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WETLANDS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Trainer's Booklet



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BIOLEARN-BSB142
ECO-CONSCIOUS MINDS TO STOP POLLUTION
IN THE VALUABLE WETLANDS OF BLACK SEA BASIN

WETLANDS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Trainer's Booklet

Target Audience: 8-14 years old

District Government of Enez

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About The Project

BIOLEARN (Eco-Conscious Minds to Stop Pollution in the Valuable Wetlands of Black Sea Basin - BSB142), which was initiated on 01.01.2020 within the scope of the first call for proposals of “Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin 2014-2020” where the Directorate for EU Affairs is the national authority, is led by District Government of Enez.

Representatives of the following partners are as follows:

1. District Government of Enez-Turkey
2. Division Directorate of Edirne under First Regional Directorate under General Directorate of Nature Protection and Nature Parks of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry - Turkey
3. Foundation Caucasus Environment - Georgia
4. Agricola NGO - Ukraine
5. Green Balkans / Stara Zagora NGO - Bulgaria
6. Management Body of Evros Delta and Samothraki Protected Areas - Greece

The overall objective of the project is to provide information, experience transfer and capacity building training between partners and develop a common environmental protection and education approach, methodology and organizing campaigns that will raise awareness in the society to reduce pollution in important wetlands in the Black Sea Basin.

The main activities to be carried out within the scope of the 26-months project are as follows:

1. Establishment of a total of 4 environmental protection and training centres, one of which is on the shores of Gala Lake, and providing environmental protection training to visitors and especially to students. By providing equipment for the other 6 existing centres, there will be a network of 10 activity and training centres.
2. Workshops to be held in Bulgaria and Greece, focusing on discussions about examples of

successful training and awareness-raising campaigns for the protection of wetlands, sharing experiences and preparing the materials to be used in training which will be applied in all centres. Capacity building training for trainers.

3. Organizing massive and synchronized cleaning campaigns to reduce pollution in wetlands.
4. Award-winning photo contest and exhibition focused on wetland protection.
5. Organizing a wetland pollution-based painting contest and exhibition in primary and secondary schools.

Outputs of the Project:

1. “Stop Pollution” and “Save Nature” environmental education and activity centres, one of which is mobile, will be established in 5 countries and will sustainably carry out training and awareness-raising activities.
2. A report will be prepared on the nature and rate of pollutants in 5 wetlands in the Black Sea Basin.
3. A guide with examples of good practices consisting of training and campaigns focused on protecting wetlands will be prepared.
4. A wetland protection training set consisting of 12 sections will be prepared especially for students. Training sets will also be shared on the internet.
5. After 10 people from 2 each partner country received trainer’s training, they will train 25 people in each region (totally 125 people) and the sustainability of training activities will be ensured in the established centres.
6. A painting competition on environmental protection will be held in at least 15 primary and secondary schools and paintings selected by the jury will be exhibited.
7. Pictures taken in 5 regions with the participation of professional photographers will be exhibited. With the mobile ‘Stop Pollution’ vehicle, the exhibition will travel to 5 countries.
8. An environmental cleaning campaign will be held simultaneously with the participation of 1500 people in 5 regions.
9. With the international conference to be held in Georgia, the outputs of the project and future action plans will be shared with the public.

For more information, you can visit the project website: www.bio-learn.org



About The Booklet

This training booklet is a part of the training set prepared under the “BIOLEARN-BSB142 / Eco-Conscious Minds to Stop Pollution in the Valuable Wetlands of Black Sea Basin” project. The booklet is prepared to attract the attention of the countries in the Black Sea basin to the importance of wetlands, to prevent pollution in wetlands and to develop ecological literacy of the participants accordingly.

This training material targets groups age 8-14 and consists of two parts which are the educator booklet and participant booklet. The trainer booklet has detailed activity application instructions, necessary information on the subject, assessment questions and recommendations to enrich the activity.

Application Notes

🌱 Before starting the activity, it is recommended to view the entire booklet and to get ready for the topic by using the information in the booklet.

