



Michigan Nature Association

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Homes & Habitats

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Learning Objectives:

1. Students will know what an animal's habitat is.
2. Students will be able to identify the 5 elements/needs of an animal for its habitat (food, water, shelter, safe place to raise young, and space), and give examples types of habitats.
3. The students will know what and how to identify some animal signs.

List of Materials Needed:

- Animal Cards: Animal names written on note cards (can be any animal you would typically find in the habitat you are visiting)
 - Ball of Yarn
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Introduction

Ask participants if they have a Home/Neighborhood?

- Do you get food there?
- Do you get water there?
- Do you have a warm and safe place to sleep and play?
- Do you have enough space?

That is your Habitat!

What Is a Habitat?

- A habitat is a specific area where an animal lives, where it makes it home, kind-of like a neighborhood or community.

Animals Need:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| - Food | - Space |
| - Water | - Shelter |
| - Safe Place to Raise Young | |

Activity: Home Hunting

Participants will work in pairs. Each pair will get an animal card with a certain animal on it and they will look for its home/habitat in the woods.

The group of participants will pretend to be the animal on their card and answer the following questions for their assigned animal.

- Where do you hide from predators?
- Where do you spend winter?
- Where will you hide from storms?
- Where does the animal live?
- What type of food do you eat? Where would you find the food?
- Is water near your home?

Some examples of animals could be: Tree frog, Squirrel, Chickadee, Owl, Bear, Wolf, Fox, Centipede, Pillbug, Deer and Rabbit.

Activity: Parade of Homes

When the participants are finished finding their Habitats have them go on a Parade of Homes. Each group will show the other groups their Homes/Habitats. As the groups approach each Home/Habitat have the students who worked on it describe the animals' habitat needs and explain why this is the ideal place for the animal.

(Make sure you are helping the participants with the information on each animals habitat, the best way to handle this is to take 15 minutes before you lead these activities and familiarize yourselves with the animals you put on your cards).

Activity: Habitat Run Game

Ask students how their animal might have troubles getting to their habitat. Ask the chaperones to be the habitat obstacles (Snow storm, Cold rain, No food, No water, Road Construction, Home Construction, and Predators).

Chaperones will stand in one spot and try to tag the habitat runners. The runners will try to attempt to 'get home' without being tagged by any obstacle within the established boundaries.

A twist to the game would allow the predator(s) to move around and 'hunt' for the habitat runners.

If tagged, the animal 'dies' and must stop in-place until all animals have either safely arrived home or been waylaid by the obstacle.

You could also emphasize the need for space for the animals by first making the boundaries small(more obstacles stop animals) and then enlarging them, you could also introduce the predator around this time, comment on the differences.

Activity: Habitat Interaction Game

Assign each participant an animal or plant (look in the habitat around you and pick plants and animals you can find there). Tell them that for the purpose of this game, they are going to be that animal or plant.

Start with the producers (the plants). Have the participant(s) who is the plant hold one end of the ball of yarn. If there are more plants, have the first student toss the yarn to the other plant students. Make sure they all hold onto the yarn before they throw it! Tell the plants they are all connected because they all get their energy from the sun.

Now ask the students which animals eat the plants and which animals eat those animals, and so on. Proceed connecting the students with the yarn, until all of them are holding another piece of yarn. Continue pointing out the connections between them, or have them come up with the connections themselves.

Once everyone is connected, demonstrate how each individual is important to the community: take away some member of the web, by some plausible means. For instance, pollution kills one of the plants. When that plant dies the participant tugs on the yarn he holds; anyone who feels a tug has been affected by the death of the plant. Now everyone who felt a tug gives a tug. The process continues until every member of the community is shown to have been affected by the death of the plant.

What is a Habitat- The Specifics

- The type of environment an organism or group of organisms normally live or occur.
 - The natural abode, locality, or region of an animal or plant.
 - Place where anything is commonly found
 - The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.
 - The place occupied by an organism, population, or community. It is the physical part of the community structure in which an organism finds its home and includes the sum total of all the environmental conditions present in the specific place occupied by an organism. Often a habitat is defined to include a whole community of organisms.
 - The specific area a species lives.
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Test What You Learned!

1. What are 5 things animals need from their habitats?
2. How are animals and plants connected to one another?
3. What happens to the plants and animals in a habitat when one plant is killed?
4. What are some examples of obstacles animals face in their habitat?
5. How does a smaller or shrinking habitat affect it's inhabitants?

Animal Cards

Rabbit	Deer
Pillbug	Centipede
Fox	Bear
Owl	Chickadee
Squirrel	Tree Frog