

Rationale

To understand the behaviors of the condors during feeding and illustrate the condor's curious nature, students will do feeding observations. .

Objectives

1. Students compile data on feeding
2. Students identify characteristics of a condor feeding event
3. Students understand the lifestyle of a scavenger

Aligned Standards

NGSS: Analyzing Data and Communicating Information; Patterns
LS2.D: As a group, condors obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes. Predator differences and number of condors change the social dynamic and observable behavior.

Time

Day 1 of two-day lesson
Teaching time: 45 minutes (approximately)

Vocabulary

scavenger
feeding event
vigilance

Tech Integration

Feeding photo library

PROCEDURE – DAY 1

DATA (30 minutes)

Teacher should frame the lesson in such a way that the students are early condor researchers, trying to get the best info from photos to determine norms about condor feeding behaviors. Each image should be displayed for a certain time increment (eg. 30s). Students should log the behaviors seen in the image and take note of: juveniles, other birds, number of birds, day or night, etc.

Begin by brainstorming the many factors that are involved with a condor's feeding event. Show the students feeding event photos in order:

Animal dies

Scavengers approach

Hierarchy within different species

Hierarchy within same species

Taking turns, chasing if threatened

Have the students discuss what they saw and infer why the animals might behave that way. Discuss vigilance: Why do condors wait so long before they feed? Why do younger/lower hierarchy birds take more risks? Why feed in a group? How does this relate or compare to how we eat as humans?

GRAPH (15min)

Depending on needs of class, students can either graph the data they have collected on feeding behaviors (Y axis as number of times observed, X axis as type of observation) or answer comprehension questions in their journals.

Before you begin

Prepare to display feeding event images.

What to do

The curious nature of the condor is one of Condor Kids' overarching goals for understanding. Feeding events are an excellent environment to observe this curious nature.

Data

Frame this lesson in such a way that the students are early condor researchers, trying to get the best information from photos to determine norms about condor feeding behaviors. The condor program relied and still relies on data observed from the wild population to learn more about condors. Before the use of radio telemetry and wing tags, photo identification was used to estimate the population of wild condors. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would collect all the photographs taken and identify the bird by missing, growing, and broken feathers as well as visible signs of age (color of under-wing feathers and head).

Before showing the images, brainstorm with the class the factors involved with the feeding event. Consider appropriate responses with your students. Discuss in advance what they might see, why such things occur, and what an appropriate response might be. For example, discuss whether or not the students should yell "EWW!" or hide underneath a desk.

What do they expect to see? List on the board an expected sequence of events. Ask the students how the term "scavenger" applies to the condor. What is a scavenger's role?

The sequence should be as follows:

1. Animal carcass in sight
2. Scavengers approach. Turkey Vultures, who depend mostly upon smell to locate carrion, approach first
3. Scavengers that search by sight (condors) approach
4. Inter-species hierarchies develop
5. Intra-species hierarchies develop
6. Condors take turns eating; chases can occur here

Use the time-lapsed photos of the feeding event in Feeding Event photo library. Each "Feeding Sequence" image should be displayed for 30 seconds. Then show the students the time-lapse video from the Feeding Event library titled "Condor Feast Video." Students should log the behaviors they see in the photo and take note of: juvenile condors, other birds (ravens, turkey vultures, golden eagles), the number of birds, day or night, etc.

Graph or Journal

Have the students discuss what they saw and infer why the animals might behave in the ways observed. Discuss vigilance: why do condors wait so long before they feed? How did the condor most likely find the carrion? Why do younger/lower hierarchy birds take more risks? Why feed in a group? How does this relate or compare to how we eat as humans?

Have students answer the following questions in their journals:

1. What are common characteristics of a feeding event?
2. Describe a scavenger.
3. Would you describe condors as "social?" Why?

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Day 1 of two-day lesson
Teaching time: 45 minutes
(approximately)



OPTIONAL EXTENSION 1:

Learn about the ways to identify condors today. Visit numbering system to learn about how to identify condors. Visit condor watch to practice.

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ELL MODIFICATION:

Translate the vocabulary words and give an image for each one.



OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

Graph the data observed in the feeding event. The Y-axis should be the number of times observed and the X-axis should be the type of observation. ELL Modification for Extension: Label the X axis with drawings instead of words.