



National Park Service Rock Creek Park Environmental Education

HABITAT HUNT

Watching a squirrel in search of acorns, finding a bird's nest sitting in a bush and following deer tracks into the forest are just some of the experiences that students may encounter as they stroll through a forest in search of animal habitats. Students will discover what all animals, big or small, need for survival.

TOPICS: Habitat requirements (Food, Water, Shelter, and Space)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Prior to the urbanization of Washington DC, this area contained a variety of habitats teeming with wildlife. As Washington grew, these habitats shrunk and much of the wildlife was lost. A few species became extinct or at least extirpated from the area.

By identifying the components of a habitat and explaining the history of local habitat loss, this program will focus on the importance of Rock Creek Park.

Where: Rock Creek Park Nature Center

Length: 1 hour

Who: 2nd - 3rd grade classes

Students per group: maximum of 30

Chaperones per group: 5-7

CURRICULUM MATCH: Based on D.C. Science Standards

GRADE 2- describe the varied needs of living things (food, H₂O, light, space)

GRADES 2 & 3- identify/ compare needs of living thing to environment

GRADES 2 & 3- observe the changes and variations in local habitats

GRADE 3- describe the animal requirements of a habitat

GRADE 3- describe the interdependence of living organisms

OBJECTIVES: By the end of the program, students will be able to;

1. Identify three things that all animals need to survive.
2. Name three animals that live at Rock Creek Park.
3. Explain the importance of habitat protection and Rock Creek Park.

SAFETY MESSAGE: Avoid Poison Ivy



HABITAT HUNT PRE AND POST- TRIP ACTIVITIES

Pre- trip activities: Prior to your visit to Rock Creek Park, please take a moment to read this presite. The pre- trip activity will not only introduce students to the concept of "habitats", but it will also enable them to make later comparisons between their needs and the needs of wild animals. The post- trip activity is designed to reinforce the program by comparing habitats of some of Rock Creek Park's animals.

Pre- Trip Activity

EVERYBODY NEEDS A HOME

- a. Ask each student to draw a picture of where he or she lives- or to draw a picture of the place where a person they know lives. Ask the students to include in their drawings pictures of things they need to live; for example, a place to cook and store food, a place to sleep, a roof to keep them dry.
- b. Allow a few students to share their drawings and point out the places they need.
- c. Put the pictures up around the room- making a "gallery of homes". Point out that everyone needs a home.
- d. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine a bird's home, a beaver's home, a squirrel's home, an ant's home, a fox's home, and a worm's home.
- e. Compare the homes. Talk about what all animals need to survive; food, water, shelter, and space. Explain that this area is the animal's habitat.

Post- Trip Activities

WILD ANIMALS

- a. Split the class into groups and have them identify habitat needs for any five wild animals that live in Rock Creek Park (deer, rabbits, raccoons, squirrels, songbirds, beavers, foxes, bats, mice, moles, snakes, turtles, and even worms, spiders, millipedes, or types of insects).
- b. play charades with students acting out habitat components from (a). When all five components are identified see who can guess the animal.

MATCHING ACTIVITY

- a. Pass out "Matching" activity sheets.
- b. Ask the students to draw lines matching the animals on the left to a part of their habitat (food, water, shelter, and space) on the right. Note: only use each animal and each habitat component once. An answer key is included.

MY FAVORITE HABITAT

- a. Ask the students to think back to the park program and the animals at Rock Creek Park. Have them think of their favorite animal that lives in the park, and draw its habitat. Remind them to include all four components (food, water, shelter, and space) in their picture.
- b. Find a good place to hang your habitat pictures at school, or write a letter to the Park Rangers at Rock Creek Park and tell them about your favorite animal and its habitat.

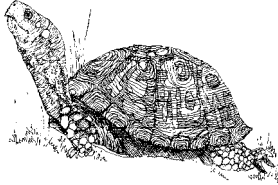
HABITAT PLEDGE

- a. Pass out copies of the "Habitat Pledge" to the students.
- b. Ask the students to think back to the sharing circle part of the program. Ask them to think of one way that they can help protect animal habitats. Ask each student to write his or her idea at the end of the pledge. Help the students read their pledges.
- c. Once again, Rock Creek Park would love copies of the students' pledges.

HABITAT SCAVENGER HUNT

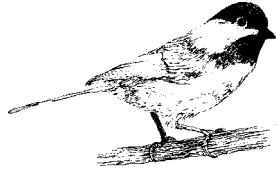
Look for signs that the following residents find their necessary habitat (food, water, shelter, and space) here at Rock Creek Park

TURTLE



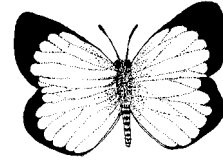
Look for a place where I may live.

BIRD



Listen for our songs or
Locate a nest of ours.

BUTTERFLY OR BEE



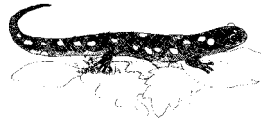
We help to pollinate
the flowers.

FROG



Listen for a frog chorus.

SALAMANDER



Look beneath a log for me.

WORM OR BEETLE



We help make soil!

SQUIRREL



Look for signs of me-
either my home in a tree,
or an acorn that I can eat!

DEER



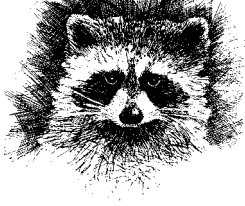
I love to eat poison ivy and
catbrier!

FOX



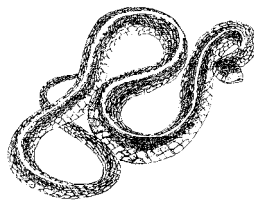
Look for my
footprints. I am sly
and not often seen!

RACCOON



Look for my home- a
large hole in a tree.

SNAKE



Find a place where I may
live.

ANT



I am a hard worker-
watch me carry
something that weighs
much more than me!