

Subject

Language Arts
Science

Grade 5- 6- 7

Summary

We don't think of wildlife being affected by natural disasters, such as hurricanes. But Mother Nature spares no one. Two cruising kids have written reports on two bird species that were recently affected by two hurricanes in Grenada. Students can read their reports and answer questions.

Overall

Expectations.

Students will develop an understanding of the power of weather conditions.

Specific

Expectations

Students will describe ways in which weather conditions affect the activities of humans and other animals.

Students will read two scientific reports on endangered species and answer comprehension questions.

Authors

Kim Saunders with
Ben and Emma
Goddard

Hurricanes: unexpected casualties

BACKGROUND

The end of November brings the end of hurricane season here in the tropics. It has been a good season in Grenada but it has not been that way on islands in the Pacific Ocean or in Mexico. When hurricanes strike, we often see images of total destruction on



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television. Roofs are ripped off buildings, homes smashed, and neighbourhoods are completely destroyed. Waves from hurricane storms erode beaches, and wipe out coral reefs and on shore, strong winds blow down stands of trees and habitats of land animals are in turn gone.

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Recently, cruising kids, Ben and Emma aboard *sv Carapan* did a little research and wrote reports on two birds that were devastated by two hurricanes that nearly wiped Grenada off the map. Hurricane Ivan struck Grenada in 2004 and hurricane Emily followed in 2005. Up until 2004, Grenada had been hurricane free for more than 50 years. Both these hurricanes brought two species of birds - the Grenada Dove and the Hook-billed Kite to the edge of extinction. These two birds are currently listed as endangered in Grenada.



The Grenada Dove
(*Leptotila Wellsi*)



ACTIVITY

Read over Emma and Ben's reports on these two endangered species. Following each report, answer questions about their research.

Grenada's Endangered Species: Grenada Dove

by Emma Goddard

Sadly the Grenada Dove is almost extinct. Since they only live in Grenada there is approximately 64 left in the world. Before hurricane Ivan there was approximately 200 birds. Unfortunately the hurricane wiped out more than half their population. Another reason why they are so endangered is because of all the introduced predators including cats, dogs, mongooses and snakes (who eat the eggs).

The Grenada Dove spends most of its life on the ground eating seed pods. During mating season the males sit in the trees and they call every eight seconds to the females. When they are disturbed they fall to the ground where they become prey. The Grenada Dove mates 3 times per year and each time they mate they have 2 eggs. They nest in trees.

The Grenada Dove is 30 cm (12 inches) long. It is very camouflaged with its grey-brown under parts and back, white belly, pink breast and its outer tail is tipped with white. There are no markings on its wings. It also has white from head to crown.

The Grenada Dove lives in the dry forests on the coast of southern Grenada (Mount Hartman National Park). Dry forests have sparse rainfall and are close to the coast in low altitudes. It is scrub wood land with cactus and acacia trees. Unfortunately, this land is being cleared for houses and agriculture. The habitat for the Grenada Dove is shrinking. They are shy of humans and as their habitat becomes more crowded their breeding is disturbed.

Questions

1. How many Grenada Doves were wiped out in Grenada by the two hurricanes- Ivan and Emily?
2. What type of food does the Grenada Dove eat?
3. What are the three most significant causes for the decline in the Grenada Dove population?
4. What is the difference between extinct and endangered?
5. The Grenada dove mates 3 times per year. How long would it take its numbers to reach what they are today, if their population steadily increased and all their young survived each year?

REFERENCE:

Image for the Grenada Dove taken from, www.skyviews.com/grenada/nature.html

Grenada's Endangered Species: Hook-billed Kite

by Ben Goddard

Who

The Grenada Hook-billed Kite (*chondrohierax unicanthus mirus*,) is a small hawk-like bird about the size of a small chicken. It has a wingspan of approximately 2-3 feet (0.75 – 1 m). It has a hooked beak which is great for eating insects. It has a grey head, a black back, a barred grey and white stomach and underside and a black tail with two white bars. These birds are usually solitary but can sometimes be found in groups of two or three.

What

These little guys don't necessarily have many predators but two of them are tree boas and mongooses. Kites tend to feed on tree snails, frogs, caterpillars and insects.

When

The Hook-billed Kite started to become endangered when hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and hurricane Emily 10 months later hit Grenada. The hurricanes affected them because of habitat loss and egg loss. They lost eggs along with the nests and other adult kites as well. Food was scarce after the hurricanes so hunting was difficult.

Where

The kites like to live in the dry forests near the southern coast of Grenada, the mangroves in Levera near the northern coast, Grande Etang near the center of the island and even in agricultural plots and gardens. Their nesting places are forests, marshes, and lone trees.

Questions

1. What types of food does a Hook-billed kite eat? Why do you think it's important for this bird species to have a hooked bill (or beak)?
2. How did hurricanes Ivan and Emily affect the population of kites?
3. What effect will developing agricultural land have on the bird population?
4. In the first paragraph (Who), Ben wrote Grenada Hook-billed Kite with three words in brackets (*chondrohierax unicanthus mirus*,). This is the latin name for this species of bird. In fact, all plants and animals have latin names. The first name is called its common name. Interestingly, there are several common names for the Hook-billed Kite including the Mountain Hawk, Merlion and Gree-gree. Coincidentally, another local bird, the Broad-winged hawk, is also commonly called the Gree-gree. Why do you think it's important to include both the common name and the latin name for animals in a report?

REFERENCE: Image for the Hook-billed kite taken from, www.peregrinefund.org/archived_conserve.asp?m...