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## **The Rewilding Connection: From Our Backyards to the African Bush**

A Grade 4-6 Lesson on Biodiversity, Ecosystems, and Human-Wildlife Coexistence

Lesson Overview: This lesson uses the principle of Rewilding to connect local biodiversity action (planting native Canadian/US species) with global conservation efforts (supporting African elephant coexistence gardens). Students will become Habitat Heroes by understanding how their small action contributes to a larger, global ecosystem.

### **Curriculum Alignment (Grades 4-6)**

-  **US Alignment (NGSS):** Serves standards in Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems, Biodiversity and Humans, and Human Impacts on Earth Systems. Emphasizes the Crosscutting Concepts of Systems and System Models and Cause and Effect.
-  **Canadian Alignment:** Serves core outcomes in Habitats and Communities (Gr. 4), Interactions in the Environment (Gr. 5), and Biodiversity (Gr. 6) across various provinces. Directly supports STSE (Science, Technology, Society, and Environment) goals.

<b>Detail</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Rewilding and Coexistence: Local Action, Global Impact</b>
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Middle Elementary (Grades 4–6)</b>

<b>Time Allocation</b>	<b>60 Minutes (Focused lesson plan)</b>
<b>Key Concepts</b>	<b>Rewilding, Biodiversity, Native Species, Coexistence, Ecosystem</b>

## Section 2: Learning Outcomes

By the end of this 60-minute lesson, students will be able to:

- **Define "rewilding"** and **"coexistence"** in simple terms.
  - **Identify** at least two local native plant species and **explain** their critical role in the local ecosystem (e.g., Monarchs need Milkweed).
  - **Explain** the shared conservation principle between protecting local pollinators and African elephants: **Creating Safe, Functional Habitat**.
  - **Design** a plan for a **Habitat Hero** garden, connecting their local action to a potential global conservation goal.
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## Section 3: Lesson Procedure (60 Minutes)

### 1. Engage: What Do Elephants and Bees Have in Common? (5 minutes)

- **Activity: Think-Pair-Share:** Ask students: "What is the wildest animal you can imagine in Canada/the US? The wildest in Africa?" (Guide them to local bees/butterflies and elephants.)
  - **Introduction:** Introduce the core challenge: "What does a local garden have to do with an African elephant? **Everything.**"
  - **Define Rewilding:** Use the simple script: "**Rewilding** is letting nature take the lead. It's making our world wilder, safer, and stronger for all living things."
  - **Prompt:** Show a picture of a neatly mown lawn versus a patch of wildflowers. Ask: Which is a better home for bees?
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### 2. Explore: The Global Principle of Coexistence (15 minutes)

- **Mini-Lesson: The Rewilding Connection:** Use the provided script to show the parallel missions.
  - **Focus on the Problem:**
    - **Local (Canada/US):** Pollinators are running out of food and safe homes (**Habitat Loss**).

- **Global (Africa):** Elephants are running into human farms and homes (**Coexistence Conflict**).
    - **Focus on the Solution:**
      - **Africa Example:** Introduce Coexistence Gardens. Farmers plant spicy chili peppers—which elephants hate—around valuable food crops. This creates a safe boundary. (Let students safely smell a chili pepper.)
      - **Local Example:** We plant native **Super-Plants** that local bees and butterflies love, creating safe food sources.
    - **Shared Principle:** The solution is the same: **Creating Safe, Functional Habitat**.
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### 3. Explain & Elaborate: Grow Native, Go Global! (30 minutes)

- **Action Challenge:** Introduce the "Habitat Hero" Challenge: To make a garden for our local pollinators and, in doing so, raise awareness and potentially funds for the elephant coexistence gardens in Africa.
  - **Hands-on Gardening (Simplified to save time):**
    - Present a few local **Super-Plants** (e.g., Milkweed, Coneflowers). Explain why each is a "hero" plant (e.g., Milkweed is critical food for Monarch babies).
    - **Activity: Design or Seed Ball:**
      - **Option A (Hands-on):** Students create a quick **Seed Ball** (pre-mixed clay, soil, native seeds) to take home and plant.
      - **Option B (Design):** Students draw/design their own **Habitat Hero Garden** on a piece of paper, choosing and labeling 2 native "Super-Plants" and their mission (e.g., "Bee Nectar Station").
    - **The Economic & Educational Link:**
      - **Educational:** They learn about local ecology and plant care.
      - **Global:** Briefly discuss the potential for a small fundraising idea (e.g., a bake sale or small plant sale) where profits go to elephant conservation. This reinforces the idea that **local action fuels global impact**.
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### 4. Evaluate & Reflect (10 minutes)

- **Closing Question (Quick Write or Discussion):** Ask students to compare their needs: *"If you were an elephant, what would you need in your perfect habitat? If you were a bee, what would you need in your perfect habitat?"*
- **Assessment:** Check if students successfully completed their Seed Ball or correctly labeled their Habitat Hero Garden design.



## T-Chart Visual Plan: No PowerPoint Required

Your T-Chart will be the central visual for the **Engage** and **Explore** sections (20 minutes total).

### Step 1: Prepare the Chart and Headings

Draw a large T-chart on a whiteboard or chart paper. Write the headings clearly at the top:

<b>LOCAL HABITAT HEROES (Canada / US Pollinators)</b>	<b>GLOBAL HEROES (African Elephants)</b>
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### Step 2: Attach the Key Images (4 Total)

Print or draw the four main images below. These will serve as your **visual anchors** for the entire lesson.

<b>T-Chart Location</b>	<b>Visual Anchor</b>	<b>Search Query for Image</b>
<b>Local Side (Top)</b>	<b>Monarch Butterfly on Milkweed Plant</b> (Shows the critical native relationship)	monarch butterfly on milkweed plant
<b>Local Side (Bottom)</b>	<b>Native Pollinator Super-Plant</b> (e.g., Purple Coneflower, great for all-region US/Canada lesson)	purple coneflower native plant for bees
<b>Global Side (Top)</b>	<b>African Elephant</b> (Your symbolic anchor)	African elephant close up in savanna
<b>Global Side (Bottom)</b>	<b>Chili Pepper Fence</b> (The coexistence solution)	chili pepper farm fence for elephants

### Step 3: Fill in the "Explore" Content (The Mini-Lesson Script)

As you teach the 15-minute mini-lesson, you will write the following keywords and phrases under each image to build the comparison and show the **Shared Principle**.

<b>LOCAL HABITAT HEROES</b>	<b>GLOBAL HEROES</b>
<b>Problem:</b> Habitat Loss $\rightarrow$ No Food	<b>Problem:</b> Crop Conflict $\rightarrow$ No Safety
<b>Solution:</b> Plant <b>Native</b> Super-Plants	<b>Solution:</b> Plant <b>Chili Fences</b>
<b>Outcome:</b> Pollinators thrive, we eat safely.	<b>Outcome:</b> Elephants stay safe, farmers earn money.
<b>Activity:</b> Design Your <b>Habitat Hero Garden</b>	<b>Connection:</b> Raise awareness for <b>Coexistence</b>

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### The Shared Principle

Draw a large circle or star between the two columns and write:

**The Shared Principle: Creating Safe, Functional Habitat!**