🌱 At the beginning of the activity, necessary materials and worksheets should be distributed to the participants.

🌱 When activities are applied, it is important to undertake a facilitator/guide role and to ensure the active participation of the participants.

🌱 The activities in this booklet are planned to be completed in a short time. All of these activities can be applied consecutively or one or two of the activities can be applied in desired order depending on the development stages and interest levels of the participants.

🌱 Presenting the activities with a natural narrative rather than reading the information text in the instructions and keeping the interest of the participants with questions and answers would present positive benefits.

🌱 The activity instructions can be followed exactly or adapted based on participants' ages, development stages and interest levels without diverging from the activity purposes.



Wetlands and Their Importance



 A typical view of a wetland.

What Is a Wetland?

As you can understand from its name, a wetland means a land surface covered with shallow water. The water level in wetlands is mostly low when you compare it with seas and lakes. The main reason for this is that the soil absorbs as much water as possible and cannot take it anymore. The rest of the water is accumulated on the surface and wetlands are formed!

Keep in mind that any area with puddles is not called a “wetland”. Let’s look at the waterholes in the garden, field or streets after raining. These areas could accumulate water for a while, but it does not mean that they have characteristics of wetlands.

Did You Know?

Wetlands only cover 6% of Earth’s surface but 40% of all known living beings live in these areas.

Wetlands assume several important tasks. Apart from hosting millions of living creatures, wetlands maintain the health of the ecosystem.

First of all, water always exists in wetlands. Although the water level changes according to rainfalls, there is always water in wetlands. Thus, the plants which live in water have access to an unlimited source to survive. Not just plants but birds, mammals, fish, insects and many others live in the wetland ecosystem.

What Types of Wetlands Exist?

Wetlands could be in different shapes, sizes and characteristics. While some of them are formed as marshes near lakes and rivers, others are formed as bogs deep in the





 Marshes are the one of the wetlands which form in the soils rich in terms of minerals.

forests. Some of them could be large like the Amazon River Basin, while others could be the size of a small water pond.

Wetlands are usually classified into three categories as marshes, swamps and bogs. Each of them has its own soil characteristics and mineral levels. So, each wetland hosts different kinds of plant species.

Marshes are one of the wetlands which form in the soils rich in terms of minerals. They are mostly covered with grassy areas and herbaceous plants. The water level is generally low, so it creates an important feeding and breeding area for numerous

Did You Know?

One of the largest wetlands in the world is the Pantanal Protection Area in South America. Its size is almost half of the Black Sea.



 *Pantanal Protection Area*

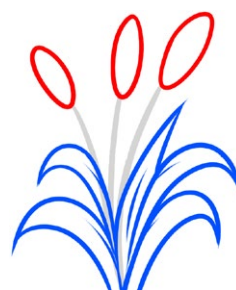
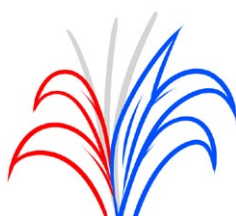
bird species. The river deltas where a river and a sea meet, the banks of lakes or artificial ponds are good examples of marshes.

The other wetland type is **swamps** which also is formed in mineral-rich soils. The water depths in swamps are generally higher than in other wetlands. They also provide suitable growing conditions for woody plants like trees.

Lastly, **bogs** are wetlands that form in the land with poor minerals. Bogs are mostly found in Siberia and Canada which have cold and rainy climates. One of the most important features of bogs is the acidic characteristics of their waters. Because of that, only mosses could grow in bogs.



Follow the steps
below and try to
draw a cattail!



Where Are Wetlands Found?

Wetlands could be found almost anywhere on Earth. There are numerous wetlands in different shapes and sizes on all continents except Antarctica, which is completely covered by ice. On the scale of Europe, the Black Sea Basin is a very important area that contains the richest wetlands of the region.

