



Wild Kids

Neighborhood Wildlife

STUDENT GUIDE

You might be surprised to learn how many different types of wildlife live in your neighborhood or even your yard. If you look and listen carefully, you may see or hear them. Or, you may not see animals but can find "signs" of wildlife such as nests, burrows, tracks, or nibbled leaves. These are signs that animals are living there. Wildlife is living there because it provides what they need. If you look closely around, you will find many different kinds of food, water, and shelter for wildlife. By exploring your neighborhood or yard, you can learn why some animals live there and some ways to attract others.

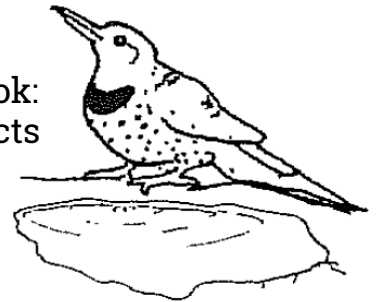
FOOD

What types of food for wildlife can you find in your yard? Look for nibbled grasses or chewed leaves. If you sit quietly you might observe birds, small rodents and squirrels scampering about eating seeds or berries. Or you may be lucky to see or hear a hummingbird as it hovers over a flower while drinking nectar.

Also, look for leaves with tiny holes in them. This may be a sign that insects have been munching on the leaves. Check for insects on the underside of leaves or on flowers. Note which flowers bees visit most often. But always observe bees (and other animals) from a safe distance.

WATER

Is there water for wildlife in your yard? Here are some places to look: a leaky faucet, a drain pipe, or a low depression where water collects after a rain shower. You can also check to see if there is a sprinkler system for plants and trees. Water often pools up in the area around plants after being watered.



SHELTER

Shelter is very important for wildlife. It is a safe place for animals to hide, keep warm, and raise their young. Just think, if you didn't have a home, where would you sleep and find protection from the weather? There are many different types of shelter. Birds build nests. Ground squirrels dig burrows. For lizards and snakes, shelter may be just a pile of rocks, sticks or leaves. How many different types of shelter can you find in your yard? (Remember, try not to disturb animals, especially when they are in their shelter.)

SPACE

How much space do animals need? They need enough to find food and water, escape predators and raise their young. Some insects don't need much. However, a hawk may travel many miles each day in search of food. Observe some animals in your neighborhood. How far do they travel for food and water? Where is their shelter? Make a list of animals that need a small amount of space and some that need a lot. Why do some animals need so much space?










MAKE A MAP!

Mapping is a fun way to explore your neighborhood. Many maps use symbols to identify different features (trees, rocks, buildings, etc). Symbols take up less space and keep the map from looking too cluttered. Maps with symbols have a key or legend to identify the symbols. Take a look at the legend below for an example. To make a map, all you need is a pencil and paper. Read through the steps below to learn some tips on how to map your neighborhood, yard or school grounds.








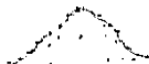

1. North is always at the top of a map. Mark north on your map. If you're not sure which direction is north, use a compass or ask your teacher to show you.
2. Study your area before drawing your map. Where are the boundaries, trees, and walkways located? Are there benches, buildings, or a playground? Once you have a general idea of where features are located, you can begin to draw your map.
3. Using some of the symbols below or your own, lightly draw in the larger features of your area. When you are satisfied that the larger features are correct, you can begin to draw in some of the other features.
4. Remember to include animals you observe and any signs of wildlife you may find.
5. Note your favorite place on your map.
6. Make notes of where you think wildlife could find food, water, and shelter.
7. When you are finished with your map, share it with other students. What do your maps have in common? How are they different? What kinds of wildlife did they observe?



Map Legend

 bush	 logs	 grasses
 bare dirt	 rocks	 favorite place
 evergreen tree	 shade tree	 weeds

Signs of Wildlife

 leaf with bumps	 nest	 spider web
 leaf with holes	 burrow	 mound of dirt
 scat	 ant hill	 chewed branch



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TEACHING GUIDE

Overview

In this activity, students will read an article about the four desert found in North America and Arizona. Then, they will complete a word search puzzle to assess their understanding of the reading. Finally, with the teacher as a guide, they will discuss adaptations are necessary for animals to live in the different deserts and what might happen to species moved from one desert to another.

Suggested Procedures

1. Print the worksheet above. If possible, print it double sided.
2. Have the students read the first page.
3. Ask students the following questions and discuss:
 - What are the four elements that a good habitat provides wildlife? What might happen if all four elements are not available?
 - Think about our school (or your house or the neighborhood park): what animals have you seen? What animals do you think might live there but you haven't seen? What changes could we make to provide better habitat for more wildlife?
4. Inform students that they are now going to make a map. The purpose of the map will be to show just how common wildlife could be in the area. It is probably best if you have the students map the school grounds. However, if the circumstances require, you can have them map their backyard or a neighborhood park or something similar. The big idea is that it should be something in the neighborhood and not an area that we traditionally consider "wild."
5. Have the students read the second page. Discuss the instructions prior to heading out to map. Make sure students are clear on what they are to do.
6. Give students time to complete their maps.
7. Have students share their maps. Discuss the following questions:
 - Do you think there is enough space for all the wildlife you found?
 - What similarities and differences do each of the maps have? Did everyone find the same wildlife? Why or why not?
 - Why do you think we aren't finding mountain lions or black bears?
 - If you wanted to attract diferent wildlife to the area, what would we need to do? Would that be good or bad? Why?

Grade

5th

AZ Science Standards

- 5.L4U3.11

Science and Engineering Practices

- Obtain, evaluate and communicate information

Crosscutting Concepts

- Patterns
- Scale, Proportion and Quantity