



Explorer Classroom Event Guide: Grades 4-8

Tracking Elephant Seals | Roxanne Beltran

October 14, 2021, 10:00AM & 2:00PM Eastern Time

Help your students get the most out of their Explorer Classroom experience by choosing one or more of the activities from each section below:

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Register here! Registering your class gives you a chance to be featured on screen with the Explorer, a shout out during the intro, and helpful email reminders before the event. Remember, the further in advance you register the more likely you are to be selected to be onscreen.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Research the Explorer and pick 1 or more activities to complete before the event date:

- ❑ **Read** about ecologist and marine biologist [Roxanne Beltran](#) to familiarize yourself and your students with her work. *Ask*, what are you excited to learn about Roxanne's research? Is this connected to anything you've already learned about?
- ❑ Roxanne researches elephant seals, with particular interest in elephant seal pups and tracking their migration. **Read** about [northern elephant seals](#) to find out what makes them unique mammals. *Ask*, what other animals migrate? How is the elephant seal migration different?
- ❑ **Watch** [this video](#) (3:07) of Roxanne in action on Año Nuevo Island, California as she searches for signs of the elephant seal pups she and her team are tracking for research. **Read** Roxanne's [field notes](#) to follow along in her research on elephant seals.
- ❑ **Brainstorm questions for the Explorer** Help your learners revise their questions, making sure they are specific and are asking only one thing. You may need to work together through a few drafts to arrive at a solid final question. Consider using question words like **WHERE, WHAT, WHEN, HOW, WHY, & WHO** to brainstorm a long list of questions, then choosing your favorites from the list to ask the Explorer.

DURING THE EVENT

Pick 1 organizer to help you out during the event:

- ❑ [Two-Column Chart](#): Print copies or ask your students to draw their own two-column chart. Have your students write things they are learning in one column and in the other, write questions about that information, or draw something related to it.
- ❑ Your list of questions: write your list of questions you came up with for the explorer on the board, or print copies of the list for the class. As the Explorer presents, see how many answers your class can find!

AFTER THE EVENT

Choose from the discussion questions and reflection activities to process the event:

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was your favorite part of today's talk? Why?
2. What was one new thing you learned during the Explorer Classroom event you didn't know before?
3. What skills, tools, or knowledge do you think are needed to explore?
4. What do you think the most important message was from the Explorer?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO INVESTIGATE AS A CLASS

1. Are there any animals in your community that make migrations similar to the elephant seals?
 - o What makes your local species special? What do they use the land around your community for? Where else do they spend their lives?
2. What other questions and techniques from Roxanne's research could you apply to your own local species? Is there a similar expert for this species in your area?

REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

- Write a short news article to tell others what the Explorer is working on and why that work is important.
- Produce a short video or social media post explaining one thing you learned today and one thing you're curious to learn more about.
- Make a map that plots the elephant seals' migration! You can use a digital tool like [MapMaker](#) or a physical map in the classroom. Add details from the presentation to it.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

We LOVE to see student work and share it with the Explorers who inspired it! Please feel free to share student projects and reflections by using the *#ExplorerClassroom* and tagging *@NatGeoEducation* on Twitter, or by emailing them to explorerclassroom@ngs.org

OPTIONAL EXTENSION RESOURCES

Try one of these related resources and keep exploring with National Geographic Education.

- **Follow along with Roxanne's live data!**
<https://roxannebeltran.weebly.com/research.html>
- *Join in the Explorer's Mission:* What are some themes from the event today? Did the Explorer inspire you in some way? How?
- Consider how your community is connected to the ocean. How does it impact you? How do you impact it? If you're not near a coast, try tracing a path through your watershed to the ocean with this [interactive mapping tool](#).
- *Want to dive deeper into animal migration?* In [this lesson](#) (three activities / three hours) students will engage with photographs, videos, handouts, and animations to learn why and how animals migrate, methods used to track and map migrations, and how humans are impacting animal migration.

Looking for more ways to engage your students online, in-person, or at home? Find more on our [Learn Anywhere](#) page or in our [Resource Library](#).