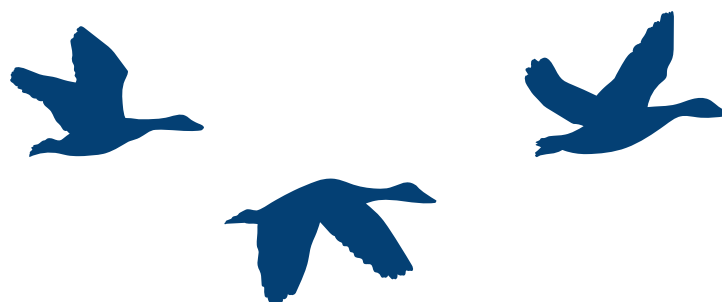
For example, the Danube River travels all across Europe and then it creates the globally important Danube Delta where it meets with the Black Sea. Similarly, the Kızılırmak River, the longest inland river in Turkey, creates a large delta on the Black Sea coast. These wetlands host dozens of bird, insect, fish, mammal and plant species.

Did You Know?

There are more than 700 bird species that have been observed across the entire Europe, and nearly 250 of them could be observed in the Danube Delta.



 Rivers create wetlands called river deltas where they meet with the sea.



What Are the Roles of Wetlands?

Wetlands assume several important tasks. Apart from hosting millions of living creatures, wetlands maintain the health of the ecosystem.





First of all, wetlands protect the water which is the key element of life on Earth. Due to their physical characteristics, they prevent floods and keep water safe. Their characteristics are not only limited to that! They purify this accumulated water and create clean water. At the same time, this water feeds the underground water supplies. All these features are vital for humanity to live safely.





Secondly, the incredible richness of wetlands provides plenty of food for each living being in the food chain. Therefore, many plant and animal species live in wetlands so that they can use this abundance of resources, which is the center of life for them. It is not a coincidence that almost half of all living creatures live in wetlands!


What Did We Learn?

 Wetlands consist of both water and land, so they are called “wetlands”.

 Wetlands always have water and its level could change according to rainfall. They are “wet” all year round.

 Wetlands could be found on all continents except Antarctica. They are mostly formed near river beds and lakes.

 Wetlands are very important for ecosystems because they host numerous plants and animals. At the same time, they filter the water and prevent floods, which significantly helps humanity.

 If a wetland has more trees, it is called a swamp. But if there are grassier plants, they are called marshes.

 The water in wetlands could be freshwater, salty or a mix of these.



World Wetlands Day

The Ramsar Convention was signed on 2 February 1971 to protect wetlands. Each year, the 2nd of February is celebrated as World Wetlands Day. Seminars, field studies and workshops are organized on this day to raise global awareness about the importance of wetlands for our nature.



Activities

Connection Game



Objective

To draw attention to the wetlands.



Target Audience

8-14 years old



Learning Outcomes

- ✎ S/he will describe the wetlands.
- ✎ S/he will form a connection between the wetlands and elements found in wetlands



Materials

Photographs of the elements in wetlands, computer, projector



Duration

20 min.



