Forest Residents

Forest education module 3

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SABUKO
Society for Nature Conservation

გერმანიის თანამშრომლობა
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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თბილისის მერია

Forest residents

Required time:	≈ 2 1/2 hours
Material needed:	Pictures of forest animals (mix of mammals, birds, insects, …)
	Markers (small flags or color threats)
	Play dough
	Animal information sheets
	Face colors
	Scale

Relevance in context to the curriculum

- Describe adaptation of animals and plants to their habitat

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Forest provides habitat for many animals. If you ask, which animals live in the forest, most likely you will hear names of mammals and birds. Every animal has its own ecological niche. Therewith there is less concurrence among the species. Forest provides spaces for breeding, weather protection, and hiding from predators, and food.

Wild animals perceive humans as danger. As soon as they detect us, they make sure to avoid us. Therefor we very rarely see them.

Animal adaptation

Due to climate related availability of food, some animal species have adapted strategies to cope with the shortage. Some species hibernate - they sleep throughout winter, others only reduce activity. Which means, they spent much more time sleeping, but get periodically active to look for food. Some birds migrate to more convenient places.

Some species still find enough food, but change color to adapt to the different coloration of the landscapes for better camouflage.

PREPARATION

AT SCHOOL

Prepare the children for the visit of the forest. Discuss:

- Who has been in a forest before?
- What did you do there?
- How do we behave in a forest?

RECOMMENDATION

Check the place where you want to go before for animal traces. (Woodpecker markings, resting place from roe deer, bite marks on bark, twigs or leafs, excrements, bones, …) After a rainy day or in snow, it is usually easier to find footprints. If you are limited to an area where you do not find anything, you may place some specimen from your collection. (Feathers, bones, …)

WHAT TO BRING

Make sure everyone knows how to dress and what to bring!

Everyone should be dressed according to weather. This can be, protection against cold, wind or rain, head cover, sun screen.

It is highly recommended to wear long trousers, as high grasses can be very itchy and spiky plants are very annoying. For the same reason it is preferred to wear closed shoes.

Everyone should bring their own drinking water. Preferable in a reusable bottle. Everyone should have a light snack. It should be made clear, that no trash is left behind!

Have the children bring their notebooks and pencils.

Make sure you have all the materials ready with you, which you may need for your activities.

If it is not anyway mandatory from your school, make sure you have basic first aid with you. At least a small bottle of disinfectant and bandaids.

Have your phone charged and ready with relevant contact numbers.

Topic introduction and sensibilisation

Who lives in the forest

Overall time required for the introduction period: 40 minutes

FOREST RESIDENTS

Group discussion - 10 minutes

- Which animals live in our forests?
- Which animals have you ever seen in a forest?
- What do you think, why is it so hard to see wild animals?

ANIMAL QUEST

Game - 20 minutes

You need pictures of different forest animals.

Have the class split in small groups. Show an animal card to one group. This group now gives hints about the animal. How many hints does the other group need to find out, which animal group one describes.

If your class is big and you split in several smaller groups, it can become a contest.

MAMMALS OF THE FOREST

Group discussion - 10 minutes

Reflect on the animals in the game. Guide over to ‚mammals' by emphasizing their characteristics.

- Why are bats no birds?
- How many legs have birds, mammals, insects, spiders?
- To which group do we humans belong?
- What are the characteristics of mammals?
- ….

Traces from mammals

Overall time required: 70 minutes

Draw the children into the activity with the questions:

- What kind of traces animals may leave?
- How could we find them?

FIND TRACES

Activity

Depending on your area you have the following choices.

You go all together on a walk and look out for traces. You discuss them along your walk.

Or, you let them walk independently in a defined area. Where they find something, they place a marker. After a given time you give the signal for the children to return to you. Now you visit all together the individuell findings.

Have the children compare sizes of the traces. Measure. Make them draw the traces in their notebooks.

CAMOUFLAGE

Adaptation

Play-Dough

1 kg play-dough:

400 g flour, 200 g salt, 2 spoons alum powder, 0,5 l boiling water, 3 spoons oil, 1 spoon food colouring

Mix flour, salt and alum in a big bowl.

Stir oil and food colouring in the boiling water. Slowly add to the flour mixture. Stir until lukewarm, than continue to knead with your hands.

If the dough is too dry, add more oil.

Can be kept for a while if enclosed in plastic

Now hand out the play dough. Every participant gets a small ball of dough. Ask them to create forest animals. Besides the dough, they are allowed to use natural material.

Mark two separate fields of 10 m x 10 m in size. Split the group in two. Each group has 3 minutes to place their animals in one field and return to the baseline.

Now the groups switch the fields.

First they only look from the baseline, if they can see any of the animals.

