

THE KIDS' READING ROOM; CALIFORNIA CLASSROOM; Aiding the survival of the blue butterfly
[HOME EDITION]

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Habitat is another word for home. If animals lose their habitat, it becomes harder for them to survive. In some cases, they may even become endangered or extinct.

Plants are an important part of an animal's habitat because they provide shelter and food. But what if an animal could survive on only one type of plant?

That's how it is for the tiny El Segundo blue butterfly. From caterpillar to butterfly, it can survive only on dune buckwheat.

A long time ago, this plant grew on sand dunes along the Pacific Coast, from Los Angeles International Airport all the way to Palos Verdes. The dune buckwheat provided plenty of habitat for these butterflies.

Today there are houses, buildings and roads covering these sand dunes. No sand dunes -- no dune buckwheat. No dune buckwheat -- no habitat for the El Segundo blue butterfly. And so, the El Segundo blue butterfly is endangered. But there is hope.

An organization called the Friends of Ballona Wetlands is planting dune buckwheat in one section of the wetlands. Its volunteers are trying to create a habitat for these beautiful insects.

To find out how you and your family can help, visit www.ballonafriends.org or call (310) 306-5994. Your classroom can also schedule a field trip to the Ballona Wetlands. Contact Abby Fox, educational outreach director of the Wonders of Wetlands Team at (310) 342-0100.

This Learning Link was provided by Kristen Dorsey of the Ballona Wetlands Foundation, North Hall, 1 Loyola Marymount University Drive, Mail Stop 8160, Los Angeles, CA 90045.