Method

Question-answer



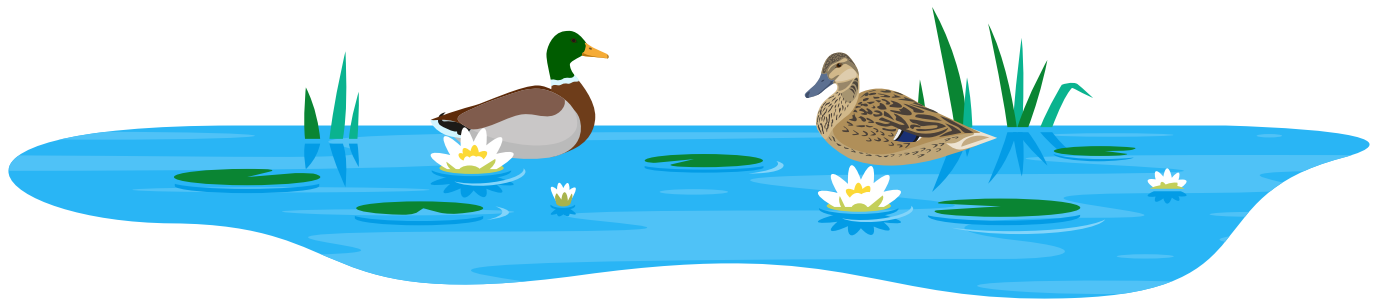
Preparation

Prepare a presentation including photographs of various elements related to wetlands before the activity. You can use the following photos in the presentation: A typical wetland, gray heron, plastic bottle, tree, fish, bush, sea, reeds, seeds, bird nest, rain, human, sun, soil, snake, bicycle, frog, waste bin, turtle, mosquito, picnic basket, insect, rice, camera, migratory birds, plastic bag.

Application

1. Open the presentation and reflect the wetland photograph on the board. Ask students whether they had been in a wetland before. Get a few sentences briefly from them about wetlands.
2. Say that you will be playing a game together today. Give everyone a number in turn starting from 1 and ask everyone to keep their numbers in mind.
3. Then share your thoughts on the first photo to show the game. For example, you can say: "The wetland is a very important place for gray herons. This is their home... They feed and sleep here."

4. After commenting on the first photo, say a random number and open the new photo. Take the comment of the child whose number has been said and then continue the game in the same way. Make sure to continue the game without slowing down the speed by getting short com-
- ments. There are no wrong answers in the game, so encourage everyone to quickly say their thoughts about the photos.
5. After getting everyone's comments, you can end the activity by giving the following brief information about the wetlands.



Wetlands are lands covered with water, as you can understand from their name. However, the waters here are not very deep like the water in seas and lakes. The water in wetlands is shallow. The soil absorbs all the water it could absorb in these areas, and the remaining water accumulates on top of the soil. The presence of this water in wetlands attracts living creatures. It provides a rich habitat for plants and animals such as birds, insects and mammals. Wetlands

are the home and breeding areas for some species, and feeding and resting areas for some migratory species. We humans also benefit largely from wetlands. Wetlands both host millions of living beings and ensure a healthy ecosystem. It prevents floods. It provides clean water by purifying dirty water. It would not be wrong to say that the existence of life on earth depends on wetlands. It is our duty to recognize and protect our wetlands with such benefits...



Assessment Questions

You can ask the following questions to the children during or at the end of the activity.

- ▶ What living and non-living beings are found in a wetland?
- ▶ What elements that you saw in the photographs are naturally found in wetlands? Which elements could have been brought there by humans?
- ▶ Which elements that you see in the photographs should not be in wetlands? Why?

Extensions

- ▶ You can tell the children that February 2 is World Wetlands Day and suggest that they celebrate that day at their homes and schools.

Word Hunt



Objective

To learn the concepts related to wetlands.



Learning Outcomes

- ✎ S/he will explain the concepts related to wetlands.
- ✎ S/he will distinguish wetland types.
- ✎ S/he will realize the importance of wetlands.



Target Audience

8-14 years old



Duration

15 min.



Method

Question-answer, group work



Materials

Word Hunt Worksheet, pencil, computer, projector

Application

1. Tell the children that you will be playing a word hunt game.
2. If possible, divide the children into groups. If not, everyone can play this game individually.
3. Give the children the Word Hunt Worksheet and pencil. Tell them that within 5 minutes they have to find the words hidden horizontally and vertically in the puzzle.
4. Project the puzzle page on the board and start the time.
5. Ask groups or individuals how many words they have found at the end of the given time.
6. Project the answer key page on the board. Check whether anyone found all the words. Ask what words they've heard before. According to age level, try to explain briefly the meaning of the words that children do not know. You can use the information below:

