

# SAMPLE ACTIVITY

from

## Learning through Legacy

Alabama's Environmental Education Guide

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## OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to:

Design a poster that will identify types of litter harmful to aquatic wildlife.

## BACKGROUND:

“Only recently have we become aware of how severely we are plundering our planet. Some argue that pollution always existed, that we should be no more upset by the extinction of the bald eagle than that of the dinosaurs. This ignores the basic fact that we are no longer in a slow evolution process but in a violent explosive one. No comparison is possible. There are no precedents. We have to face the danger as a new kind of human peril that only human measures can remedy. The life cycle and the water cycle are inseparable; we must save our oceans and waterways if we are to save mankind.” This is a direct quote written by Jacques Cousteau in a book in 1968. Things have changed and not necessarily for the best. The litter problem on beaches and in rivers, lakes, streams, and ponds can be solved if people take litter home instead of throwing it in the water and on the shores. Public awareness and education can be persuasive elements in cleaning up aquatic environments.

## VOCABULARY:

aquatic wildlife, litter, harmful, identify

## ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Gather materials needed such as fish net, fish line, balloons, plastic bags, poster board, construction paper, markers, and drawing instruments.

## PROCEDURE:

### *Setting the Stage*

1. Have a student come forward. Tell the class to pretend that this student is a wading bird. Hold up a piece of fishing line. Ask: “What would happen if this wading bird were to get caught in this fishing line?” Carefully wrap the fishing line around the student’s feet and ask, “Could this wading bird walk like this?” Explain the dangers of fishing line to aquatic wildlife.
2. Have another student come forward. Tell the class to pretend that this student is a dolphin. Hold up a balloon or a plastic bag. Ask: “What would happen if this dolphin ingested this balloon or plastic bag?” Explain that the dolphin could not digest the plastic bag or the balloon; therefore, it would lay in the dolphin’s stomach making it feel full and eventually starving it to death.
3. Have another student come forward. Have the class pretend this student is a pelican. Hold up a piece of fish net. Ask: “What would happen if this pelican got its wing caught in this net?” Put the net gently around the student’s arm. Ask the student, “Could you fly like this?” Explain the dangers of fish net to aquatic wildlife.

## Grades:

6-8

## Subjects:

Science, Social Studies, Language  
Arts, Art

## Time Needed:

One-two class periods

## Materials:

cardboard pieces  
poster board  
construction paper  
pictures of aquatic wildlife  
pictures of litter  
letters or stencils for lettering  
drawing pencils  
color markers  
types of litter that could be harmful to  
aquatic wildlife (such as plastic  
rings, fishing line, plastic bags, etc.)

### *Activity*

1. Explain that students are to design a poster that will educate the public to the dangers of litter to aquatic wildlife.
2. Tell students they are to use the materials given to them but to be creative.
3. Tell students they should make a rough draft of their posters before beginning actual construction. Be sure they keep this rough draft to submit as a part of their grade.

### *Follow-Up*

1. Have students share their posters with the class.
2. Have students place their posters around the school for viewing.

### **EXTENSION:**

Have students conduct a poster contest.

### **RESOURCES:**

*Marine debris: Get a grip on it.* (1990). Seattle, WA: Marine Advisory Service.

*Trashing the oceans.* (1988). Washington, DC: Center for Marine Conservation. Video available from: U.S. Coast Guard, Attn: Sea Partners Supplies, 2100 Second St., S.W., Washington, DC 20593, fax: (202) 267-

*In the ocean with Jacques Cousteau.* (1986). Danbury Press.