

Rationale

To understand the behaviors of the condors during feeding and their social structure, students will participate in feeding simulation activity.

Objectives

1. Students identify characteristics of a condor feeding event
2. Students understand the lifestyle of a scavenger
3. Students understand the social structure of a condor population
4. Students understand the social interactions condors have with competing scavengers at a feeding event

Aligned Standards

NGSS: Asking Questions, Defining Problems; Patterns and Structure, Function
LS2.D: Roles of ravens, turkey vultures, golden eagles, and condors in feeding events illustrate interactions and behaviors. Groups of condors work in a hierarchy to obtain food and compete with other animals at the feeding event.

Time

Day 2 of two-day lesson
Teaching time: one hour (approximately)

Vocabulary

scavenger
feeding event
socialization

Materials

Supplies to create improv cards as needed

Tech Integration

Feeding photo library

PROCEDURE – DAY 2

IMAGES (15 minutes)

Begin by showing the Condor Feast video, “Feeding Other,” and “Feeding” photos 1 - 3. Discuss the role and examples of a scavenger.

IMPROV (45 minutes)

Pass out improv cards to each student. Give students time to read their card; discuss the different roles as a class if necessary. Then guide the class by directing students through the first scenario. Encourage the students to be creative in their improvisation.

SCENARIO 1: Condor conservationists have just put out a carcass of dead meat for the California Condors to eat. But before the condors find the meat, Ravens and Turkey Vultures find the carcass first. As they begin feeding, California Condors circle overhead and perch in trees, ready to join the other birds at the feeding event.

SCENARIO 2: Condors and Turkey Vultures are together at a feeding event. Then an older California Condor begins to chase one of the juvenile condors around the feeding site to make sure the juvenile and all the other condors know the social structure of the group.

SCENARIO 3: Ravens and 2 condors are together at a feeding event. Then 3 Golden Eagles show up to feed as well.

SCENARIO 4: California Condors are feeding together with 3 ravens and 2 Turkey vultures. Then 1 Golden Eagle arrives and wants to feed as well. A little later on, a Mountain Lion comes to the feeding event.

FEEDING FRENZY II BIOLOGY G

<p>You are a YOUNG CALIFORNIA CONDOR. You may show up to feeding events after ravens and turkey vultures. But remember to run away from any Mountain Lions. If there are more Golden Eagles than condors, you need to back up and let the Golden Eagles feed first.</p>	<p>You are a YOUNG CALIFORNIA CONDOR. You may show up to feeding events after ravens and turkey vultures. But remember to run away from any Mountain Lions. If there are more Golden Eagles than condors, you need to back up and let the Golden Eagles feed first.</p>	<p>You are a YOUNG CALIFORNIA CONDOR. You may show up to feeding events after ravens and turkey vultures. But remember to run away from any Mountain Lions. If there are more Golden Eagles than condors, you need to back up and let the Golden Eagles feed first.</p>
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<p>You are a GOLDEN EAGLE. You may show up to feeding events after ravens and turkey vultures. But remember to run away from any Mountain Lions. If there are more condors than Golden Eagles, you need to back up and let the condors feed first.</p>	<p>You are a GOLDEN EAGLE. You may show up to feeding events after ravens and turkey vultures. But remember to run away from any Mountain Lions. If there are more condors than Golden Eagles, you need to back up and let the condors feed first.</p>	<p>You are a MOUNTAIN LION. You may show up to the feeding event after other animals have been feeding. When you show up, the birds will leave the food alone!</p>

Before you begin

Print and cut out improv cards for each student.

What to do

Scavengers are extremely important consumers; they help to clean up the environment. This function adds context for the condor feeding event and social environment.

Images

Begin the lesson by replaying the Condor Feast video and showing the “Feeding Other” and “Feeding” 1-3 photos from the Feeding Event photo library. Write the word “Scavenger” on the board. Ask students explain the role of a scavenger and give examples.

Pass out the prepared “improv cards.” Randomly select roles for each student. Give students 3 minutes to read their card and ask any questions about their role. Students are to be given the roles of: Raven, Turkey Vulture, Golden Eagle, juvenile condor, adult condor, and Mountain Lion. Have students hold on to their card throughout the activity.

Improv

Remind the students of the importance of social interactions between the same species and between different species. Spend time explaining the roles if students are unfamiliar with the animals represented.

When the students feel comfortable about their roles, guide the class by directing the students through the first scenario (copied below). Ask and guide with the following questions: “Who approaches first?” and “What happens when the condor arrives?” and “Which condor is first to the food?”

The activity should play out in such a way that the Ravens or Turkey Vultures show up to the event first. The condor and golden eagle can come next, but defer to the improv cards to know how the interaction between them is to play out. Answer questions as they arise during the game and be sure to discuss how each species feeds. Go over the differences between following the sense of smell vs. the sense of sight. Point out any differences as the students accurately portray them.

Scenario 1: Condor conservationists have just put out a carcass of dead meat for the condors to eat. But before the condors find the meat, Ravens and Turkey Vultures find the carcass first. As they begin feeding, California Condors circle overhead and perch in trees, ready to join the other birds at the feeding event.

Scenario 2: Condors and Turkey Vultures are together at a feeding event. Then an older California Condor begins to chase one of the juvenile condors around the feeding site to make sure the juvenile and all the other condors know the social structure of the group.

Scenario 3: Ravens and 2 condors are together at a feeding event. Then 3 Golden Eagles show up to feed as well.

Scenario 4: California Condors are feeding together with 3 ravens and 2 Turkey vultures. Then 1 Golden Eagle arrives and wants to feed as well. A little later on, a Mountain Lion comes to the feeding event.

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OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

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

VARIATIONS:

Not all roles are needed; students can create a visual identifier for their role; make the cards into necklaces by taping a string on the back of the card long enough so that it can hang around the student’s neck.

ELL MODIFICATION:

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