



# UNTAMED S2E12: Wildlife Research

## Classroom Activity

*This classroom activity is designed to be used as a resource that inspires conversation, critical thinking, and promotes a “big picture” understanding of topics covered in each episode. Questions may be answered individually, or out loud in a group setting. Key terms and vocabulary that will help educators and students engage in discussion include:*

***Research, population, average, range, data, database***

***Group Size: Individual***

***Materials Needed: Computers with internet access for each student, or; prepared data sheets for each student, writing utensils, calculator for each student***

***Time: 30-45 minutes***

***Instructions:***

During this activity, students will participate in online research to create a bar graph representing the number of species-specific patients admitted to the Wildlife Center throughout a given range of years.

On average, the Wildlife Center of Virginia admits 3,000 wild animals in need of veterinary care each year, representing hundreds of different species. Detailed information about each and every patient is recorded and stored in WILD-ONE -- the Center’s online database used by wildlife hospitals and rehabilitation facilities around the world. By analyzing and interpreting the hundreds of thousands of patient records in WILD-ONE, veterinarians are able to learn valuable information about trends in wildlife populations.

WILD-ONE is not available for public use, but the Wildlife Center’s Annual Reports published on WildlifeCenter.org [<https://www.wildlifecenter.org/about-center/publications>] provide a simplified “database” where students will collect information about patients for this activity. Each Annual Report features a list and sum of all animals admitted during that year.

As a class, choose a specific animal (Red-tailed Hawks, Garter Snakes, Virginia Opossums, etc.) or group of animals (owls, turtles, songbirds, etc.) that students will be collecting information

about. Next, decide on a range of years for students to take information from, with a minimum of three years.

Explain that as students are browsing Annual Reports, they should be recording how many of their chosen species were admitted during a single year.

After students have collected the proper data, guide them through the process of creating a bar graph to represent species' frequency as patients throughout the chosen range of years.

To conclude the activity, lead a group discussion and have student's share the results of their graphs. Ask students to brainstorm why it's valuable to record and interpret information like this, and how they think it could be used in the field of wildlife veterinary medicine and research.