

# WILDLIFE IS EVERYWHERE!

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## OBJECTIVES

Students will: 1) state that humans and wildlife share environments; and 2) generalize that wildlife is present in areas all over the earth.

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## METHOD

Students search their environment for evidence of wildlife.

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## BACKGROUND

People often think of wildlife only as large animals like those they see in pictures of Africa with lions and elephants. They might think of creatures of the North American forests that they have seen like deer and elk. But wildlife includes all animals that have not been domesticated by people.

Domesticated animals are those which have been tamed, made captive and bred for special purposes. Farm animals and pets are considered domesticated animals. (See "What's Wild?" and "Animal Charades.")

Wild animals are all the rest. What may be surprising is that wildlife includes the smallest animal organisms—even those that can be seen only through a microscope. Spiders, insects, reptiles, amphibians and most species of fish, birds and mammals may be considered wildlife. Wildlife occurs in a tremendous variety of forms and colors. And wildlife can be found all around us. Even when we think we can see or hear no animals at all, they exist somewhere around us—maybe even under our feet! There are even tens of thousands of life forms on our skin, in our hair and inside our bodies! In fact, each of us would die if all the

organisms that inhabit our bodies were to disappear. People are never truly alone in an environment. Some form of wildlife is near.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to understand that people and wildlife share environments. By investigating microenvironments or microhabitats, the students should be encouraged to generalize from the information they acquire to the entire planet, coming to the understanding that wildlife exists in some form in all areas of the earth. In the deserts of the southern hemisphere; the oceans, tropical jungles and cities of the earth; from the Antarctic snow fields to the glaciers of the Arctic region, wildlife exists in a variety of forms.



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## MATERIALS

OPTIONAL: string

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## PROCEDURE

**CAUTION: Ask students to observe but not touch or disturb animals they see.**

1. Invite your students to explore the classroom, looking for signs of wildlife. Even in the most cleanly swept classrooms, you can usually find some signs of life either past or present. It might be a spider web, dead insects near lights, or insect holes along baseboards and behind books. After the search and a discussion with the students about what—if anything—

**Age:** Grades K-3 (and older)

**Subjects:** Science, Language Arts

**Skills:** analysis, discussion, generalization, observation

**Duration:** 30 to 45 minutes

**Group Size:** any

**Setting:** indoors and outdoors

**Conceptual Framework Reference:** I.B., I.B.I., I.B.3.

**Key Vocabulary:** wildlife, wild, domesticated, environment, evidence

**Appendices:** Field Ethics, Observations and Inferences

they found, introduce the idea that people and other animals share environments. Sometimes we don't even notice that we are sharing our environment with other living things, but we are.

2. Expand the search for other animals to the out-of-doors. Take the students on the school grounds and give everyone, working in pairs, five minutes to find an animal or some sign that an animal has been there. Look for indirect evidence, such as tracks, webs, droppings, feathers and nests. (Be sure not to harm or seriously disturb anything.) After five minutes, sit down and talk about what everyone found. Or, in advance, create a wildlife trail for your students to follow—looking for signs of animals along the way—by placing a long piece of string around an area of the school grounds and “salting” the path along the string with evidence of animals: bones, feathers, etc. The students can explore the trail in a “follow the leader” fashion. The students should remain quiet, observing to themselves. At the end of the trail, ask everyone to sit and discuss what they saw.

3. Talk with the children about what they learned. Emphasize that they have seen that people and wildlife share environments. They have seen evidence of wildlife at their school. Ask the children to guess whether they think different kinds of animals are found all over the earth—in the deserts, oceans, mountains and cities. They may draw from their own experiences and talk about places they have been and have seen animals. Encourage the students to make the generalization that wildlife is present all over the earth.

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### **EXTENSIONS**

1. Survey your yard, kitchen, neighborhood, or city park—looking for wildlife!
2. Search magazines and books for wildlife from all over the planet.
3. “Invent” names and descriptions for the wildlife found outside during searches. Older students can observe the animals, write a written description—and then check their invented names and descriptions against the scientific names and information found in reference materials.

4. Use state maps. Look up names of towns, cities and counties with wild animal names!

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### **AQUATIC EXTENSION**

Survey your school grounds or neighborhood for any possible aquatic habitats for wildlife. Check puddles, sprinkler systems and, if possible, streams, beaches, ponds, etc. Look for evidence—direct or indirect—of any wildlife that lives in or near these water-related areas. Tell someone what you find—or show them, taking care not to damage any wildlife you find or its habitat!

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### **EVALUATION**

1. In which of the following places would you be likely to find animals living? in a forest; in a hot, dry, desert; in a lake; at the top of a mountain; at the North Pole; in New York City. What kinds of animals might you find in these places? Name any areas on earth where you couldn't find any animals.
2. Name the things you saw, heard or smelled which showed you that wildlife lives in the classroom and on the school grounds.
3. Draw a picture of a place with many different animals living there. Explain your picture.

