

ANIMAL HOMES AND HABITATS

Finding Illinois' Fauna

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Lincoln Memorial Garden and Nature Center

Teacher's Guide

Spring: Animal Homes and Habitats

Grade Level: Third and Fourth Grades

Field Trip Length: 1.5 hours

INTRODUCTION

Spring is a time of continual growth and change for plants and animals. With changes every day as the Earth warms and wakes up, spring is such an exciting season to explore animals in their native habitats! **Animal Homes and Habitats** is a field trip to Lincoln Memorial Garden that increases students' awareness of the many wild animals in central Illinois native habitats of woodland, wetlands, and prairie. We'll hike the trails to natural communities and find evidence of animals in each habitat. It might be our good fortune to find snakes or turtles basking on a sunny trail after a long winter of hibernation. Bird songs, squirrel chatter, and insect buzzes most likely will call for our attention. We will search for evidence of animal homes, food sources, signs of food chains and food webs, new families, animal tracks, etc. There are many subtle clues to help us learn more about the relationships between the flora and fauna of Illinois as we travel through Lincoln Memorial Garden.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the major components of a habitat – shelter, water and food – are the same for all animals, even humans!
2. To compare and contrast the differences of the habitats available for animals in Lincoln Memorial Garden within the context of our three ecosystems of woodland, wetland, and grassland (prairie).
3. To describe similarities and differences between animal's food webs in each distinct habitat or neighborhood in nature.

4. To explore and observe animals homes and signs, as well as, the relationships with the plant communities in the woods, near water sources, and in the prairie.
5. To deepen appreciation of central Illinois native species of animals and their natural communities and to learn better ways to protect and provide homes for wild animals in Illinois.

THIS PROGRAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MEET THE FOLLOWING ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS:

Learning Area	Goal	Standard	Benchmark
Language Arts	4	A	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Language Arts	4	B	1b, 2b
Mathematics	6	D	1, 2
Science	11	A	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Science	12	A	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Science	12	B	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Science	12	E	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Social Science	16	E	1, 2a

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRETRIP ACTIVITIES

1. Introduce students to the diversity of native animal life in Illinois. (Think small to include all invertebrates that call Lincoln Memorial Garden their home.) Check the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website for free posters that can be used to show many of the different Illinois fauna.
2. Brainstorm a list of native animals with the children. Classify them according to invertebrates and vertebrates. Then classify the vertebrates according to their family -- fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal. Ask each child to choose a favorite animal to research and then share the report with the class.
3. Read and share any of the books in the Resource List at the end of this teacher's guide.
4. Play animal charades with the children to demonstrate the diversity of movements of animals. Animal role playing can be introduced to small groups who can work together to become an animal with several parts or an animal within its habitat.

DESCRIPTION OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL GARDEN FIELD TRIP

The field trip will begin with a brief introduction to Lincoln Memorial Garden in one of the Council Rings of the Garden. A naturalist will lead a discussion about the history of the Garden, the expectations of visitors to the Garden, and an overview of the natural communities to be visited during the hike.

The students will be divided into small groups of 10 – 12 children. During the naturalist-led hike, the students will walk the Garden's trails to visit woodland, wetland, and grassland communities as they search for signs of animals and their homes. We'll listen for the sounds of native animals, look for those elusive animals, their homes, and signs of them in their preferred habitats, smell and touch the plants that provide an abundance of food choices and home building materials as we move quietly and respectfully through the nature sanctuary of the Garden that the animals call home.

