

ScienceNews

Activity Guide for Students: Cultural Connections for Species at Risk

Directions: Biocultural status is not often considered when determining how to allocate conservation resources. Read the *Science News* article, "[A new metric of extinction risk considers how cultures care for species.](#)" and answer the questions below. After answering the questions, prepare to share your definition of biocultural status with the class to create a class wide definition.

Biocultural status

1. Define conservation resources. Provide at least one example.
2. What factors need to be considered when planning how to allocate conservation resources?
3. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) designates a species's extinction risk status. Why might a specific population of a species have a different status from the species as a whole?
4. The IUCN recently changed the dugong's extinction risk status. What is the dugong's new extinction risk status, and why was it changed?
5. Using the dugong as an example, why might it be important to consider the cultural significance of a species when determining conservation resource distribution?
6. What does it mean if a species has biocultural status?
7. Define "biocultural status."

After sharing your definitions and determining what definition will be used for the purposes of the debate, form the debate motion as instructed by your teacher. Once your teacher has assigned you a debate team, answer the following questions with your team. As a reminder, you do not have to agree with your debate team's perspective to be a contributing member of the team. Use this time to find evidence that can be used during the debate to support your team's perspective, strengthen your arguments and write your opening and closing statements. Once you receive the debate questions from the moderators, prepare your debate answers.

Debate preparation

1. Review the debate structure and assign roles to each member of your group.

Opening

Pro opening statement – 3 minutes

Con opening statement – 3 minutes

Moderators present question 1 – 1 minute

Pro answer – 2 minutes

Con answer – 2 minutes

Caucus (both teams formulate their rebuttals) – 5 minutes

Pro rebuttal – 4 minutes

Con rebuttal – 4 minutes

Moderators present question 2 – 1 minute

Con answer – 2 minutes

Pro answer – 2 minutes

Caucus (both teams formulate their rebuttals) – 5 minutes

Con rebuttal – 4 minutes

Pro rebuttal – 4 minutes

Con closing statement – 3 minutes

Pro closing statement – 3 minutes

Opening statement speaker:

Speaker answering question 1:

Rebuttal speaker 1:

Speaker answering question 2:

Rebuttal speaker 2:

Closing statement speaker:

2. The opening statement of a debate often explains the debate team's perspective on the motion and uses evidence to back up the claim. Using data, draft an opening statement for your team.

3. Rebuttals are used in debate to point out flaws in the opposing team's argument. How will your team fact-check the opposing debate team?

4. During the caucus, debate teams will be able to discuss the flaws in their opponents answer and formulate their rebuttal. How will your team share information and formulate the rebuttal in 5 minutes?

5. The closing statement presented in a debate should reiterate the most important points of your argument, including the rebuttals. What information will your team use in the closing statement? How will your team craft/modify the closing statement during the debate?

Debate day

Before starting the debate, your teacher will give you directions. Remember that the moderators will be keeping time and will let you know how much time you have to speak. When the moderators show a yellow paper, you have 30 seconds remaining. You must stop speaking when the moderators show a red paper.

Throughout the debate, listen for any factual errors and weak arguments that your team can counter with a rebuttal. When the moderators determine the winner, they will explain which points provided by each team informed their decision.

Middle ground

Following the debate, you will participate in a discussion to find a middle ground for both arguments presented during the debate. In this discussion, you should identify a way to consider biocultural status in conservation resource allocation that satisfies both parties. The goal is to identify a middle ground that uses both the information and arguments provided during the debate.

