



WILD Kids



Environmental Laws: What Are They?

The Endangered Species Act is one of the United State's most important environmental laws. Below you will find a general overview of several important pieces of environmental legislation.

Lacy Act (1900)

This U.S. act prohibits the selling, buying, trading, taking, importing, exporting or transportation of any plant or animal that is protected by state, federal, tribal or foreign law. It is also illegal to import into the U.S. any plant or animal that may be harmful to people, agriculture, or wildlife. Finally, the act requires that wildlife be humanely transported and correctly identified. The Lacy Act's strict penalties (up to five years in prison and/or a \$20,000 fine) are used to prosecute people that import illegal species as legal ones.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918)

This treaty protects migratory birds (those that cross international borders on their way to summer or winter grounds). It restricts the trade of bird parts (wings, tails, bones, muscles, etc.), feathers, nests, eggs, and products made from these things. (How many of you have feathers or nests at home?) Seasonal hunting is allowed for some ducks, geese, woodcocks and other migratory birds. An interesting note: The roadrunner was almost not included in this treaty (they do not have separate summer and winter grounds. They are year-round residents). Fortunately, scientists saw a few roadrunners crossing the U.S./Mexico border looking for food, making them eligible for protection.

Eagle Protection Act (1940, 1962)

This act was passed to protect our national bird, the bald eagle. The bald eagle cannot be hunted, trapped, poisoned or killed in any way. Body parts, eggs, nests, feathers and products made from these are illegal to possess. The act was amended in 1962 to include the golden eagle. It is often difficult to tell an immature bald eagle from a golden eagle, so both are now protected. Certain Indian tribes are excluded and may possess live eagles and feathers for ceremonial purposes.

Marine Mammal Protection Act (1972)

This act prohibits harming or taking marine mammals in U.S. waters, or importing their body parts or products made from them. Marine mammals include polar bears, sea otters, walruses, dugongs, manatees, whales, seals and sea lions. Some Indian tribes are excluded from this act and may take specific numbers of animals for food.

Endangered Species Act (1973)

This law was passed to protect plants and animals that are in danger of becoming extinct. Plants or animals listed as threatened or endangered are not allowed to be imported, exported, hunted, collected, harassed, transported across state or national borders, sold or used in any way without an authorized permit from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Restrictions on trade and transport apply to living or dead plants and animals, their parts and the products made from them. Protected plants and animals may be used for purposes of public education, exhibition in zoos, scientific research or efforts that could help save the plant or animal.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1975)

This international treaty, also called **CITES**, is designed to protect plants and animals affected by international trade. It regulates the import and export of endangered and threatened wildlife. Nations that sign the treaty agree to restrict trading of certain plants and animals. The severity of restrictions depend on the appendix the plant or animal is listed under.

Appendix I

Includes plants and animals immediately threatened with extinction. All shipments of live or dead animal and plants, their parts, and anything made from them must have two permits - one from the exporting country and one from the importing country. The permits are granted only for educational or scientific purposes and only if the collection of the plant or animal will not threaten the population any further.

Appendix II (of CITES)

Includes plants and animals that are not immediately in danger of extinction, but will be if trade is not regulated. A permit only from the exporting country is required. It is legal to use these plants or animals in commercial trade, but only if it will not threaten the population.

Appendix III (of CITES)

Includes species not covered by Appendix I or II, but are endangered or threatened in a country that needs international help to protect them. An export permit must be issued by the country where the plant or animal is native.

For more information, write to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Endangered Species, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Activity I: Wildlife Law Survey

Make-up a survey and give it to other students in your school. The survey should ask them about the wildlife laws and what they know about them. After the survey is complete, go over it with your class. Finally, set-up a booth for other classes to visit explaining and illustrating each of these laws. After classes have seen your booth, give them the survey again to see if they learned anything from your booth.

Activity II: (Adapted from the Project WILD activity "Wild Bill's Fate.")

Write to your state legislators at the addresses below and ask them about legislation that affects wildlife and their habitat (including endangered species). It is helpful to be specific. Contact wildlife interest groups and ask their opinions on current or upcoming legislation.

Senator _____
 Arizona State Senate
 1700 West Washington
 Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Representative _____
 Arizona House of Representatives
 1700 West Washington
 Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Activity III: What is Missing?

There was not enough space in this issue of *WILD Kids* to present other important environmental laws. What are they? Using the resources of your school or public library, locate the missing laws. Read over these laws and prepare a general overview for your class. (Hint: The laws deal with air, water and habitat.)

Activity IV: Seek-N-Find

Below is a Seek-and-Find puzzle. In it you will find 25 words from the descriptions of the listed environmental laws. The words can be forward, backward, diagonal, and backward diagonal. If you want a challenge, cover up the list below the puzzle. What words are important?



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|------------|---------------|------------|
| Act | Feathers | Migratory |
| Animal | Flora | Plant |
| Appendix | Harming | Protection |
| Boundaries | Illegal | Roadrunner |
| CITES | Importing | Species |
| Eagle | International | Trade |
| Endangered | Lacy | Treaty |
| Exporting | Mammal | |
| Fauna | Marine | |