Dear Educator:

For many of us, Africa remains a distant and inaccessible place. Now, however, there is an opportunity to visit one of the most unique wilderness areas on this fascinating continent, the Okavango Delta, in a new 40-minute giant-screen film from nWave Pictures, African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango.

The Delta, created by the flood waters of the Okavango, is so large it can be spotted from deep space like a giant hand, a refuge from the pressures of civilization. Now, with the release of this film, you and your students can sit back and observe the Okavango up close and personal without leaving your classroom. Let your imagination take you on a virtual safari to the Okavango Delta, as explored in the giant-screen film African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango, and to identify features of the region and some of the wildlife that make this area their home.

To introduce students to the Okavango Delta, as explored in the giant-screen film African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango, and to identify features of the region and some of the wildlife that make this area their home.

Discussions with students feature the Okavango Delta. Using the maps on the activity sheet, point out to students where the Okavango Delta is in Botswana and where it is on the continent of Africa. Tell them that the topographical features of the Okavango include a floodplain, a network of islands and swamps, and grassland in the areas that have only seasonal flooding.

Have students identify at least one animal that lives in the Delta. Options include fish and water birds in the Panhandle; hippos and crocodiles in the swamps (and elephants as seasonal occupants); and buffalo, elephants, lions, giraffes, impalas, antelopes and leopards living in the wooded areas that fringe the larger Delta areas and its dryland edges. Features are shown on the map at left.

1. Have students fill in the map on the sheet showing the location of the Okavango Delta region in Africa and within Botswana itself.
2. Have students label the topographical features using a legend they create for the detailed map of the Delta (see sample at left).
3. Have students identify at least one animal that lives in the Delta. Options include fish and water birds in the Panhandle; hippos and crocodiles in the swamps (and elephants as seasonal occupants); and buffalo, elephants, lions, giraffes, impalas, antelopes and leopards living in the wooded areas that fringe the larger Delta areas and its dryland edges.

Film Synopsis

African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango offers viewers the ultimate giant-screen 3-D adventure of going on a photo safari in the Okavango Delta without ever leaving the comfort of their local cinema. The immersive beauty of 3-D photography puts the audience in the boat with zoologist Liesl Eichenberger and wildlife filmmaker Tim Liversedge as they explore this unique region of our planet untouched by civilization.

Departing from the panhandle in the North, where the Okavango River meanders through a 10-mile-wide mat of papyrus, viewers will venture into the heart of the Delta and will come face-to-face with hippos, crocodiles, elephants, lions, and many types of antelopes.

Through the wondrous of giant-screen 3-D technology, viewers will get a sense of “being there,” developing a greater appreciation of why conservationists like Lieslview have been so driven to preserve it. The Okavango Delta is treasured as a national treasure worth protecting for generations to come.

Activity

1. Part A. Animal Adventure

Building on what students learned in Activity 1, have them pick an animal they would like to explore in-depth; complete the map on the activity sheet about the animal’s habitat, its physical characteristics, diet and predators, as well as one or two interesting facts. Answer guidelines are coded as Y for younger students and O for older students.

1. Animal’s habitat
   Y: Description of the environment
   O: Identification of type of environment (for example: river, perennial wetland)

2. Animal’s physical characteristics
   Y: Description of size, shape, color, and any distinctive features
   O: Distinguishing physical characteristics, social groupings (whether the animal lives alone or in a group), and its reproductive habits

3. Animal’s diet
   Y: One or two examples of what the animal eats
   O: At least three examples of what the animal eats as well as its hunting habits
Part B. Animal Attractions

Based on the information on their sheets, ask students to develop a sign for an exhibit about the Okavango Delta at a zoo or a museum. Encourage students to be creative and to use both words and pictures to convey the information. To help students get started, you could share the following information.

Animals of the Okavango Delta

- **Crocodile:** The most feared predator of the region, with its black markings and scales on its back. It spends time in the water or on the riverbank, mostly at night, as a way to help regulate its body temperature and relax its jaw muscles.
- **Hippopotamus:** One of the most feared animals of the Delta. With its sharp teeth and powerful jaws, hippos can bite a canoe in half and gash a hole in an aluminum boat. They also move quickly, which makes them a fierce predator.
- **Sitatunga:** A kind of antelope that lives on the papyrus growing throughout the Delta. The animal’s splayed hooves enable it to move easily through the swampy environment.
- **Wild dog:** The Delta has one of the largest populations of these endangered animals. Conservation efforts in Botswana, largely geared toward keeping them away from villages, may help keep the species from becoming extinct.
- **Fishing owl:** This bird is one of the largest owls in the world. It hunts at night and is almost impossible to see during the day. It lives in the thick forests and fishes in the swampy waters.

Related Activity

Using the information they gathered for their signs, ask students to compile their findings into an Okavango Animal Encyclopedia. After deciding on the format for the encyclopedia—as a print compilation, a PowerPoint presentation, or another format of their choice—divide students into five groups. Have each group compile information on two animals in the chosen format. After the encyclopedia is completed, invite another class in to learn about the animals of the Okavango Delta.

Survival in the Okavango Delta

**Goal:** To help students understand how animals of the Okavango Delta have adapted to their environment, which fluctuates between flooding and periods of arid weather, and to learn about how conservationists are working together to preserve this region.

