

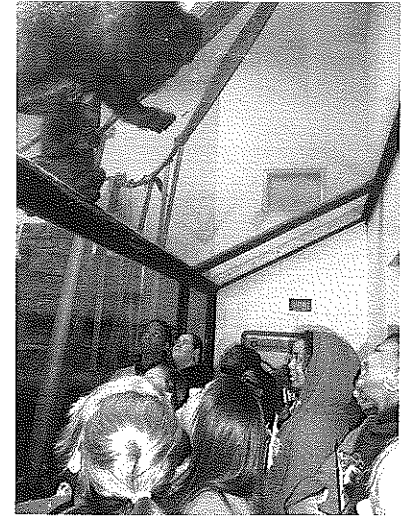
Collaboration Increases Conservation Ethic among Urban Students

By Natalie Cook

Recently the Toledo Zoological Society and Toledo Public School (TPS) investigated techniques to increase student learning through unique experiences in an urban environment. With a focus on students' knowledge, concern and feelings about animals, the project intended to answer which teaching method influences student attitudes and knowledge about animals and their conservation plights more, a discussion/lecture in a classroom or a visit to the zoo. The study brought up many more interesting questions including: What impact do inquiry-based visits to a zoo have upon the attitudes and knowledge regarding animals of girls as compared to boys?; and How much of an impact does the inquiry based/ zoo setting versus the traditional class setting have on the different age groups attitude and knowledge of animals?

The partnering school, Natural Science Technology Center (NSTC) is a career and technical school that offers students in an urban school district courses in floriculture, animal management and natural resources classes in addition to those core classes they take at their home schools.

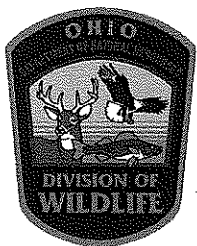
In the span of a week, forty NSTC high school students learned about four different animals in both of two different teaching formats – a classroom lesson in lecture format and a zoo lesson at an animal exhibit that included a participatory animal behavior activity and a biofact.



Finally, the students were divided into the four groups representing each of the topic animals. The scenario they received was that they had to present to an International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) panel on why their animal should not be extinct. Due to a multitude of reasons, the IUCN only had the funding to save one of the four animal species. Students were allowed to research and make flyers, then each group gave a presentation to the panel and one animal species was saved.

Through the use of pre- and post-tests, results support a positive correlation between animal knowledge and concern for conservation status, as well as animal knowledge and feelings about an animal. As student knowledge about the animal and its environmental needs increases, so do the concerns for conservation action and the feelings about the animal.

With five urban zoos in Ohio, this collaborative project can easily be duplicated by other zoos/nature center educators and classroom teachers. For more information about the project, contact Natalie Cook at gnattygirl@yahoo.com.



2011 Wildlife Diversity Conference: March 9, 2011

Aladdin Shrine Complex, Columbus, Ohio

Wildlife Diversity: Connecting Wildlife, Habitat and People

We will feature presentations on how to interconnect wildlife, habitat and people to conserve our native wildlife. Our keynote speaker will cover the dynamics of wildlife diversity enthusiasts and enlighten us on our "customers". Topics for the day will include:

- ✦ Sandhill cranes
- ✦ Conservation genetics and the Eastern massasaugas
- ✦ Distribution of Softshell turtles
- ✦ Evaluating stress in hellbenders
- ✦ Fostering Conservation Partnerships
- ✦ Birding for everyone
- ✦ Fishing access for steelhead trout and riparian corridor protection

The newest Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp will be available at the Conference for \$15. The stamp features a male Eastern amberwing dragonfly with proceeds supporting wildlife diversity conservation, research and education in Ohio. Put your "stamp" on wildlife conservation!

Please join us on March 9th and bring a friend. The conference will provide opportunities to ask questions, share ideas and network with others interested in natural resource conservation and management.

For information after January 10, please call 1.800.WILDLIFE, or visit www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife.