

What can we do?

AGE RANGE 5-11 years

LESSON TIME 40 minutes

CURRICULUM LINKS ICT, English, Design technology, Art and design, Geography, Science, Citizenship.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Technology is being used to help track both polar bears and elephants. Special collars with GPS tracking devices are fitted and a signal is then transmitted from the collar by GPS, to scientists. This is known as radio telemetry tracking.

GPS collars are being fitted to elephants to find out more about where they go and what they do. This information is then transmitted back throughout the day and night, so that it is possible to pinpoint the location of an elephant at any time. Another way technology is being used to protect elephants from poachers is by using a drone (a tiny controlled unmanned aircraft). This can be controlled from an iPad in the cab of a truck. It can spot poachers and also, if necessary, be used to divert elephants.

Polar bear researchers are using radio collars to track polar bears in the Arctic so they can find out how they are responding to the changes in the environment as a result of climate change. They want to understand how the bears travel around and how they behave in their natural habitat. By fitting the collars, they are able to record things like weight, length of the bear and the toxicity levels in their fur. Only female bears can be tracked, as male bears have necks that are wider than their heads so the collars would slip off!



Activity

Talk to the children about tracking devices, why they are useful and how they work. Ask the children to research these on the internet.

Ask them to think of another device that could be used to find out more about the way polar bears or elephants live in the wild. One idea could be a 'moon rover' type of device or a special camera which records day to day activities. The children can draw their design using the sheet provided.

In the letter template also provided, ask the children to write a letter to either the WWF (for polar bears) or Born Free Foundation (for elephants), asking them for information and ways in which you might be able to help.

LOWER

- Discuss ways in which the school environment could be improved and made more creature friendly. Talk about why it is important to plant butterfly friendly plants and provide homes for mini beasts.
- Draw a picture of a polar bear or elephant wearing a tracking device which is a bit like a dog collar.

UPPER

- Investigate some of the ways in which organisations are helping to protect these creatures.
- Find out more about how GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking devices work.
- Investigate global warming.

FURTHER IDEAS

- Organise a class assembly to explain the plight of the polar bear or the elephant.
- Run an awareness campaign to explain to other children in the school why these animals are endangered and how they might help them. This could take the form of a poster campaign, quiz or activity sheets.

