NEWS BREAK

Article: Nonprofit threatens to sue feds over Growler flights

Section: NW, C3

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, March 21, 2021 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will talk about how loud sounds from jets impact them and how it effects marine life below. Current studies show Growler jet flights are known to trigger behavioral changes in fish, birds and marine mammals. Students will try to figure out what changes might occur, when loud noises are heard. They will brainstorm how the Navy can remain at Whidbey, while also protecting the marine life in the area. They will each brainstorm 2 ideas that might be able to help this situation.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

- What do you think the article will be about, using only this picture?
- Are there clues?
- What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“The threat of legal action is based on two studies, each published in peer-reviewed journals.”

Peer-reviewed journals Guess:

Peer-reviewed journals Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. A battle continues over jets at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, with the most recent fight being over how the noise generated by a growing number of EA-18G Growler jets stationed at the military base impacts what?
2. Based on research published in November, the nonprofit Citizens of Ebey’s Reserve is threatening to sue the Navy, as well as NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, if the federal agencies don’t reconsider how Growler flights may impact what two specific animals?
3. The threat of legal action is based on two studies, each published in what?
4. Mike Welding, NAS Whidbey Island public affairs officer, said the Navy disagrees with what?
5. The researchers looked for ________ levels that could have an impact on wildlife, including whale, seal and bird species.
6. “Our goal was to evaluate potential impacts on people and wildlife, using thresholds of response that have been established in previous studies,” the study states. Lauren Kuehne, an environmental scientist involved in both studies, said during an event Tuesday hosted by Western Washington University’s Salish Sea Institute that underwater noise from aircraft has historically been ignored. Why?

7. Other speakers, including conservation scientists and public health experts, agreed. They said the hydrophone findings, while limited in scope, offer a critical piece of information. What is it?

8. Todd Hass, of the Puget Sound Partnership, was involved with the state’s Orca Recovery Task Force that convened in 2018 and 2019, and said the findings are concerning for whales. “We now have a definitive answer to what question?

9. In a Feb. 9 letter giving a 60-day notice of its intent to sue, what group argues the “new scientific information relating to the depth to which Growler aircraft noise penetrates into the water column” requires the Navy and federal agencies responsible for protecting at-risk wildlife to reassess NAS Whidbey Island operations under the Endangered Species Act?

10. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ has been a subject of disagreement for years, with some residents of Whidbey Island and surrounding areas saying noise from practice flights over homes, schools, parks and waters interrupts daily life and threatens the environment.

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first I thought ______________, but now I think ___________?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- How do you feel when loud jets fly above you? Have you heard them before?
- How do you think those sounds could impact animals living below the water?

Growler jet flights at levels known to trigger behavioral changes in fish, birds and marine mammals.

- What behavioral changes do you think you’d find in these marine mammals?

The Navy base is an important location for jets that may board military aircraft carriers and engage in electronic warfare. The pilots of those jets need ongoing practice for taking off and landing on those ships. The Navy is in the midst of a land-based jet noise-monitoring study requested by Congress. The project began collecting real-time noise monitoring over a seven-day period in December.
How can the Navy remain at Whidbey, while also protecting the marine life in the area?

Brainstorm and come up with at least 2 ideas that might be able to help this situation.