



STUDENT HANDOUT

Each year, with help from kids across America, **Pennies for the Planet** raises money for some special conservation projects. This year **Pennies for the Planet** projects are:

- Restore Sabal Palm Forest
- Preserve Our Barrier Islands
- Protect the Arctic Ocean

Copy these pages and share with students to teach them about these important projects. For more information, visit www.penniesfortheplanet.org.

Ready for Action

Pennies for the Planet helps amazing animals and the habitats where they live. What can you do to help animals and habitats in your area?

- Learn about the plants, birds, and other animals in your own backyard. The more you know about them, the better you'll be able to protect them!
- Encourage family members to plant only native plants, recycle, help with litter cleanup projects, and conserve water.
- Publish interesting facts about plants, birds, and other animals in your class newsletter or school newspaper.
- Take pictures of the plants, birds, and other animals in your neighborhood. If you can't identify them, investigate to find out what they are.

Want to do more? Visit these websites for lots of ideas!

- www.education.audubon.org
- www.penniesfortheplanet.org

Restore Sabal Palm Forest

Seth Patterson/Gorgas Science Foundation



Graeme Purdy/iStock

Yin Yang/iStock

Look! Was that a cat that just ran by? If you happen to be at the Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary, it might be an

ocelot. An ocelot is about twice the size of a pet cat and looks like a mini leopard. Or it might be a jaguarundi. Jaguarundi are about the size of a pet cat. They don't have spots after they are four months old. In the United States, both animals can only be found at the very tip of Texas on the Rio Grande River. Both are endangered.

Something else you would see at Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary is the sabal palm tree. Sabal palms once were found all around the area. Now they're only in the Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary and a few nearby sections of land. These trees have been crowded out by non-native plants—ones that don't belong in the area. You're likely to see birds of all colors around the sabal palms—green jays, buff-bellied hummingbirds, olive sparrows, and northern flickers.

As houses and roads are built, clusters of native plants and animals may get cut off from one another, threatening their survival. Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary is creating "wildlife corridors"—narrow strips of land that link groups of animals and plants including the ocelot, jaguarundi, and sabal palm.

FUN FACT:

People come from all over the world to see the plants, birds, and other animals at Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary. Visitors have made the trip from as far away as France and China!

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Never release a non-native bird, fish, or other animal into a new environment. Without natural predators, the new creature could overrun those who call the habitat home.

Pennies for the Planet will help Sabal Palm Audubon Sanctuary build wildlife corridors so plants and animals can thrive.

Preserve Our Barrier Islands



Jason Cordell/Stock

Walker Golder/Audubon

Walker Golder/Audubon North Carolina

Lea-Hutaff Island is an undisturbed barrier island off the coast of North Carolina. Barrier islands serve many purposes, including protecting the mainland from hurricanes and storm surges and providing a unique environment for many species. The island is a low, narrow ribbon of sand.

When you step onto Lea-Hutaff Island, you might feel like you're stepping back in time. Although the island is near busy North Carolina beaches, it doesn't have any roads or hotels and is much like it was hundreds of years ago. The island was originally two separate islands, but the inlet between them filled with sand and caused them to join. Today, Audubon biologists safeguard the birds and turtles on the entire island.

In the spring and summer, birds such as the American oystercatcher and the least tern nest directly in the sand on the island's beaches. In the summer, loggerhead turtles lay their eggs on the sandy shore. Their babies will scurry to the ocean and hopefully return one day to make their own nests on the island. The open beach has few predators, increasing the chances of survival. The island provides an important stopover for many migrating birds.

People reach Lea-Hutaff Island by boat. While they're there, they can play on the beaches, swim, fish, and surf. They can also watch the many different types of wildlife. But it's important that visitors are careful not to disturb nesting birds and sea turtles or trample vegetation. The Lea-Hutaff Island Share the Beach campaign is one way to help people know how important it is to protect beach habitats.

Pennies for the Planet will help protect Lea-Hutaff Island for birds, turtles, and other wildlife and to spread the Share the Beach message.

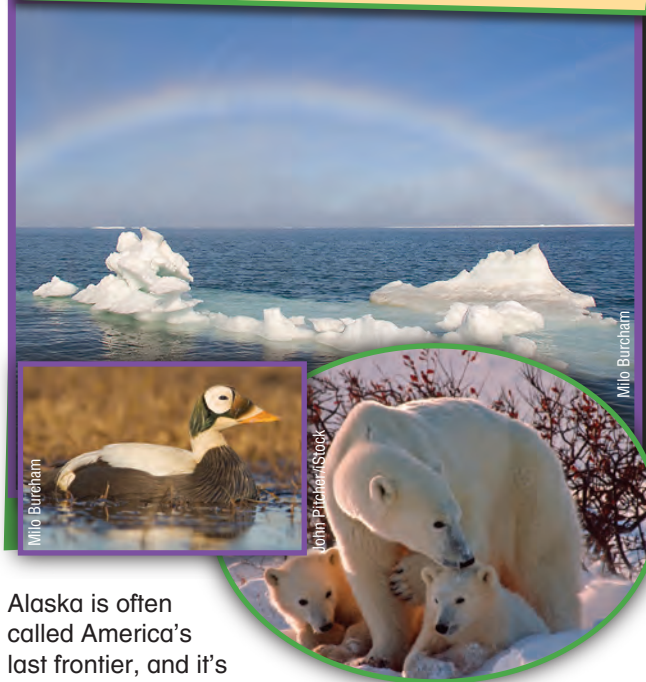
FUN FACT:

Birds like the least tern, common tern, black skimmer, and American oystercatcher thrive in open, sandy areas, with few predators or vegetation. Lea-Hutaff Island provides just the right home for them.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Never disturb a turtle's nest or bird's nest. If you see an area roped off, stay away. And if you take your dog to the beach, keep it on a leash to make sure your furry friend doesn't disturb the wildlife!

Protect the Arctic Ocean



Milo Burcham

John Pichler/Stock

Milo Burcham

Alaska is often called America's last frontier, and it's no wonder why: the state is rich with wildlife and is still largely unspoiled. In northern Alaska, polar bears rule from the top of the food chain, and the Arctic Ocean teems with walruses, seals, whales, and millions of seabirds. The Arctic Ocean may be cold—or even ice-covered—most of the year, but it's rich with life.

Like a true frontier, much of the Arctic is still unknown to scientists. Where do seabirds go during the months of darkness and freezing weather of Arctic winters? As the sea ice melts, where do the walruses rest and care for their young? And exactly where do bowhead whales migrate?

Finding out these answers is more important than ever. New oil exploration is proposed in the Arctic. How will it affect the animals? Scientists need to learn more about Arctic wildlife habitats, then share what they learn with other scientists, citizens, and government decision makers. Everyone must work together to protect areas that are critical to Arctic wildlife.

Pennies for the Planet will help scientists find and protect places in the Arctic that are most important for polar bears, seals, walruses, and seabirds.

FUN FACT:

The Chukchi (pronounced chuck-chee) Sea is home to half of America's polar bears.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Reduce demand for petroleum by walking or riding your bike instead of driving and by using cloth bags instead of plastic (plastic bags are made from petroleum).