SUGGESTIONS FOR POST TRIP ACTIVITIES

1. Ask each child to choose a favorite native animal. Have them bring a shoebox or another small box from home in which to create a diorama of the habitat that the animal would live in the wild. Create the animal with clay, toothpicks, etc. to make a 3D animal to reside in its habitat.
2. Play the webbing game developed by Joseph Cornell in *Sharing Nature with Children*. Create cards with a picture of each component of the habitat – soil, sun, water, and plenty of plants. Then, add **animals** specific to the ecosystem in which the habitat is found. (Wetland, woodland or prairie if wanting to just work with native Illinois areas). Each child wears the picture with a clothespin clipping the picture to the front of the child. The students stand in a circle. Starting with the sun, pass a ball of twine or string to each child connecting him/her with whatever they need or whatever needs them. (Example – sun to big bluestem grass, to grasshopper, to meadowlark bird to prairie king snake to red tailed hawk, etc). Be certain all children are joined with string at the end of the webbing activity. Some animals may need to die, be composted, become soil and grow plants to keep the energy flowing through the food web.

3. Take a walk around the schoolyard or neighborhood to look for signs of animals and their homes in an area that has more human involvement and interaction. Make a Venn diagram with circles of the school area and LMG to determine what animals can live both in a natural area and a city within the intersected space of the diagram. Lead a discussion with the students on how they might improve the schoolyard and neighborhood to increase the number of native animals in the vicinity.
4. Take action on the discussion mentioned above. Build birdhouses, plant food sources for animals with flowers, shrubs, and trees, establish bird baths and watering places, design a butterfly garden, establish a bird feeding station, etc.
5. Read and share any of the books listed in the Resource List at the end of this teacher's guide.

RESOURCE LIST FOR ANIMAL HOMES AND HABITATS: Finding Illinois' Fauna

Bannatyne-Cugnet, Jo. *A Prairie Alphabet*. University of Saskatchewan Press. 2009

Brenner, Barbara. *One Small Place in a Tree*. HarperCollins Publishers. 2004

Cornell, Joseph Bharat. *Sharing Nature with Children*. Dawn Publications. 1979

Davis, Barbara J. *Biomes and Ecosystems*. Gareth Stevens Vital Science Publishers. 2008

Dutton, Michael. *Exploring Ecosystems: An Environmentally Friendly Coloring Book*. Dover Publishing Co. 2009

Goldie, Sonia. *Animals in Their Homes*. Lark Books. 1998

Gregoire, Elizabeth. *Whose House Is It? A Look at Animal Homes – Webs, Nests, and Shells*. Scholastic Books. 2007

Huter, Anne. *What's in a Pond?* Houghton Mifflin Co. 1999

Kalman, Bobbie. *What is a Biome?* Crabtree Publications. 1998

- Kalman, Bobbie. *What are Food Chains and Webs?* Crabtree Publications. 1998
- Lauber, Patricia. *Who Eats What?* Harper Collins. 1995
- MacMillan, Dianne M. *Life in a Deciduous Forest.* Lerner Publishing Co. 2003
- McGehee, Claudia. *A Tallgrass Prairie Alphabet.* Bur Oak Books. 2004
- McKinney, Barbara Shaw. *Pass the Energy, Please!* Dawn Publications. 1999
- Martin, Debbie. *Animal Homes.* Usborne Books. 1999
- Morrison, Gordon. *Nature in the Neighborhood.* Houghton Mifflin Co. 2004
- Pipe, Jim. *Earth's Ecosystems.* Planet Earth Publishers. 2008
- Pratt – Serafini, Kristin Joy. *Salamander Rain: A Pond Journal.* Dawn Publications. 2000
- Reif, Pat. *The Magic School Bus Hops Home: A Book About Animal habitats.* Scholastic Books. 1995
- Squire, Ann O. *Animal Homes.* Groliers Press. 2001
- Stille, Darlene R. *Grasslands.* Groliers Publishers. 1999
- Stille, Darlene R. *Wetlands.* Groliers Publishers. 1999
- VanCleave, Janice. *Ecology for Every Kid.* John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1996
- Wagner, Marianne. *America's Forests: Guide to Plants and Animals (America's Ecosystems).* Fulcrum Publishers. 2009
- Weber, Belinda. *Science Kids Animal Disguises.* Kingfisher Books. 2004
- Wilkes, Angela. *Science Kids Animal Homes.* Kingfisher Books. 2003