Than they are allowed to move carefully through the area and look for the animals. They are not allowed to point at them or to shout out their positions.

Come back to the baseline. How many animals could you find? Why was it difficult or easy?

Discuss the purpose of camouflage.

Explore-Explain

Activity - 50 minutes

Split the participants in pairs. Every pair gets an information sheet about one animal.

- Read the information and create a fact sheet.
- Where does your animal live in the forest? Search in the given territory for places where they may live.
- How does your animal look like? How does it move? Which sounds do they produce?

Every pair will present their animal to the rest of the group. They can color their faces with the characteristics of the animals or create masks from paper. Act out your animal!

(Animal sounds are widely available on the internet from YouTube recordings to official sound archives. Print templates of animal masks as well.)

Farewell from the forest

Overall time: 35 minutes

SQUIRREL AND MARTEN

Activity - 10 minutes

All children place their heads with their ear against a tree trunk. They all turn into sleeping squirrels.

Tip against one child, to turn it into a marten.

If you knock at the trunk, the squirrels know, the woodpecker is here.

If the marten scratches on the trunk, Attention! Marten is here! - Escape!

Whom the marten catches turns into the new marten.

MAMMALS IN THE FOREST

Group discussion - 5 minutes

Which traces did we find?

About which animals have we learned today?

How are mammals different from birds, insects, and other animals?

OWLS AND CROWS

Game - 10 minutes

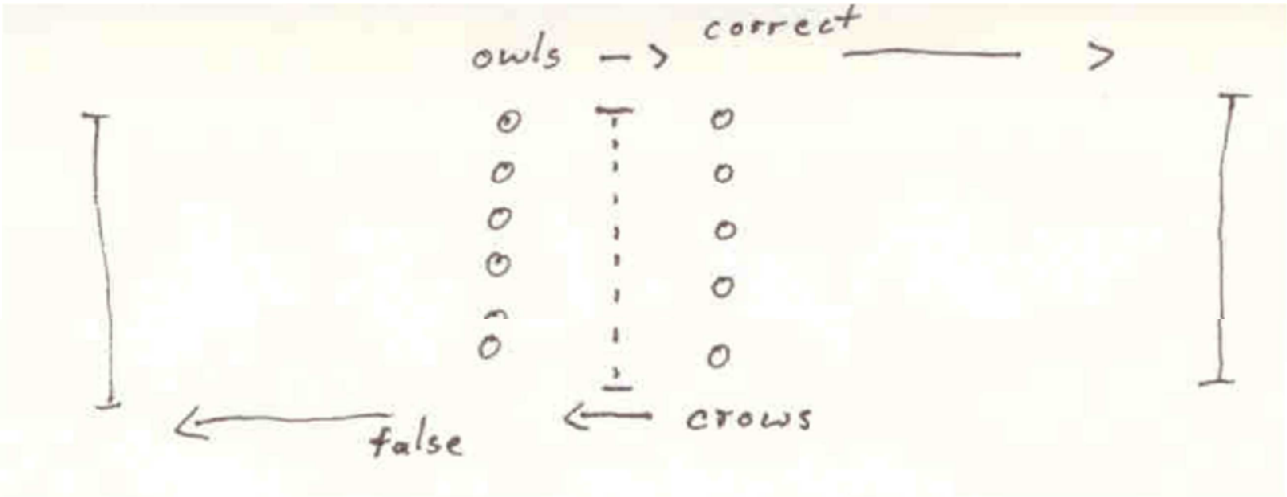
It is strongly recommended to prepare correct and wrong statements beforehand.

Form two groups. Mark a field with a middle line. Each group is placed in a line about 6 steps away from the middle line, facing the other group. About 10 m behind each group an end line has to be marked.

One group are owls. Owls are a symbol for wisdom and stand for the right answer. Crows are said to be cheeky and crafty, they stand for the wrong answers.

You state an argument, for example “Bats lay eggs“. As this is a false argument, the crows have to catch the owls. If the argument is correct, the owls have to catch the crows. If a player reaches the end line, he is safe. If a player is caught, she has to join the other group.

It is recommended to have a few test runs with very simple arguments to make clear which group has to run into which direction.



Before you leave the forest,
make sure you collect everything you brought
and take it back with you!

Take all your waste home!
Garbage causes damage to the environment and animals.
By polluting the environment, we harm ourselves.

FOLLOW-UP AT SCHOOL

- Reflect the day in the forest. Create a picture gallery where forest animals are shown in their habitat.
- Intensify the topic: who else lives in the forest? (Birds, insects, spiders, amphibians, reptiles)
- Discuss the threats forest animals face. Which threats come to the children minds?
  - Hunters and poachers
  - Loss of habitat
  - Roads cutting habitats in parts (> traffic,)
  - Offroad driving
  - Trash

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