



Title: Stake A Claim

Adapted from *Starflower Habitat Education Activities and Resources*, Washington Native Plant Society, <http://www.wnps.org/education/resources/>.

Theme: Animals need food, water, and shelter to survive.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to name three habitat necessities for animal survival: food, water, and shelter.
- Students will understand that different animals acquire these habitat necessities in different ways.

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Age Range: 4th-8th Grade

Materials:

- Small Animal Cards – 1 per group (examples included in curriculum)
- 3 popsicle sticks per group
- 3 triangles of paper or fabric per group
- Stapler, safety pins, or tape
- Paper
- Pens or Pencils
- Colored Pencils

Background:

This exploratory, outdoors activity introduces students to the concept that animals need certain habitat resources, specifically food, water, and shelter. It also highlights that different animals acquire these resources in different ways and that each habitat has its own arrangement of resources. This activity pairs well with “Oh Moose” and “Habitat Models.”

Preparation:

Prepare small animal cards for the habitat you will be working with. For example, if you are taking students to a grassy area of the playground, animals might include spiders, worms, bumblebees, mosquitoes, beetles, robins, flies, etc. Exploration for this activity is even more fun if you have access to a forest, marsh, field, or beach. Choose fairly small animals – no smaller than a mosquito, no larger than a fox. Each card should have a picture or photo of the animal and a description of the animal’s

food and shelter preferences. If the animal gets water in a unique way, be sure to include that on the card as well (for example, seals don't need access to fresh water because they get all of their water from their prey).

Introduction:

Ask students to think about what they need to survive. Brainstorm a list that includes water, shelter, and food. Explain that all animals require some sort of food, water, and shelter to survive.

Activities & Procedures:

Divide students into groups of 3-5. Explain that each group is going to select a card. They will become that animal and must search for appropriate habitat. Remind students that a good habitat needs to include easy access to the animal's food sources and freshwater and needs to include a place or way for the animal to create shelter. Provide each group with 3 flags to stake out where the animal will find water, food, and shelter. Also provide each student with paper, pencils, and colored pencils to sketch or map their habitat and label the locations of food, water, and shelter.

Send groups out to stake their claim on a habitat. Depending on the size of the area you are working with, it may be important to set boundaries and/or separate groups from each other.

Wrap-up:

Bring students back together. Tour all of the habitats, with each group presenting their animal and where it would find food, shelter, and water. Collect the flags and habitat sketches from students. Ask students what other sorts of animals might be able to survive in these habitats.

Evaluation:

Walk around and listen to student discussions with each other about their microhabitats to assess comprehension. Evaluate student understanding, cooperation, and participation during presentations.

Stake A Claim Animal Cards

Red-Backed Vole



- nests built beneath vegetation, rocks, and roots in underground burrows
- eat berries, leaves, twigs, buds, and mosses

Boreal Chickadee



- nest in a hole in a tree, digging it out or using a natural cavity or abandoned woodpecker nest
- eat seeds and insects off of evergreen branches and bark

Wood Frog



- hibernate under soil and leaf litter in dryer upland habitats
- take summer shelter in moist forests and bogs
- eat beetles, flies, caterpillars, spiders, slugs, and snails

American Red Squirrel



- create grass and twig nests in tree branches
- eat mostly spruce cones, which they store in large underground caches

Stake A Claim Standards

Concepts of Life Science: Students develop an understanding of the concepts, models, theories, facts, evidence, systems, and processes of life science.

SC1

Students develop an understanding of how science explains changes in life forms over time, including genetics, heredity, the process of natural selection, and biological evolution.

The student demonstrates an understanding of how science explains changes in life forms over time, including genetics, heredity, the process of natural selection, and biological evolution by:

[3] SC1.1 sorting Alaskan plants and/or animals using physical characteristics (e.g., leaves, beaks)

[4] SC1.1 showing the relationship between physical characteristics of Alaskan organisms and the environment in which they live

SC2

Students develop an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms.

The student demonstrates an understanding of the structure, function, behavior, development, life cycles, and diversity of living organisms by:

[4] SC2.2 describing the basic characteristics and requirements of living things

SC3

Students develop an understanding that all organisms are linked to each other and their physical environments through the transfer and transformation of matter and energy.

The student demonstrates an understanding that all organisms are linked to each other and their physical environments through the transfer and transformation of matter and energy by:

[4] SC3.1 identifying examples of living and non-living things and the relationship between them (e.g., living things need water, herbivores need plants)