



# Eco-consultants

Teamwork: to make sense of what the team has done

Investigative skills: to think creatively to explain how things work



## Generic task

# The Blind Men & the Elephant



### Learning Objective

Teamwork: to make sense of what the team has done

#### Introducing the task 5 minutes

Explain that very often we are asked to work with other people in teams. Sometimes it is useful to break big jobs up into smaller bits so that each person can do a different part. Working as a team means that we can share out the jobs fairly and co-operate together to be successful. However, the hard part is bringing all the information together so that it makes sense.

Explain that in this task the story of 'The Blind Men and The Elephant' will help us understand why it is so important to bring everyone's ideas and information together, to really make sense of what the team has been doing.

#### Running the task 15 minutes

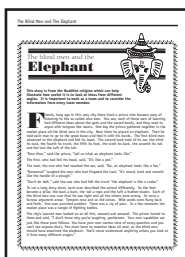
You need: the Blind Men and the Elephant story

- 1 Read the story to the children.
- 2 Discuss its meaning with the children – it's clearly not about elephants! The questions below might be useful.
  - When the blind men were asked to examine the elephant what mistake did they make?
  - What was the prince trying to prove to the wise men?
  - Do you think this was a good way for the prince to prove his point? Justify your reasoning.
  - Do you think the blind men worked as a team?
  - When you are working in a team, what does this story encourage you to do?

#### Helpful Hints

Link to work in literacy on fables and tales where children can explore further the way that stories were used to used to teach and guide people about how to live well together.

### Resources





# Science embedded task Eco Consultants



## Learning Objectives

**National Curriculum** Sc1: 1a

**Ideas & Evidence** to think creatively to explain how living and non-living things work

### Equipment

PE Hoops, masking tape or chalk

### Success Criteria

To be successful the children will:

- share their ideas and what they already know
- make links between different people's ideas
- agree on an outcome
- explain how different organisms in food chains and food webs can be affected.

### Introducing the task 10 minutes

Explain that the children will be Eco-consultants working together in a team to make sense of the information they've been given. They will need to share their ideas in order to give advice to the wildlife conservation group about different food chains. Talk about different ways that ideas can be shared and what it means to link ideas (relate this back to the generic task).

Introduce the task by explaining that it will challenge the children to think creatively about the different ways in which plants and animals are linked. They will need to consider how changes in a habitat can affect the different living things.

### Running the task 35 minutes

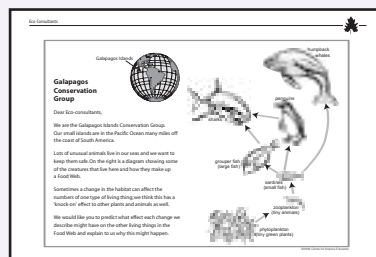
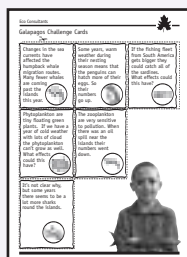
- 1 Organise the children into teams of four.
- 2 Read aloud or hand out the email from the Galapagos Conservation Group and describe the different food chains shown and how they overlap.
- 3 Arrange PE hoops on the floor in the same pattern as the food web shown. Use chalk or masking tape to create the arrows and labels for each hoop.
- 4 Give each team a Galapagos Challenge Card. Ask them to read it and work out what they think could happen to the numbers of organisms in the food web. Encourage them to use what they already know about food chains to help describe what is happening in the food web. Challenge them to consider different possibilities and to make sense of what could happen by agreeing on an explanation.
- 5 When taking feedback, ask the teams to demonstrate what they think would happen in the food web by physically modelling the process. Use class members to stand in the hoops to represent the organisms (one person in each hoop). Children should stand or sit

depending on the changes the teams describe. Where numbers of an organism go down slightly children must sit down, and where numbers go up extra children should be asked to stand in the hoop. If the organism is wiped out completely, the hoop should be left empty.

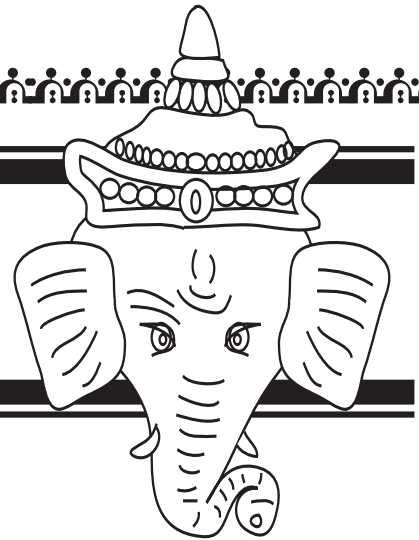
### Reviewing the task 15 minutes

Discuss with the children how they made sense of the work. How did they work together to share and link ideas? How did they manage to agree on an explanation? Did they consider different possibilities? Involve the children in reviewing their work and making an overall judgement about how well they made sense of what the team has done by using the assessment for learning Smart Grid (see back cover).

