

Endangered Species

By
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Synopsis: **Baby eagle learns about the differences between endangered and threatened species and the history of the bald eagle as a threatened species.**

Concepts: **Endangered species, threatened species, DDT, pesticide bans, proper use of chemicals**

Baby Sam (dodo puppet used if baby eagle is not available)

Pierre Pelican (Cajun accent)

Staff

Pierre: Man, am I hungry today. I was just thinking how hungry I am today and did I tell you how hungry I am today.

Staff: Pierre, you are always hungry.

Pierre: Yeah, but today, MAN, am I hungry.

Eagle: (comes on stage whimpering).

Pierre: Hey it's Baby Sam, the baby eagle. What's wrong for you, cher.

Eagle: (sniffing). Someone told me I was in danger but they would not tell me why. I'm scared. I don't want to be in danger but if I don't know why then I can't do anything about it.

Staff: First of all, Baby Sam, they were not saying you were IN danger but that you were endangered as in endangered species. Second, bald eagles are no

longer listed as an endangered species but are now only listed as threatened.

Eagle: I feel slightly better but what is the difference between an endangered species and a threatened one.

Staff: In simple terms an endangered species is one that is on the verge of becoming extinct and a threatened species is one that is likely to be on the brink of extinction in the near future.

Eagle: But why did we become threatened in the first place.

Pierre: I know! I know! The same t'ing happened to ma cousin the brown pelican.

Staff: That's right, Pierre. Why don't you explain further?

Pierre: Well, cher, let me learn you somet'ing. A long, long time ago, way back in the 1940s, you people used a lot of pesticides and chemicals without even t'inking of what ya'll were doing. Dere was one particular chemical dat was a real bad one and has since been banned in the United States. Dat chemical was called DDT.

Eagle: Brrrrr! Just the name sounds terrible.

Pierre: Well dat ain't the half of it, cher. Dis here chemical caused birds to lay eggs with shells so thin that they would break if you looked wrong at dem. With eggs like dat, the brown pelicans and the bald eagles could hatch no youngin's so the populations began to drop.

Eagle: So what changed?

Pierre: It wasn't until the 1970s dat people wised up and stopped using bad chemicals like DDT dat these birds started to make a comeback. But some people continue to misuse dangerous chemicals.

Eagle: Are they still misusing them?

Staff: Not as much as before, cher, but some people to continue to over apply and not follow the label instructions.

Eagle: But if you use twice as much, it is twice as good, right?

Staff: No, little one. Using twice as much as the label calls for could be dangerous to plants, fishes and animals.

Eagle: So if everyone follows the directions on the labels and uses only approved chemicals, I won't ever be endangered again?

Pierre: And maybe, cher, someday you might not even be threatened.

Staff: That's correct. We need to use only what we need and buy only what we will use, especially when we are talking about lawn chemicals and pesticides. By following the directions on the label and being environmentally smart, we can help prevent other plants and animals from being threatened or endangered. Just maybe we can get the baby eagle off of the threatened list.