

# World Giraffe Day

21<sup>st</sup> June 2019



**“Well as giraffes say, you don't get no leaves unless you  
stick your neck out” - Sid Waddell**

## **SPORT IN THE WILDERNESS**

World Giraffe Day will be celebrated using a SPORT IN THE WILDERNESS lesson plan.

The idea behind Sports in the Wilderness (SITW) is to incorporate as many different types of sports as possible into conservation and environmental education. The goal is to get children moving, practising new skills and learning at the same time. They do not have to be experts at a sport, or master any skills and drills, but rather just play and use their bodies.

Each lesson focuses on a specific animal. There is a theoretical lesson on the animal, a conservation message, and sporting activities that relate to the animal. In line with the Flow Learning Technique, children work through the four stages of learning:

### **1. STAGE ONE – AN ENERGISER**

Children will be introduced to an animal. Stage one will be an energiser that relates to the animal. This could include stretches, warmups or a game related to the animal.

### **2. STAGE TWO – THEORETICAL LESSON**

Stage two is the theoretical lesson where children learn more about the animal. The lesson could focus on the plight of an endangered species, the family dynamics of certain animals, how they depend on the environment and so on.

### **3. STAGE THREE – PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE**

Stage three is the practical experience. This could be a specific type of sport that focuses on the characteristic of the animal, or an activity that involves movement and is relevant to the animal.

### **4. STAGE FOUR – A DEBRIEF**

Stage four is a debrief, where the knowledge learnt is recapped, and conservation messages are encouraged.

## **WORLD GIRAFFE DAY**

World Giraffe Day is an exciting annual event started by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation to celebrate the longest-necked animal on the longest night of the year, the 21<sup>st</sup> June – every year!

### **Why is the 21<sup>st</sup> June the longest night of the year?**

The 21<sup>st</sup> of June is the winter solstice. It marks midwinter, and it is an astronomical phenomenon marking the day with the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year.

### **Giraffes need our help**

Since 1985, there has been a drop of almost 40% in population numbers – to an estimated 97 500. This is due to a number of factors including habitat loss, habitat degradation and habitat fragmentation coupled with human population growth and illegal hunting (poaching).

At the same time, limited conservation efforts and research have been undertaken on giraffe across Africa. Giraffe, as a species, have been uplisted to 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in December 2016.

Giraffe are an important icon of Africa (and the world) and as such are a key tourism attraction and an economic draw card for Africa. This collaborative effort continues to improve our understanding of giraffe as a keystone species and ensures their long-term success in the wild.

## STAGE 1 – ENERGISER

### STRETCH LIKE A GIRAFFE

**Time: 10mins**

**Materials: None**

**Location: Under the trees**

1. Using the notes below, introduce the animal for the day – the giraffe.

1) Giraffes are found in the dry savannas of Africa, where they roam among the open plains and woodlands.

2) Well known for their long necks, these gentle giants are the world's tallest living land animals. An adult male can grow to around 5.5m – that's taller than three adult humans!

3) A giraffe's height is helpful for keeping a look out for predators, such as lions and hyenas. Their excellent eyesight allows them to spot hungry beasts from far away, too.

4) Herbivores, giraffes only eat plants. Their favourite grub is the acacia tree, and they use their long necks to reach the leaves and buds in the treetops. Their long tongues (which grow to a whopping 53cm!) also help them pull down leaves growing way up high.

5) And boy do these guys have an appetite! They spend most of their time eating, and can guzzle up to 45kg of leaves and twigs a day!

6) Whilst they may eat a lot, giraffes don't drink much water. This is because they get most of their water from their leafy meals, and only need to drink once every few days.

7) Giraffes are very social animals and roam around in groups. These groups, called towers, typically have around 15 members led by an adult male. The other members are females and young males.

8) To see who is stronger, males (called bulls) fight by butting their long necks and heads. This is known as "necking". These fights aren't usually dangerous, and end when one bull admits defeat and walks away.

9) Female giraffes give birth standing up. The result? Newborns are welcomed to the world with a 1.5m drop to the ground! Ouch! But these infants are quick to get on their feet – within 30 minutes they are standing, and only hours later they're able to run with their mothers.

