



# World View Fellows: *OVERBook* Project on the Environment and Sustainability: Study Guide-Nature’s Rights

**Title:** *Yours, Mine, and Nature’s: Understanding our Role in Protecting the Rights of Nature”*

**Study Guide Theme:** Nature’s Rights

**Featured Photos:**



Image: *Cows and Smoke*



Image: *Seal in Net*



Image: *Shark Fins*

**Overview:** The students will explore the meaning of “rights” by first investigating human rights. Then, the students will utilize the images: *Cows and Smoke*, *Seal in Net*, and *Shark Fins* to better understand the need for nature to be seen as an entity deserving of rights, and our responsibility in protecting it, ensuring a healthier world for all living things. Following the lesson, the students will have an opportunity to go a step further, and determine if their own school grounds are eligible for a wildlife habitat certification from the *National Wildlife Federation*.

**Grade level(s):** 3-5

**Subject(s):** Science, Social Studies, ELA

**Corresponding National Standards:**

ELA

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.5	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1	

Science

3-LS4-3.	5-LS2-1.	5-ESS3-1.
2-LS4-1.	3-LS4-2.	
3-LS4.D.	3-LS4-4.	

Social Studies

Standard 1	Standard 4	Standard 7	Standard 10
Standard 2	Standard 5	Standard 8	
Standard 3	Standard 6	Standard 9	

**Corresponding Global Competency Skills:** [Asia Society](#)

- Investigate the World
- Recognize Perspectives
- Communicate Ideas

## Take Action

### Essential Question(s) (include 1-3):

What are rights?

Does nature have rights?

Why is it important to protect nature's rights?

### Specific Strategies and Activities by Grade Level:

Introduction and Poster Analysis (30 minutes):

The teacher will open the lesson with [nature sounds](#)\* playing in the room. The teacher will ask the students what they hear. Then the teacher will ask to describe what they picture in their mind when they hear these sounds. The teacher will then ask the students to think about ways that nature could be harmed. (Share aloud.)

*(\*This is a YouTube.com link. Be aware that there may be an ad that plays at the start of the video. You can skip the ad, by clicking "skip" on the video. The video itself is 1 hour. If you cannot access YouTube through your school network, you can try starting the lesson outdoors, or downloading a free nature sounds app on your personal device ahead of time, to get the same effect.)*

The teacher will then provide access to the "Human Rights" poster (either via projection or individual hard copies-see "Use of Image" on poster attachment) and a copy of the attached note-taking guide. After allowing the students the time to review the poster, the teacher should ask the students to share their thoughts about the poster with a partner. The teacher will then ask the students to work through the following *Discussion Questions* on the attached note-taking guide:

- After you've looked over this graphic, what do you think is meant by the term, "rights?"
- If people have rights, including the youngest and the oldest of us, do you think that the environment in which we live should also have rights?
- If you do think that nature also has rights, which parts of the environment do you think this includes?
  - Why?
- If nature has rights, whose responsibility is it to protect those rights?
- Can you think of a time when you think that nature's rights have been violated?

The teacher will invite the students to partner-share what they have written

- Walk around the room to listen in on partner-sharing
- Following this part of the activity, fade out the nature sounds

The teacher will then ask for students to share any "a-ha" moments from their partner-sharing with the larger group. (This could mean a new understanding of the term "rights," a clear explanation of whose responsibility it is to protect nature's rights, or it could be a strong example of a time when nature's rights have been violated. Additionally, there may be viewpoints in the room that disagree with nature being given rights, and these perspectives are important to unpack as well. The hope is that all students will arrive at the understanding that by protecting the Earth, we are also protecting ourselves.)

Exploration 15-20 minutes:

The teacher will read the book, [Why Should I Protect Nature?](#) (Written by Jen Green), aloud to the class. The students will be asked to listen/look for ways that the book addresses how nature is being harmed, ways to rectify the situation, and the connection between nature and people. The teacher will facilitate a class discussion about the points of interest in the book.

Application 30 minutes:

Working in small groups, or partnerships, the students will put the pieces of a puzzle\* together to see a complete image (OverBook images used: *Shark Fins*, *Cows and Smoke*, and *Seal in Net*). They will need to work through Part A of the “Picking up the Pieces” activity sheet to document their learning as they move through this learning experience. (\*Before the class time, the teacher will need to cut up the images into “puzzle pieces” and place them in a bag/envelope. Only one image is needed for each group or partnership.)

Then, independently, the students will complete Part B of the “Picking up the Pieces” activity sheet. If time allows, the teacher should encourage the students to share their revision of the image, depicting a protected environment in which nature’s rights are honored.

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### **Extending the Learning:**

The teacher will share the site for the [certified schoolyard habitat program](#) sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation. The students will be encouraged to assist in walking the grounds of the school, using the certification checklist, to determine if their schoolyard is eligible for recognition. If it is not eligible, identify a project\* or two that could make eligibility possible.

(\*Building nesting boxes in the Makerspace or Fabrication Lab on campus, or simply planting specific plants that will provide food sources or places to raise young, like milkweed.)

### **Materials:**

science journal (or utilize the attached note-taking guide, or a “Notes” app on a device)  
“Human Rights” poster by Zen Pencils  
Nature Sounds link on YouTube.com  
*Cows and Smoke*, *Shark Fins*, and *Seal in Net* images from OverBook  
Why Should I Protect Nature? By Jen Green  
*National Wildlife Federation* website  
“Picking up the Pieces” activity sheet  
crayons/markers

### **Additional Resources:**

New York news station explains the movement to endow nature with legal rights; [Nature’s Law: The Right of Nature to Exist](#)  
[Timeline](#) of important events regarding the evolution of the Nature’s Rights movement  
[Typographic video representation](#) of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

### **Bibliography:**

Cheung, K. (2013, January 3). *Shark Fins*. Hong Kong, China

Beltrá, D. (2008, August 12). *Cows and Smoke*. Brazil (Amazon).

Pitt, M. (2001, May). *Seal in Net*. Pacific Ocean, Hawaii (Kure Atoll).

Gav. (2013, October 23). #134, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved Monday, October 8, 2018.  
<https://zenpencils.com/tag/humanrights/>

Lawson, J. (2017, March 1). *Nature Sounds of a Forest for Relaxing-Natural Soothing Sound of a Waterfall & Bird Sounds*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2NmyoXBxmE>

Green, J. (2002, March 14). Why Should I Protect Nature? Hodder and Stoughton Children’s Division.

Belke, T. (2018, September 8). *Nature’s Law: The Right of Nature to Exist*. Retrieved October 26, 2018.

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Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. (2010). *Timeline*. <http://therightsofnature.org/timeline/>