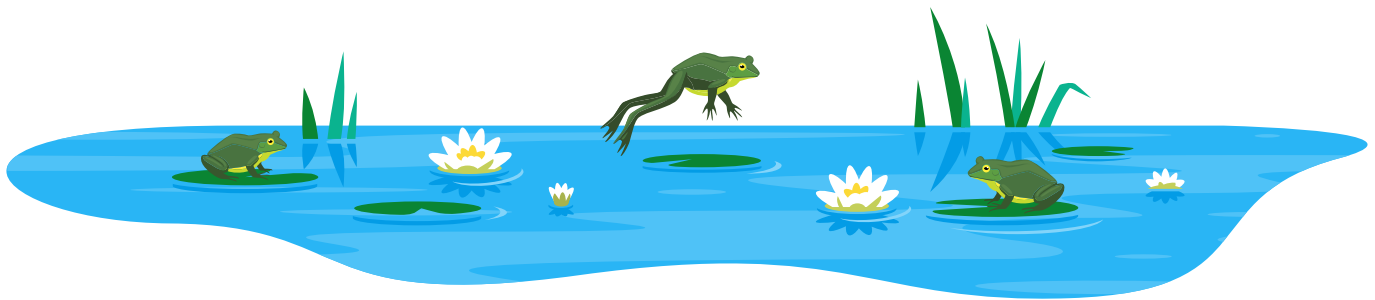


Wetlands are land areas covered with **shallow** water. The water found there is not very deep like the water in seas and lakes. The water level increases or decreases seasonally, but the area is usually wet. They are very suitable areas for aquatic **plants**. In addition to plants, it is home to many microorganisms, algae, fungi and **animal** species, which means it is very rich in terms of **biological diversity**. It is an indicator of whether the **ecosystem** is healthy or not. There are important relationships between living and non-living things

in these areas. Wetlands could be in different shapes, sizes and characteristics. While some wetlands have mineral-rich soil, the soil of others can be poor in terms of minerals. Some of them consist of **fresh water**; some have **salt water**. Some of them are huge; while there is a larger wetland in size than some countries such as Greece and England; some are little like a small pond. They can be in the form of **marshes**, **swamps** and **bogs**. Herbaceous plants grow on the marshes. Water depths of marshes are not too much

and marshes are very important areas for various **bird** species. Some bird species use these wetlands as their home, feeding and breeding areas, while some stop by to rest during **migration**. Swamps, on the other hand, consist mostly of deeper waters and woody plants like trees. The soil structure of wetlands in the form of bogs is poorer than other wetland types. It is commonly found in colder regions such as Si-

beria and Canada. Because the water is very acidic, smaller plants such as mosses grow here. Wetlands prevent **floods**, clean the water, act as homes and shelters for many species... The **Ramsar** Convention has been signed to protect wetlands and some wetlands are under protection as Ramsar Site. **February 2** which is the date that the Ramsar Convention was signed, is celebrated as World Wetlands Day.



Assessment Questions

You can ask the following questions to the children during or at the end of the activity.

- ▶ Do you know the wetlands in your area? If you know, what kind of wetland is this (such as marshes, swamps...)?
- ▶ Is there a new word about wetland that you learned today? What?
- ▶ Which feature of the wetland is interesting?

Extensions

- ▶ You can mention important information about the wetland you are close to.

WORD HUNT WORKSHEET

Let's find the words related to the wetland hidden horizontally and vertically in the puzzle!

