

1. Amazing discoveries

This week's lesson is based on a recent news story concerning the remarkable number of new animal species being discovered on the island of New Guinea. Between 1998 and 2008, scientists there identified more than a thousand previously unknown animals, including some large and colorful ones.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. You could begin by introducing and explaining the expression *endangered species* and asking the students to provide examples. Why are those animals endangered? How much should it matter to us when animals do become extinct? Then ask the students if they imagine it is possible for “new” (previously unknown) species of animals to be discovered in their country. If so, in what regions do they think those animals would most likely be found, and why? Ask the students what kinds of animals they would expect most of the world's new species to be (very small insects, for example). This could be an opportunity to introduce vocabulary such as *mammal*, *reptile*, *amphibian*, *invertebrate*, etc., before the students read the text.
2. Give your students five to ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer a series of questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet B. Ask the students to work together to complete Exercises 1 and 2, in which they have to answer two different kinds of comprehension questions.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Hand out Worksheet C and ask the students to work together to complete the crossword.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. T 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. D 7. T 8. F 9. F 10. D

Exercise 2

1. Because they are jungle or mountains.
2. Because it doesn't seem to sing and is very quiet.
3. In some of New Guinea's rivers.
4. Illegal hunting; and the increasing human population in the parts of the world where they live, which is reducing their habitat.
5. Papua New Guinea.
6. The reason is that the fish has many colors, like a rainbow.
7. Their large size.
8. Because of illegal hunting.

Exercise 3

1. reptile 2. extinct 3. sing 4. shark 5. wild 6. Indonesia 7. Jungle
8. species 9. habitat 10. surprising 11. endangered

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *pink dolphin* will read from top to bottom. (Note that this is a description of the animal rather than its name, which is actually “snub-fin dolphin.”)

2. Related websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

<http://news.discovery.com/animals/new-species-discovered-in-new-guinea-110627.html>

An article (June 27, 2011) on the New Guinea discoveries, from Discovery News. Challenging for Pre-intermediate level.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2011/06/pictures/110627-new-species-rare-animals-papua-new-guinea-wwf/>

From *National Geographic*, a slideshow of pictures of some of the new species of animals discovered in New Guinea – including the pink dolphin, black and turquoise lizard, and rainbow fish mentioned in the text – with text below each picture. Accessible to Pre-intermediate level.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/12/photogalleries/101207-top-ten-weird-new-animals-2010/>

Again from *National Geographic*, a slideshow of the ten animals the editor thinks were the “weirdest” to be discovered last year around the world, with accompanying text. Accessible to Pre-intermediate level.