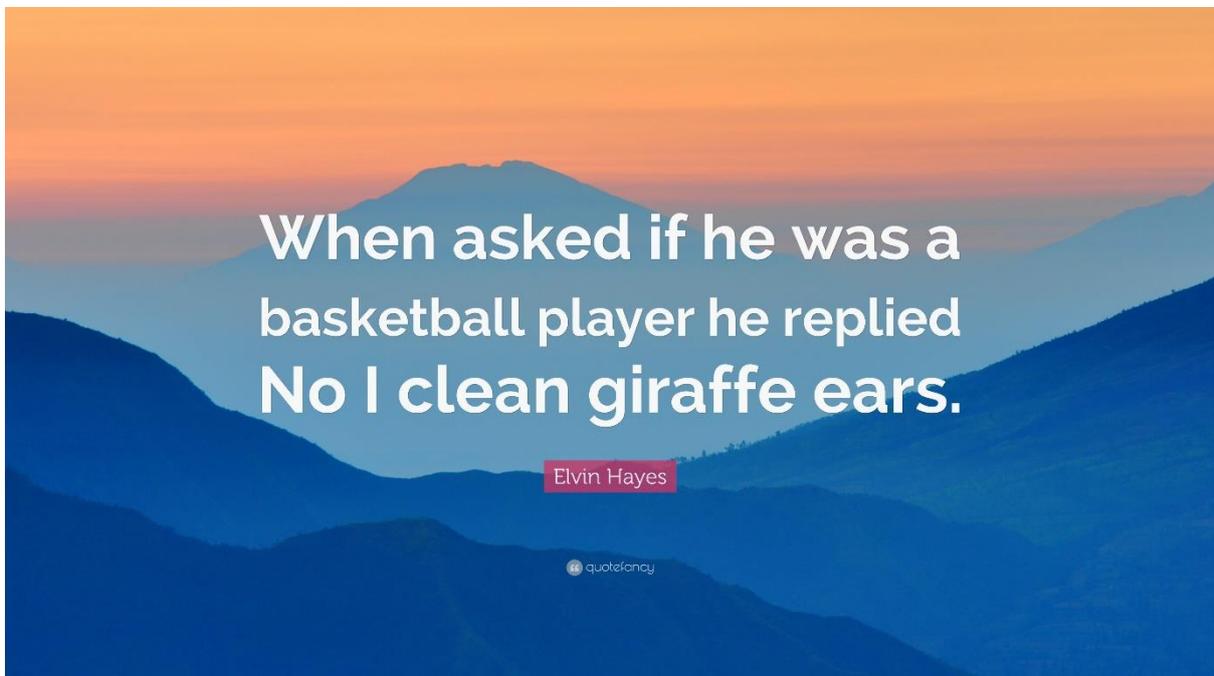
10) In the wild these beautiful creatures live for around 25 years. In captivity they live longer, and have been known to reach 40 years old.

2. Now, have the children stretch like giraffes:

1. Reach up as high as a giraffe – stretch up as far as you can!
2. Now, stand with your legs slightly apart and reach down and touch your toes with your back and legs straight. You're stretching down just like a giraffe would have to in order to drink water.
3. Take a slow gallop like a giraffe would, around the area outside.