D	S	R	T	G	B	N	E	F	L	O	O	D	M	U	D	P	R	M	F
R	M	A	R	S	H	K	C	G	H	J	K	W	P	Q	Q	G	V	C	E
E	T	E	Y	N	M	K	C	S	A	L	T	W	A	T	E	R	H	J	B
R	E	A	T	Y	B	V	N	B	O	C	E	R	Y	G	F	D	S	J	R
A	A	S	W	E	T	L	A	N	D	X	N	F	H	J	F	R	Y	U	U
M	Z	B	T	L	O	U	K	H	B	N	F	T	R	E	R	L	W	H	A
S	Y	O	B	M	X	L	W	O	P	U	M	T	E	F	E	D	B	G	R
A	E	G	T	Y	H	G	F	D	S	A	I	V	C	N	S	J	I	X	Y
R	E	W	T	F	D	A	H	J	B	V	G	X	O	C	H	Z	R	Z	T
G	Y	I	S	H	A	L	L	O	W	Z	R	V	S	B	W	C	D	B	W
A	D	S	G	J	Y	N	C	B	W	L	A	C	Y	N	A	P	S	W	O
S	A	N	I	M	A	L	S	T	R	Q	T	Z	S	V	T	N	R	M	X
V	Y	T	F	D	K	L	S	I	Y	T	I	E	T	T	E	U	O	K	V
A	R	T	V	G	B	D	Y	J	M	H	O	J	E	Y	R	R	G	N	B
S	E	F	D	G	H	Y	T	O	I	Y	N	Y	M	U	H	N	H	Y	T
D	G	H	J	K	L	S	D	F	G	H	Q	K	A	S	D	F	A	D	W
B	I	O	L	O	G	I	C	A	L	D	I	V	E	R	S	I	T	Y	Q
K	H	J	K	H	T	R	E	V	B	N	M	J	U	I	T	R	F	D	Q
R	P	L	A	N	T	S	R	R	H	J	K	L	U	T	N	B	V	G	X
R	T	Y	H	N	B	V	F	F	B	H	S	W	A	M	P	L	I	K	T

WORD HUNT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

1. Marsh, **2. Swamp**, 3. Bog, **4. Shallow**, 5. Ramsar, **6. Wetland**, 7. Ecosystem,
8. Flood, 9. Plants, **10. Birds**, 11. Animals, **12. Freshwater**, 13. Saltwater,
14. February Two, 15. Biological Diversity, **16. Migration**

D	S	R	T	G	B	N	E	F	L	O	O	D	M	U	D	P	R	M	F
R	M	A	R	S	H	K	C	G	H	J	K	W	P	Q	Q	G	V	C	E
E	T	E	Y	N	M	K	C	S	A	L	T	W	A	T	E	R	H	J	B
R	E	A	T	Y	B	V	N	B	O	C	E	R	Y	G	F	D	S	J	R
A	A	S	W	E	T	L	A	N	D	X	N	F	H	J	F	R	Y	U	U
M	Z	B	T	L	O	U	K	H	B	N	F	T	R	E	R	L	W	H	A
S	Y	O	B	M	X	L	W	O	P	U	M	T	E	F	E	D	B	G	R
A	E	G	T	Y	H	G	F	D	S	A	I	V	C	N	S	J	I	X	Y
R	E	W	T	F	D	A	H	J	B	V	G	X	O	C	H	Z	R	Z	T
G	Y	I	S	H	A	L	L	O	W	Z	R	V	S	B	W	C	D	B	W
A	D	S	G	J	Y	N	C	B	W	L	A	C	Y	N	A	P	S	W	O
S	A	N	I	M	A	L	S	T	R	Q	T	Z	S	V	T	N	R	M	X
V	Y	T	F	D	K	L	S	I	Y	T	I	E	T	T	E	U	O	K	V
A	R	T	V	G	B	D	Y	J	M	H	O	J	E	Y	R	R	G	N	B
S	E	F	D	G	H	Y	T	O	I	Y	N	Y	M	U	H	N	H	Y	T
D	G	H	J	K	L	S	D	F	G	H	Q	K	A	S	D	F	A	D	W
B	I	O	L	O	G	I	C	A	L	D	I	V	E	R	S	I	T	Y	Q
K	H	J	K	H	T	R	E	V	B	N	M	J	U	I	T	R	F	D	Q
R	P	L	A	N	T	S	R	R	H	J	K	L	U	T	N	B	V	G	X
R	T	Y	H	N	B	V	F	F	B	H	S	W	A	M	P	L	I	K	T

Wetland Explorer



Objective

Making observations to get to know the wetland area in the region.



Learning Outcomes

- ✎ S/he will observe and discover the surrounding and natural assets.
- ✎ S/he will realize the importance of the wetlands for living beings.



Target Audience

8-14 years old



Duration

40 min.



