



# The *Un-endangered* Species<sup>®</sup>

TEACHER'S GUIDE

An educational video  
program for grades 7—12



National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.

# The *Un-endangered* Species<sup>®</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Wildlife and conservation experts agree that America has the best system of wildlife management in the world. There is no better example of the success of wildlife management in our nation than the story of the “un-endangered species” —species such as elk, wild turkey, pronghorn antelope and white-tailed deer. These species were on the brink of extinction a century ago but have been restored to abundance today.

Despite great strides that have been made in wildlife conservation, many students, for a variety of reasons, tend to view all wildlife as threatened or endangered. This is simply not the case.

The purpose of *The Un-endangered Species* program is to familiarize today’s students with the history of wildlife management in America and with the remarkable comeback of our un-endangered species. The best way to ensure support for wildlife conservation in the future is to make students aware of the tremendous success we have had in restoring wildlife in the past.

In an upbeat, entertaining fashion, **The Un-endangered Species** offers a “good news” wildlife message and will make a valuable addition to your environmental science, biology or current events curriculum.



#### CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

Teresa Richardson and Steve Adams, representing The Council for Wildlife Conservation and Education, visit a class of high school students. Using historical photos and modern wildlife footage, Teresa and Steve document the amazing comeback of our un-endangered species. The classroom format was actually recommended by students and educators as an effective way of communicating to today's students.

#### AUTHORITATIVE CONTENT

*The Un-endangered Species* features commentary and input from such respected conservation organizations as Wildlife Management Institute, The National Wildlife Federation, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other expert groups.

In a colorful and fun presentation, students are made aware of the scientific techniques that wildlife managers used to help the un-endangered species rally. Population statistics from the late 1800s and early 1900s are compared with those of today.

#### CLASSROOM APPLICATION

*The Un-endangered Species* has been prepared — and tested — in cooperation with educators and conservation experts to serve as supplement to studies in the biological and environmental sciences.

Specifically, it has been designed to supplement:

BIOLOGICAL STUDIES — An Introduction to Wildlife Management

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CONSERVATION — Conserving Our Wildlife Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES — Interaction of Man & Wildlife

MAN'S EFFECT ON HIS ENVIRONMENT — Good or Bad?

In addition, the program is also appropriate for:

CURRENT AFFAIRS: Is All Wildlife in Danger?  
Does Hunting Endanger Wildlife?  
Who is Looking Out for Our Wildlife?

SOCIAL SCIENCE: A History of Wildlife Conservation

**Designed for Grades 7-12**

**Length: 23 minutes**



## Key Words About Wildlife Management

### ANSWERS

1. **(I)** Habitat is critical to healthy wildlife populations. Loss of habitat had the greatest effect on wildlife populations at the turn of the century.
2. **(C)** The trumpeter swan is a perfect example of the success of wildlife management, having been removed from the Endangered Species List in the late 1960s. There is a healthy population of 25,000 today
3. **(B)** One of the primary responsibilities of the wildlife manager is to help insure that animals do not overpopulate their habitat — that is, exceed the “carrying capacity” of that habitat.
4. **(G)** Perilously close to extinction in the early 1900s, the pronghorn antelope population today is 1,000,000.
5. **(E)** Although a controversial subject, hunting is widely recognized as one of the most important tools available to the wildlife manager to help keep wildlife populations in balance with habitat capacity.
6. **(H)** There are so many white-tailed deer in the nation today that it is difficult to believe that they were once on the verge of extinction. There are 20,000,000 today.
7. **(F)** Another classic wildlife management story, the wood duck, once seriously endangered, is now common. 5,500,000 exist today.
8. **(J)** Few wildlife species anywhere on earth can match the majesty of the Rocky Mountain elk. It is indeed gratifying that elk exist today in such abundant numbers.
9. **(D)** The wildlife management profession strives to insure healthy numbers of game birds and small mammals, as well as waterfowl, large game animals and other species.
10. **(A)** A very successful wildlife management technique for expanding the range of a particular species is to trap species from healthy herds in one area and release them in areas where there is suitable habitat.

### America's Wildlife Today

Designed to be used before program alone or as a pre/post test and discussion motivator.

#### ANSWERS

1. **False.** The exact opposite of this statement is true. Habitat destruction and commercial exploitation had reduced the white-tailed deer population to around 500,000 in 1900. However, scientific wildlife management programs have since restored the deer to healthy numbers, and they now total some 20 million.
2. **False.** Wildlife experts predict a very healthy future for the white-tailed deer, and it is likely that there will be about 20 million deer in the United States by the year 2020.
3. **False.** The settlement of the West had a disastrous effect on elk and pronghorn antelope. Antelope, in fact, reached a low of 13,000 animals before beginning its comeback.
4. **False.** Wildlife management professionals agree that the biggest problem facing wildlife is the loss of suitable habitat. Hunting has long been an acceptable and valuable part of wildlife management and has never been a factor in the endangerment of any species.
5. **False.** It is true that there were only about 100,000 wild turkey in the United States in the early 1950s. However, wildlife management programs have since increased that number to nearly 4 million today.
6. **False.** Most conservation experts disagree with this statement. Carefully planned and researched scientific management programs over the past half century have proven that wildlife will do much better with assistance from wildlife management professionals.
7. **False.** Humane societies certainly have a genuine interest in wildlife conservation, but the majority of the money to further conservation efforts comes from the nation's hunters and sportsmen through licenses, special taxes on firearms and ammunition and private contributions.

## America's Wildlife Today

8. **False.** Most of the nation's major conservation organizations support hunting as a valuable and necessary part of wildlife management.
9. **False.** This statement was true around 1900. It is no longer true today. There are now more than one million elk in the United States with healthy populations in most Western states.
10. **False.** Conservation history books tell us that the first meaningful efforts to save wildlife came from hunters and organized sportsmen's clubs in New York, Boston and other Eastern cities between 1850 and 1865. President Theodore Roosevelt was an active member of several of these groups.

## Test Your Friends & Family

This is a take-home worksheet which gives the student an opportunity to "be the teacher" at home and to discuss the story of "The Un-endangered Species®" with his or her family.

**ANSWERS:** The answers to this activity master are included on the bottom of the sheet, itself.

# THE "UN-ENDANGERED SPECIES"

These species have been rescued from near extinction by wildlife management programs administered by state and federal conservation agencies.



## Wild Turkey

Then: 650,000  
Now: 5,400,000



## Pronghorn Antelope

Then: 12,000  
Now: 1,000,000



## White-tailed Deer

Then: 500,000  
Now: 20,000,000



## Rocky Mountain Elk

Then: 40,000  
Now: 1,000,000



## Wood Duck

Then: Very Rare  
Now: 5,500,000



## Trumpeter Swan

Then: Only 73  
Now: 25,000

