



Wetlands Scavenger Hunt

Virtual Classroom Extension

Objectives

These activities are designed to start your at-home students in recognizing themselves as scientists and in thinking critically about problem-solving. The goal is to teach concepts through discovery and to encourage using scientific thought processes, including scientific argumentation. Feel free to adapt the lessons provided to better suit your students' abilities. Take these ideas, make them your own, and your at-home students will have a greater chance of success.

Materials

Scavenger hunt sheet, writing utensil, access to a park with a wetlands area, binoculars (optional).

Background Information

Wetlands are areas where the ground is often covered by or saturated with water. Sometimes, this flooding is permanent, and sometimes it is seasonal. The plants that live in wetland areas are adapted to living in or around large amounts of water. Both terrestrial and aquatic animals can be found in wetland areas.

Procedure

1. This activity requires you to travel to a park or other outdoor space with a wetland area. Some locations in Cleveland Metroparks with wetlands include West Creek Reservation, Big Creek Reservation, Mill Stream Run Reservation, North Chagrin Reservation, Rocky River Reservation, and South Chagrin Reservation.
2. Start by asking your students what they know about turtles. Where would they find turtles? Do they think that turtles can be found in Ohio?
3. Explain that you will be going to a wetland to see if you can find turtles and other wetland animals.
4. For this activity, either walk on a trail alongside the wetland, or stay in an observation area overlooking the wetland.
5. Tell your students that in order to protect the habitat and the animals that live in it, they need to make sure to stay on trails, overlooks, and other human designated area. Also explain that they will be going into the animals' homes so they should respect all the animals and plants that they see there.
6. For this activity, your students will observe the wetland habitat. As they are making their observations, they should fill out the attached worksheet by counting all the animal species that they see.
7. If you want to be able to identify wildlife species, but do not own any field guides, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has free field guides on their website (<http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/education-and-outdoor-discovery/conservation-education-project-wild/education-materials>).
8. Remind your students that a lot of animals use camouflage to hide from predators. That might make them very hard to see. One trick to help find camouflaged animals is to look for the animal shape, as opposed to the coloration. Another trick is to look for movement. Some movement might be the wind, but other movement might be an animal. If you have binoculars, help your students use the binoculars to help get a closer look at the animals that live in the wetlands.
9. You should also remind your students that sudden movements or loud noises might scare animals into hiding. If they don't see anything right away, tell them to remain still and quiet for a few minutes. Then

- listen to for animal movements. Slowly and quietly search in the direction they heard the sound to see if they can see an animal. If you and your students are on a trail, try this method in several locations.
10. To find turtles, tell your students to look at logs floating in the water or along the shore. Turtles often come up to bask in the sun, but they also like to be able to quickly dive into the water if they see a predator.
 11. Your students also might hear animals, but not see any. Discuss if they also want to count animals that are heard but not seen. Examples of animals you may hear are birds, frogs, and toads. You also may hear splashing from fish, frogs, or turtles.
 12. Once your students finished their observations, they should classify those animals as either mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, or invertebrates. Discuss the characteristics of each classification and how your students can tell which group an animal fits into.
 13. Discuss what types of animals your students saw. What are some physical or behavioral characteristics these animals have that would help them survive in wetland areas? Physical characteristics are the ways the animals look and structures that they have. Behavioral characteristics are the ways animals act and things that they do.

Ohio's Learning Standards

Science Content Standards
Grade 3 Life Science Standards: Behavior, Growth and Changes 3.LS.2: Individuals of the same kind of organism differ in their inherited traits. These differences give some individuals an advantage in surviving and/or reproducing.
Grade 4 Life Science Standards: Earth's Living History 4.LS.2: Fossils can be compared to one another and to present-day organisms according to their similarities and differences.



Wetlands Scavenger Hunt

Can you find one of every kind of animal? Make a tally mark for each animal you see in each category.

Animal	Number seen	Is this a mammal, bird, fish, reptile, amphibian, or invertebrate?
Butterfly		
Deer		
Dragonfly		
Duck or goose		
Fish		
Frog or toad		
Hawk or eagle		
Salamander or Newt		
Snake		
Songbird		
Spider		
Squirrel		
Turtle		
Other		