**Have the children contribute their ideas of how they can stretch like giraffes.**

**This man must be tall...**



## STAGE 2 – THEORETICAL LESSON

### ALL ABOUT GIRAFFE

**Time: 20mins**

**Materials: None**

**Location: Under the trees**

1. Using the notes below, teach the children all about Giraffe and World Giraffe Day.

1. World Giraffe Day is an exciting annual event started by the Giraffe Conservation Foundation to celebrate the longest-necked animal on the longest night of the year, the 21<sup>st</sup> June – every year!
2. **Why is the 21<sup>st</sup> June the longest night of the year?**  
The 21<sup>st</sup> of June is the winter solstice. It marks midwinter, and it is an astronomical phenomenon marking the day with the shortest period of daylight and the longest night of the year.
3. **Giraffes need our help**  
Since 1985, there has been a drop of almost 40% in population numbers – to an estimated 97 500. This is due to a number of factors including habitat loss, habitat degradation and habitat fragmentation coupled with human population growth and illegal hunting (poaching).
4. At the same time, limited conservation efforts and research have been undertaken on giraffe across Africa. Giraffe, as a species, have been uplisted to 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in December 2016.
5. Giraffe are an important icon of Africa (and the world) and as such are a key tourism attraction and an economic draw card for Africa. This collaborative effort continues to improve our understanding of giraffe as a keystone species and ensures their long-term success in the wild.

## STAGE 3 – PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

### MAKE LIKE A GIRAFFE

#### ANIMAL OBSTACLE COURSE

This activity requires discussion around the various characteristics of the animals mentioned at each step in the obstacle course. Discuss these first with the children, and then explain the obstacle course.

**Materials:** Timer (even the one on your phone works perfectly); Items from around the camp to build your course (brooms, chairs, water bottles, etc.) \*Note: you do not have to use exactly what is shown in the picture – be creative ☺



1. All the groups will complete this activity together.
2. Talk about the way these animals move. They will have to move through the obstacle course like these animals. Have them practise each movement out of the obstacle course first (eg. Clear a path for them to sprint like cheetahs; Have them stomp in a circle like heavy elephants; etc.)

**Cheetah – Sprint as fast as a cheetah!** The fastest land animal in the world, a cheetah can reach 112km/h in just three seconds – that’s faster than a sports car accelerates! Its body has evolved for speed, with long legs, an elongated spine, adapted claws to grip the ground and a long tail for balance.

**Impala – Jump as high as an impala!** They are very fast runners and amazing jumpers, with the ability to leap 3 metres high and 10 metres long which helps them to escape from predators.

**Frog – Leap like a frog!** Many frogs can jump at least 30 times their body length, and some smaller species of tree frogs can jump 50 times their length. This is the human equivalent of jumping the length of a football field without a running start.

**Elephant – Walk like an elephant!** Weighing up to 6000 kg (6.6 tons) and measuring up to 3.3 m at the shoulder, the African elephant is the world’s largest land mammal.

**Giraffe – Take long strides like a giraffe!** Giraffes have very long legs (1.8metres to be exact!). They take very long strides and can move at 60kms per hour!

**Zebra – Zig Zag like a Zebra!** Zebras are built for speed and long distance movement.

**Snake – Slither like a snake!** The snake will contract its muscles starting at the head, moving its body from side to side, creating a series of curves.



3. Set up the obstacle course as shown. Each set of obstacles requires the children to move and act as an animal that you have discussed with them. Try to spread it out so that they have plenty of time and space to move as each animal:
4. In their teams, each child must make it from beginning to end. Time the teams, and the team that does it in the quickest time, wins ☺

Start out hopping / leaping like a frog around boxes / crates / chairs.

START

Jump over the broom like an impala!  
**\*Note: Don't make this too high!**

Zig zag like a zippy zebra between the water bottle **\*Note: You will have to mark each point of the zig zag with a water bottle so that they know the path they will need to zig zag on.**

Walk like a big, heavy elephant! Use your arm to show the elephant's trunk.

Slither like a snake through the boxes  
**\*Note: You might want to use chairs instead of boxes.**

Step over an object like a tall giraffe! **\*Note: This can be a box or any other object that will require a big stride**

Sprint like a cheetah to the finish!

FINISH!

## **MAKE A GIRAFFE**

**MATERIALS:** Paper (flip chart or A4), stationery, natural items from around the school grounds

**TIME:** 30 minutes

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Put the children into groups of 5.
2. Each group should create a giraffe using natural materials which they have found in around the school grounds (only materials that have fallen – they should not damage plants or items which are still intact).
- 3.** Give each group a big piece of flip chart paper, and the freedom to create their giraffe however they feel works.

## **STAGE 4 – DEBRIEF**

### **A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON**

Have the children present their giraffe posters to the rest of the group. Each group should also share at least one new fact they learnt for the day.