## Resources



## The blind men and the **Elephant**



**This story is from the Buddhist religion which can help illustrate how useful it is to look at ideas from different angles. It is important to work as a team and to consider the information from every team member.**

**F**riends, long ago in this very city there lived a prince who became wary of listening to the so-called wise men. You see, each of these men of learning had different ideas about the gods and the sacred books, and they used to argue with tongues like razors. One day the prince gathered together in the market place all the blind men in the city. Near them he placed an elephant. Then he told each man to go to the great beast and feel it with his hands. The first blind man advanced to the elephant and felt its head. The second took hold of its ear, the third its tusk, the fourth its trunk, the fifth its foot, the sixth its back, the seventh its tail and the last the tuft of the tail.

"Now then," said the prince, "tell us what an elephant looks like."

The first, who had felt his head, said, "It's like a pot."

The next, the one who had touched the ear, said, "No, an elephant looks like a fan."

"Nonsense!" laughed the man who had fingered the tusk, "it's round, hard and smooth like the handle of a plough."

"Don't be daft," said the one who had felt the trunk "the elephant is like a snake."

To cut a long story short, each man described the animal differently. So the foot became a pillar, the back a barn, the tail a rope and the tuft a feather-duster. Each of the blind men was sure that he was right and all the others were wrong. At once a furious argument arose. Tempers rose and so did voices. Wild words were flung back and forth. One man punched another. There was a cry of pain. In a few moments the market place was a tangle of fighting bodies.

The city's learned men looked on at all this, amazed and amused. The prince turned to them and said, "I don't know why you're laughing, gentlemen. Your own squabbles are just like these poor fellows. You have your own narrow view of every question and you can't see anyone else's. You must learn to examine ideas all over, as the blind men should have examined the elephant. You'll never understand anything unless you look at it from many different angles."



## Galapagos Challenge Cards



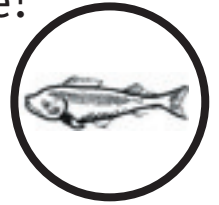
Changes in the sea currents have affected the humpback whale migration routes. Many fewer whales are coming past the islands this year.



Some years, warm weather during their nesting season means that the penguins can hatch more of their eggs. So their numbers go up.



If the fishing fleet from South America gets bigger they could catch all of the sardines. What effects could this have?



Phytoplankton are tiny floating green plants. If we have a year of cold weather with lots of cloud the phytoplankton can't grow as well. What effects could this have?



The zooplankton are very sensitive to pollution. When there was an oil spill near the islands their numbers went down.

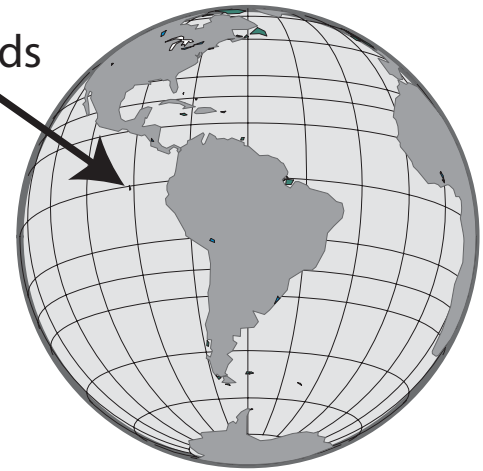


It's not clear why, but some years there seems to be a lot more sharks round the islands.



