



WILD Kids



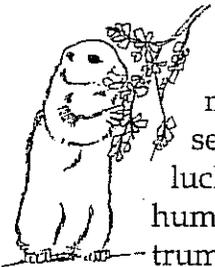
School Yard Habitats

You might be surprised to learn how many different types of wildlife live in your school yard. If you look and listen carefully, you may see or hear them. Or, you may not see animals but can find “signs” of wildlife such as nests, burrows, tracks, or nibbled leaves. These are signs that animals are living there. Wildlife is

living in your school yard because it provides **food, water, shelter, and space**. If you look closely around your school grounds, you will find many different kinds of food, water, and shelter for wildlife. By exploring your school yard, you can learn why some animals live there and some ways to attract others.

Food

What types of food for wildlife can you find on your school grounds? Look for nibbled grasses or chewed leaves. If you sit quietly you might

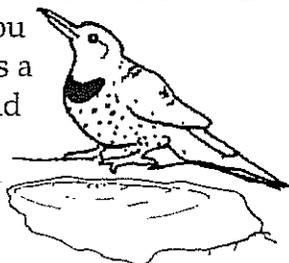


observe birds and small rodents (ground squirrels, chipmunks, and mice) scampering about eating seeds or berries. Or you may be lucky to see (and even hear!) a hummingbird as it hovers over a trumpet-shaped flower, drinking nectar.

Also, look for leaves with tiny holes in them. This may be a sign that insects have been munching on the leaves. Using a hand lens, check for insects on the under side of leaves or on flowers. Note which flowers bees visit most often. *Always* observe bees from a safe distance.

Water

Is there water for wildlife on your school yard? Here are some places to look: a leaky faucet, a drain pipe, or a low spot or puddle where water collects after a rain shower. You can also check to see if there is a sprinkler system for plants and trees. Water often pools up in the well around plants after being watered.



Shelter

Shelter is very important for wildlife. It is a safe place for animals to hide, keep warm, and raise their young. Just think, if you didn't have a home, where would you sleep and keep warm? There are many different types of shelter for wildlife. Birds build nests for protection and to raise their young. Ground squirrels dig burrows where they hide to escape predators.

For lizards and snakes, shelter may be just a pile of rocks or a brush pile (a pile of sticks or branches). How many different types of shelter can you find on your school grounds? (Remember, try not to disturb animals, especially when they are in their shelter.)



Space

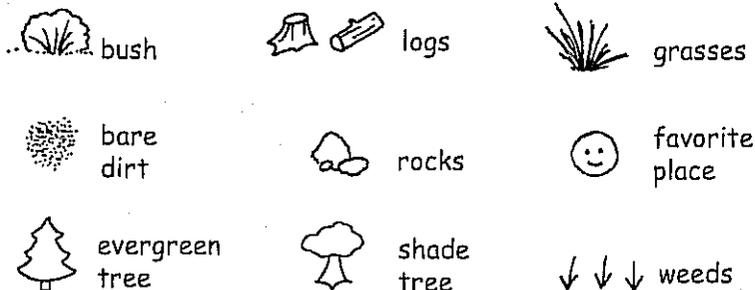
How much space do animals need? They need enough space to find food and water, escape predators and raise their young. Some insects don't need much space. However, a hawk may travel many miles each day in search of food. Observe some animals on your school grounds. How far do they travel for food and water? Where is their shelter? Make a list of animals that need a small amount of space and some that need a lot of space. Why do some animals need so much space?

Mapping Your School Site

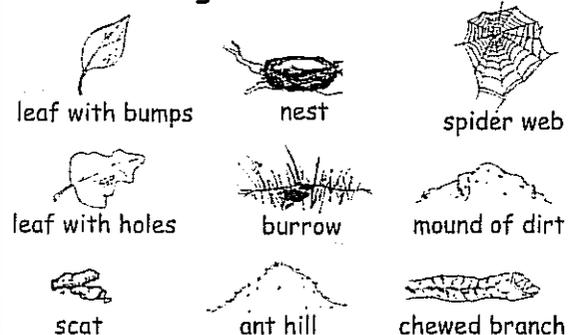
Mapping is a fun way to explore your school grounds. A map can be thought of as a picture of a place. Many maps use symbols to identify different features (trees, rocks, buildings, etc). Symbols take up less space and keep the map from looking too cluttered. Maps with symbols have a key or legend to identify the symbols. (See the map and legend below). To make a map, all you need is a pencil and paper. Read through the steps below to learn some tips on how to map your school grounds.

1. North is always at the *top* of a map. Mark north on your map. If you're not sure which direction is north, use a compass or ask your teacher to show you.
2. Study your school grounds before drawing your map. Where are the boundaries, trees, and walkways located? Are there benches, buildings, a playground? Once you have a general idea of where features are located, you can begin to draw your map.
3. Using some of the symbols below, or some of your own, lightly draw in the larger features located on your school grounds. When you are satisfied that the larger features are correctly located on your map, you can begin to draw in some of the other features.
4. Remember to include animals you observe and any signs of wildlife you may find (you can use the symbols in the legend below).
5. Also, note your favorite place on your school grounds. You can use the symbol in the legend or another symbol you like.
6. Make notes of where you think wildlife could find food, water, and shelter on your school grounds. Is there enough space?
7. When you are finished with your map, share it with other students. Do their maps look different? Did they record different features than those on your map? What kinds of wildlife did they observe? Where would they find food, water, shelter, and space? Discuss why certain types of wildlife, such as bears and mountain lions, are usually not found on school grounds.
8. If you wanted to attract different types of wildlife to your school yard, what would you need to do? What types of wildlife might cause problems in your school yard? Why?

Map Legend



Signs of Wildlife



Food + Water + Shelter + Space = Habitat