Method

Trip-observation



Materials

My Observation Notes Worksheet, pencils, binoculars

Application

1. Ask the children whether they have ever been to wetlands before and briefly get their experiences. For example, you can ask what season they have been there, what the weather was like and which living beings they have seen. You can ask them to describe their previous feelings by asking questions such as “was it boring, was it tiring or was it fun”.
2. Then tell the children that you will be exploring this area together and they will have some tasks to complete while exploring. Tell them to use the “My Observation Notes Worksheet”.
3. When you go to the field, tell them that everyone is a wetland explorer. If you have carried out the previous two activities, ask the children about the roles of wetlands to remind them of the information they have learned in the previous activities. If you have not applied the previous two activities, you can give information to the children about wetlands by using the

information texts found in the previous activity instructions.

4. Then say that you will observe a very important role of the wetlands today, that is, hosting many living beings. Provide information about the area.
5. Then describe what a wetland explorer has to do:

An explorer is a good observer. An observer is always careful as well. S/he uses all the senses. S/he observes his/her surroundings well, as it is possible to discover something new at any moment. S/he respects the natural environment. S/he does not litter, avoids damaging animals, plants and their surroundings. S/he avoids activities that will stress animals. If s/he is observing animals, for example bird watching, s/he should be as quiet as possible. This way, both the sounds of the birds are heard better and the birds are less bothered. When s/he encounters a nest, s/he does not get too close to the nest and does not stress the animals. If s/he gets too close to the nest, s/he can frighten the animals and cause animals to leave the nest. S/he does not collect material from nature. S/he puts back the natural materials

that s/he takes to observe in exactly the same place. Only scientists can collect a certain number of materials for their research and take them to their laboratories for analysis. On the other hand, we only need to make observations in the field. So, let's observe the plants and animals on site... And please don't go away from the group.

6. After the explanation, start observation. Remind them to use the My Observation Notes Worksheet. Tell the children to note today's date, time and location. Talk about the importance of recording this information so that an explorer will remember these dates and location later when s/he looks in the notes.
7. Guide the children to use their binoculars while observing and encourage them to do the tasks given in the My Observation Notes Worksheet.
8. After half an hour, end the observation. Find a quiet, shadow and safe area. Direct the children to this area to make your observation evaluations.
9. Conclude the activity with the assessment questions.

Assessment Questions

You can ask the following questions to the children during or at the end of the activity.

- ▶ What did we observe today? Have you done every task?
- ▶ What was the thing you encountered the most?
- ▶ What was the most interesting thing you saw? What was the most interesting sound you've heard? Can you imitate it?
- ▶ What are the characteristics of wetlands? What different types of wetlands are there and what types of wetlands did we observe?
- ▶ What other wetlands are there in your area other than this? Do you know?

Extensions

- ▶ If you have enough time, you can show the tree height measurement technique to the children.





Tree Height Measurement by Using A Pencil

By using this method, you can approximately calculate the height of a tree but the measurement results will not be exact.

- ▶ Find a tree which you can see the entire tree trunk from bottom to the top. Choose a volunteer child (you must know the height of this child). Ask the volunteer child to stay right next to the tree.
- ▶ Take the pencil, hold the tip of the pen and keep the vertical to the ground and completely stretch your arm forward.
- ▶ Move away from or move closer to the tree until the size of the pen and the height of the tree look the same.
- ▶ Find how many times is the height of the tree of the height of the child. Multiply this number with the height of the children.
- ▶ The result you find will give you the approximate height of the tree.

MY OBSERVATION NOTES

Let's observe your surroundings and record the things you have seen.

Date

Start and
End Time

Location

Weather

Wind speed

Observer

Tasks

Draw the sky

Find two different leaf shapes. Draw them.

What type of wetland are you in?

Observe two different bird species.
Write their names.

What did you observe from what color? Write them down.
For example, a red ladybug.

Green

Blue

Red

White

Brown

Yellow

Gray

Black

What did you see with the shapes below? Write down. For example, a triangular pine tree

Rectangle

Circle

Triangle

Have you encountered any traces / hints (such as animal excrement, animal footprint, feather, nest)? If you have, write them down or try to draw them.

Notes

Notes

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