## Galapagos Conservation Group

Galapagos Islands



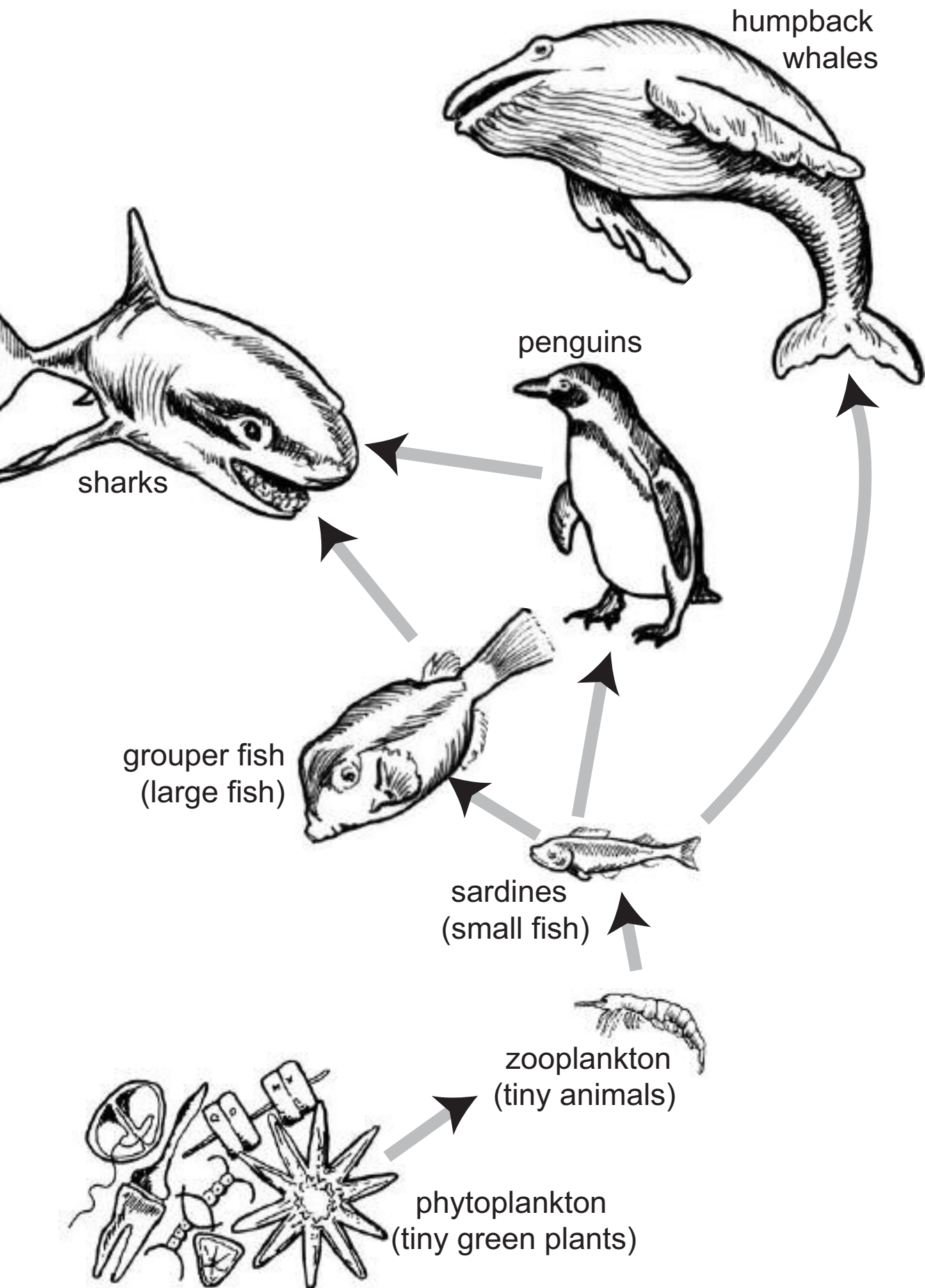
Dear Eco-consultants,

We are the Galapagos Islands Conservation Group. Our small islands are in the Pacific Ocean many miles off the coast of South America.

Lots of unusual animals live in our seas and we want to keep them safe. On the right is a diagram showing some of the creatures that live here and how they make up a Food Web.

Sometimes a change in the habitat can affect the numbers of one type of living thing; we think this has a 'knock-on' effect to other plants and animals as well.

We would like you to predict what effect each change we describe might have on the other living things in the Food Web and explain to us why this might happen.





**Thumbs Up**  
We were great at  
the task  
because...



**Thumbs Sideways**  
We were good at  
the task  
because...



**Thumbs Down**  
We were OK at the  
task because...

we shared our ideas and  
what we already knew  
about...

we made links between our  
ideas by...

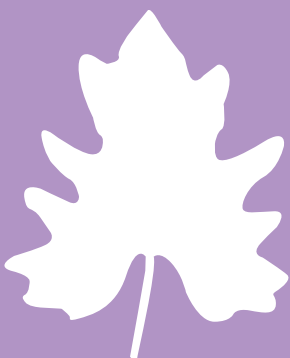
we agreed on an outcome  
by...

we talked about how  
different organisms in the  
food web could affect each  
other, e.g....

we explained how different  
factors affected the food  
web, e.g....

we...

Next time we will...





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