

Manatee Musical Chairs



Objective

Students will learn factors that affect manatee populations.

Materials

- chairs (one for each student)
- index cards (one for each student)
- marker
- recording device
- recording of students singing the manatee song or another musical selection

Action

1. This game is played like musical chairs. Make a double row of chairs, back to back so they're facing both directions. There should be enough chairs for every student. Place an index card on the back of each chair, facing down so the students can't read it.
2. Explain that the students are going to pretend that they're manatees swimming in their habitat. The chairs represent this habitat. While there are enough chairs for everyone to sit on, the manatees' habitat is safe.
3. Lead the students in a discussion about factors that make the manatees' habitat unsafe. Explain that on the back of each chair there's an index card with a habitat threat written on it.
4. Explain that this game is played like musical chairs. Tell the students that you're going to play a recording of them singing the manatee song (or another musical selection.) While it's playing, the students will march around the chairs. When the music stops, they need to quickly find a seat.
5. The first time the music stops there should be enough chairs for every student. Have the student standing in front of one of the chairs on the end remove the index card from the back. Read the index card to the class. Explain that this threat has entered the manatee's habitat. Ask the students if they think all of the manatees will still be safe with this threat in their habitat. Have the students describe what they think could happen to the manatees because of this threat. To show how the manatee's habitat is affected, remove the chair that had the index card on it.
6. Point out that there will no longer be enough chairs for every student to sit. This signifies the loss of a safe place for the manatees to live. Since there are no longer enough chairs, one of the students will be left standing when the music stops. This student represents a manatee that has died as a result of the threat in its environment. This student must stand or sit on the sidelines.
7. Play the game until only one student is left. Discuss the implications represented by this game. Ask the students to describe what happens if there are too many threats in the manatees' environment.