WILD Kids

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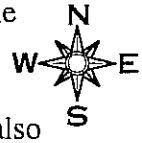
Mapping Your School Site

School campuses provide habitat for wildlife. The components of habitat are food, water, shelter and space. Since your school site provides the components of habitat, it attracts wildlife. By mapping your school site you can determine which types of food, water, and shelter are available for wildlife, why certain species of wildlife live there, and how to attract others. Before you begin to map your school site, you need to become familiar with some its features. How much space does your campus provide for wildlife? Where are the boundaries? Does fencing prevent wildlife from moving easily in and out of your school campus? What kind of food is available for wildlife? Are there plants with flowers, berries or seeds? Does the habitat change seasonally, attracting some species during the winter and others in spring and summer? Where is water available for wildlife? Is there a constant water source or is water available only when it rains? By mapping your school site you'll be able to answer many of these questions.

What Is A Map?

A map can be thought of as a picture of a place. Maps show different things about a place, but for maps to be effective, they should focus on showing a limited number of things, man-made and/or natural. No one map can show everything. Many maps use **symbols** to represent features. (It is helpful if the symbols look like the things they represent.) Symbols are used because they take up less space and keep the map from looking too cluttered. Symbols are identified in a **legend**. The legend can be thought of as the key to unlocking the secrets of the map. (See the legend on the back.)



When creating maps, map-makers use the same **orientation** for their maps - with *north* at the top. Keep this in mind when mapping your school site. Map-makers also use **scale** to show the relationship between a distance on a map and the corresponding distance on the ground. Using the distance scale, it is possible to determine the actual distance on the ground between two points on the map. A map of the world may have a small scale, such as 1:5,000 (one inch = 5,000 miles). For mapping your school site, you might use a larger scale of 1:10, (one inch = 10 *feet).* Remember: the *larger* the number, the *smaller* the scale.

Getting Started

To make a map of your school site, you'll need a pencil, a few sheets of paper to draw your map and jot down notes, a tape measure, and a ruler. (You can do this activity on your own or work with a group.)

1. First, walk around your school campus to get a good idea of the type of features that are present. Features include: fencing, trees, bushes, rocks, walkways, buildings, different surfaces, etc.

2. Decide on the symbols you plan use to represent the different features you observed. You can use the ones on this page or make up your own.

3. Measure or estimate the length and width of your campus. Depending on the size, determine an appropriate scale. If it is a small campus, you will want to use a large scale. For a larger campus, you can use a smaller scale. Use a ruler to help draw scale. Write your scale at the bottom of your map.

4. Make sure north is at the top of your map, then begin drawing some of the larger features; boundaries, fences, buildings, etc. (Try to draw as much to scale as possible.) Then, draw in some of the smaller features.

5. While you are drawing your map take notes on where you think wildlife could find food, water, and shelter on your school campus. Which features offer food, water, and shelter?

6. Also, jot down where you actually observe wildlife. Note wildlife behavior; what are they doing? Do you think the wildlife and behavior, you observe would change seasonally? Why? Also, note any signs of wildlife you observe: tracks, feathers, chewed leaves, scat, nests, burrows, or others.

6. When your are finished, compare your map with those of other students. Did they note different types of food, water, and shelter for wildlife? Which types of wildlife, wildlife behavior, and wildlife sign did they observe?

7. Discuss why certain types of wildlife are found on your campus, but others are not.

8. Are any of the types of wildlife found on your campus "not welcome?" Why? What are some ways you could change your campus habitat to make it less attractive to unwelcome wildlife?

9. Do a survey with other students to decide which types of wildlife they would like to attract to your campus. Does your school site provide the necessary food, water, shelter, and space for the wildlife? If not, what could you do to provide the necessary habitat?

10. Design a school site that provides the necessary components of habitat for the wildlife you would like to attract.

School Site Map