

Habitat Loss

There are billions of people on Earth. These people need places to live. They also need places to work, play, and learn. When people build these places, they often leave plants and animals without homes. This means that more and more structures need to be built to accommodate everyone. Humans are crowding other living things out of their habitats.

Land that belongs to plants and animals is cleared to make room for new developments. This destroys the homes of many plants and animals. For example, birds' nests are destroyed—sometimes with babies or eggs still inside. Ponds are filled in. This destroys important breeding areas for frogs, toads, salamanders, and other amphibians. While some animals are able to get away and find new homes, many more perish.

Animals face other dangers as a result of people developing the land. Food becomes scarce as plants and other animals disappear. This forces animals to forage through trash cans and garages looking for food. People view these animals as pests and look for ways to get rid of them. Animals that once ran free are often killed by cars as new roads are built.



For the Teacher

Project

Play a game to simulate animals and plants being crowded out of their habitat by humans.

Materials

- CD player
- CD of animal sounds
- chairs—one fewer than there are students

Directions

1. Have each student choose an animal or a plant to "be" during this game.
2. Set up the chairs in a circle.
3. Choose someone to operate the CD player.
4. Play musical chairs:
 - a. The CD operator plays the animal sounds while everyone circles the chairs.
 - b. He or she pauses the CD and the "organisms" scramble to find a seat.
 - c. When a player is left standing without a chair, he or she is "extinct" because his or her habitat has disappeared.
 - d. For the next round, another chair is removed.
5. Continue playing in this manner until only one "organism" is left.