



Wildlife Treasure Hunt

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will:
- 1) Learn how humans and wildlife share environments;
 - 2) Recognize that wildlife can be all around us even if we do not actually see or hear it.

METHOD:

Students go outside on a “treasure hunt” for wildlife in their yard, or at Neches River National Wildlife Refuge.

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 they have seen like deer and elk. However, wildlife includes all animals that have not been domesticated by people.

Domesticated animals are those that have been tamed or made captive and bred for special purposes. Livestock and pets are considered domesticated animals.

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 are considered wildlife.

Wildlife occurs in a tremendous variety of forms and colors, and wildlife can be 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! People are never truly alone in an environment. Some form of wildlife is always near.

Through investigation, students should be encouraged to generalize from the information they acquire to the whole of the planet, coming to the understanding in general terms that wildlife exists in all areas of the planet, in some form. The major purpose of this activity is for students to understand that people and wildlife share environments.

PROCEDURE:

This is a wildlife treasure hunt! The students are given the attached list of things to find, and they will go outside and find different kinds of evidence that wildlife exists. Wildlife includes insects, spiders, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and mammals.

MATERIALS:

Pencil, instruction sheet, notebook (optional)

Age: Grades 4-6+

Subjects: Science, Language Arts, Social Studies

Skills: Analyze, application, classification, problem solving, reading, writing.

Duration: 30 minutes – 2 hours

Setting: Outdoors

Provide each student with a pencil and instruction sheet, notebook (optional).

Establish a length of time that the student may be outside. This depends on how many things they are asked to look for.

Go outside with them to supervise. You could ask the students to find evidence for all of the items, or, especially with younger students, you could assign them just one of the things to find.

Every group should return with some evidence. Evidence can be such things as small drawings on the instruction paper, word descriptions of what they see.

At the end of the designated time period, meet back together and ask the students to report on what they found.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Do some creative writing.

Classify the types of wildlife found.

Tally the types of wildlife found and the numbers of each kind of wildlife.

Add drawings and/or descriptions.

EVALUATION:

Name the things you saw, heard, or smelled which showed you that wildlife lives everywhere.

Give examples of how evidence can be used to interpret environments.

