

Conservation Makeover - Vaquita and Totoaba



ACTIVITY: Raising awareness of a vaquita, totoaba, and importance of sustainable seafood

GRADE LEVEL(S): 3rd to 6th



 3 sessions (or more)
(20-40 minutes each)

OVERVIEW: Students become the publicists for important animals that need to be in the public eye.

DISCIPLINES: Science, language arts, visual arts

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- gather, organize, and interpret scientific data
- create an inviting publicity campaign to raise awareness of the vaquita, totoaba, and sustainable seafood
- present their approach to the class, other classes, and elsewhere
- increase support for vaquita protection and fishing and eating sustainably

MATERIALS: The exact materials depends on how students plan to promote vaquita and totoaba

Poster boards	Glue	(OPTIONAL)
Markers	Writing paper	Video camera
Crayons/Pencils/pens	Scissors	School appropriate social
Construction paper	Other craft items as needed	media platforms

RESOURCES: Vaquita, totoaba and other Save the Vaquita Fact Sheets

WHAT TO DO:

Divide class into teams or cooperative learning groups.

1. Take a poll. Write student answers for the “A” list on one side and the answers for “B” on the other of the chalkboard/white writing surface.
Ask students: *Tell me something you know about a(n) [animal]?*

Animals:	A	B
	killer whale	vaquita
	clownfish	totoaba
	great white shark	angel shark

Teacher’s note: The list generally shows students know more about animals in list A.

2. Have students compare their knowledge of killer whales vs vaquitas, which animal did they know more about? Then tell students: *There are millions of killer whales all over the world. Vaquita are the most endangered whale species. There are less than 30 vaquita left. Scientists fear they’ll become extinct in the next few years. Totoaba are also critically endangered. There are different kinds of clownfish and they are not endangered.*

Ask: *Why do you think we know more about killer whales than the critically endangered vaquita?*

3. Ask: • *Do animals that are less popular or cute need to be protected? Why/Why not?*
• *How could you make vaquitas and totoaba more popular?*
(Hints: What do companies do to raise awareness of a product? Whom do movie stars rely on to make them more popular or advertise a movie?)

Answers you're looking for might include: Public relations, marketing, publicists, advocates, fans, social media....etc.

4. Tell students they're going to help vaquitas and totoabas with an extreme makeover! They'll become the publicist for these animals. Students will become the voice to help raise awareness of vaquitas and totoabas and the importance of sustainable fishing methods and buying/eating sustainable seafood.

Student teams brainstorm to create, write, and find ways to get their message to fellow students, the school, their hometown, and the world (if social media an appropriate option for your students). Have students discuss what kinds of approach works best for them. Humor, serious, a series of messages, a single message....etc.

5. Working in cooperative learning groups, have each team construct a list of key points that makes their creature unique, stand out, a star! The list might include adaptations, habitat, predators/prey, conservation concerns, or other cool things. As the animal's publicists, the team will come up with a marketing plan to raise awareness and appreciation of their species. Let teams brainstorm as they come up with their approach. As part of the campaign, students might create:

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|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| • poster | • advertisement | • slogan/catch phrase |
| • brochure | • skit | • funny photo bomb |
| • song | • Top Ten list | • infographic |
| • video | • jingle | • memes |

6. Each team unveils their conservation message to the class, other classes, even the entire school.