**Part A. The Changing Environment**

While the Okavango Delta experiences tremendous fluctuation of water during its annual flooding, the area nonetheless does serve as an oasis for many of Africa’s most cherished animals. As a result, many of the animals that live here have adapted to the variations of life in a wetlands environment. Building on the research students have already done, have them work in groups to study the five animals below. After researching how these animals have adapted to their environment, students should complete a chart like the one shown below. (Younger students may choose to research only three animals and could draw pictures of how each animal adapts instead of using words to express their ideas.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>How Animals Have Adapted to Their Environment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Has learned to swim as a way to move from place to place and to find food.</td>
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<td>Has splayed hooves to make it easier to move in the reed beds and to wade in the swampy waters.</td>
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<td>Fishing owl</td>
<td>Hunts for food by fishing in the waterways found in the Delta.</td>
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<td>Elephant</td>
<td>&quot;Follows the water,&quot; traveling from the south to the Delta to take advantage of the annual flooding, which, over the years, has increased the size of the wetlands almost threefold.</td>
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<td>Crocodile</td>
<td>Spends days in the water or on the riverbanks, often with their mouths open, which helps them regulate their body temperature and rest their jaw muscles. Crocs hunt at night to surprise their prey.</td>
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**Part B. Conserving the Delta**

Conservationists have long recognized the Okavango as one of Africa’s national treasures. Many international groups have been working to conserve this area against environmental threats, including human activities such as cattle ranching, increased tourism, and the possibility of diverting water from the Delta to the arid areas of southern Africa. Organizations such as Conservation International and the Kalahari Conservation Society, as well as the government of Botswana, have been somewhat successful in protecting this area. In addition, individuals such as Tim Liversedge have helped educate people about the Delta through films like African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango, as well as books and magazine articles.

After students research conservation efforts in the Delta, have them write a letter to a wildlife magazine about why conservation is important. Younger students may choose to develop ideas for a class letter to a conservation group.

**Related Activity**

Sometimes the work of one person can make a big difference. Suggest that students find out more about Tim Liversedge and other individuals who have devoted their lives to protecting Africa. Have students consider whether they think films have been an effective way to get the message out. What other media have people used? Have their approaches helped save the Okavango Delta?

**ACTIVITY ONE**

Survival in the Okavango Delta

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**Part B. Conserving the Delta**

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**Related Activity**

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Part A. The Changing Environment

Although there are woods, grassy plains, and water in the Okavango Delta, it still is not an easy place in which to live. The changing water levels are one of many challenges that animals have to overcome. When the Okavango River floods the Delta, there is enough water to fill 4.5 million Olympic-size swimming pools, but during other times of the year much of this water evaporates in the hot South African sun.

Work in a small group with your classmates to learn how the five animals below have adapted to this environment. Then fill in the chart below.

**Okavango Animal Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Interesting facts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitat:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diet:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B. Animal Attractions

Now imagine that a zoo or museum is developing an exhibit about the Okavango Delta region. Organizers of the exhibit have asked you to create a display that will attract visitors to information about the animal you researched above. Show your display below in words and picture(s).

**Survival in the Okavango Delta**

**Part A. The Changing Environment**

Although there are woods, grassy plains, and water in the Okavango Delta, it still is not an easy place in which to live. The changing water levels are one of many challenges that animals have to overcome. When the Okavango River floods the Delta, there is enough water to fill 4.5 million Olympic-size swimming pools, but during other times of the year much of this water evaporates in the hot South African sun.

Work in a small group with your classmates to learn how the five animals below have adapted to this environment. Then fill in the chart below.

**Animals**

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**Part B. Conserving the Delta**

The Okavango Delta has been recognized as one of Africa's national treasures. Over the years, people have worked hard to conserve this unique environment. Find out about some of these conservation efforts. Then, using the space at right, write a “Letter to the Editor” of a wildlife magazine, supporting such conservation efforts. You may use the work of Tim Liversedge, who created the film *African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango*, as evidence of the beauty of this region and the importance of protecting it for future generations.
Resources for Teachers

Okavango Maps and Geography
www.travelafricamag.com/content/view/224/56/
www.thuto.org/ubh/bw/bhp7.htm

Animals of the Okavango
www.travelafricamag.com/content/view/224/56/
www.american.edu/TED/telephbot.htm

Conserving the Okavango
www.acf.nsf.gov/articles/19010
www.greatplaces.org/notes/okavango.htm
www.pjx.org/volumes/volume7/issue1/articles/stowe.html
www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20061207&i=

Books
Africa’s Vanishing Wildlife, by Chris and Tilde Stuart.

Okavango: A Journey, by Robyn Keene-Young and

Okavango River: The Flow of a Lifeline, by John Mendelsohn

Resources for Students

Okavango Maps and Geography
www.travelafricamag.com/content/view/224/56/
www.greatdestinations.org/notes/okavango.htm

Animals of the Okavango
www.golatrivia.com/botswana/okavango-delta/
www.travelafricamag.com/content/view/224/56/
http://animal.discovery.com/fansites/wildkingdom/animals/okavango.html

Conserving the Okavango
www.conservation.org/np/CWEB/regions/africa/safrica.xml
www.conservation.org/np/CWEB/programs/afroecotourism/

Books
Africa Calling, Nighttime Falling, by Daniel and Kimberly M.

African Animals, by Caroline Arnold. New York: William

Endangered African Animals (Endangered Animals series),

Teacher’s Resource Guide for African Adventure: Safari in the Okavango was created by Young Minds
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Publisher/Roberta Nusim • Writer/Marilyn Fenichel • Editor/Jan E. Fieberts • Art Director/Paul Fisher

nWave Pictures
www.nwave.com
Find out more about African Adventure: Safari in the
Okavango and other exciting nWave Pictures productions.