireo
white-faced ibis
white-winged scoter
willet
Wilson's phalarope
Wilson's plover
wood stork
yellow flicker
yellow rail
yellow-crowned night heron
yellow-throated vireo