Name: Date:

Activity 6 – Evolution

# Observation 4 – Overproduction

Whilst researching his theory of evolution, Charles Darwin observed that many animals overproduce offspring, which means they have lots of babies, more than the environment can support. By producing lots of offspring, it is more likely that some of them will survive to adulthood and then breed themselves. This means the parents will have successfully passed on their genes and traits to generations – the driving force behind an animals' desire to reproduce. The genes and traits that are passed on are the ones most helpful to survival, and so as generations go on these traits become part of their fundamental being. This is how a species evolves.

Which of these animals overproduce offspring? Do a bit of research into each species and circle the correct answers!

Tapir

Green Turtle

African Elephant

Rabbit

Vulture

Seahorse

Sun Fish

Snail

Why do you think some of these animals overproduce and some don't? Think about the environments they live in and the threats they may face. Jot down some ideas below:

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Not all animals overproduce offspring all at once. Some animals cannot produce lots of babies all in one go, although they may be able to produce quite a lot over a lifetime. Time for a bit more research! Can you circle the animals that produce just one or two offspring at a time?

Bear

Penguin

Mouse

Human

Cow

Rhino

Whale

Cat

Duck

Do these animals have anything in common? Perhaps their size, complexity or the environment they live in. Jot down a few ideas below:

Sometimes animals live in societies where not all of them need to reproduce. Instead, they work together to help raise the offspring of others. Research time! Can you circle the animals that do this?

Meerkat

Human

Owl

Giraffe

Naked Mole Rat

Hyena

Why do you think this might be a good strategy? Think about the environments they live in and the threats they may face and jot down a few ideas below: