PHILADELPHIA ZOO

3400 West Girard Avenue ▪ Philadelphia, PA 19104-1196 ▪ 215-243-1100 ▪ philadelphiazoo.org

Animal Classification (3-5)

Essential Question
How can we tell different animals apart?

Objectives
1. Learn what separates animals into different classifications
2. Learn what characteristics are unique to mammals, birds and reptiles

Vocabulary
Characteristic: A feature that helps to identify, tell apart, or describe an animal.
Mammal: A warm-blooded animal that has 3 main characteristics – fur or hair, give birth to live young, and the young drink milk.
Reptile: A cold-blooded animal that has scales and usually hatches from a soft egg.
Bird: A warm-blooded, feathered animal with modified limbs that form wings, which hatches from a hard egg.

Classroom Activity
Animal Search: Have students search for animals in their lives. They can include wild animals they encounter as well as any pets or other domesticated animals. The included chart can be used to keep track of the information gathered. One example is provided at the top of the chart.

- This activity may be done individually or in groups and can be modified for younger students.
- Students should take note of all animals they encounter for a set period of time, as short as 1 hour or as long as 1 week.
- If done over an extended time period, students should include animals they encounter at home or in their free time as well as at school.
- If available, students can be taken outside to a local space to look for animals during a designated time. This space can be any nearby outdoor space, including schoolyards and parks.
- Students can use the following resources to try and identify their animals:
  National Geographic Bird Identifier (birds only)

eNature Field Guide (all animals)

- If students find any animals that they are unable to identify, they can send their questions to Ask-An-Expert at the Philadelphia Zoo.

In groups: Students should spend time with one another looking for animals and use a single chart to collect data. When the time comes to compare and contrast lists, groups can work with another group as a partner.

Standards
PA Academic: 3.1 A1, 3.1 B1
Next Generation Science: K-LS1-1, 2-LS4-1, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1
New Jersey Core Curriculum: 5.1, 5.3A, 5.3E, 5.4 G
Common Core: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3

Animal Search

Type	Location	Description		
What kind of animal was it?	Where did I see it?	What size was it?	What colors did I see on it?	What was it doing?
bird	on the ground	the size of my hand	brown, red, and white	pecking at the ground

Compare and contrast with someone else!

How many animals did **I find**? □

How many animals did **my partner find**? □

How many **different** animals did **I find** that my **partner did not find**? □

How many **different** animals did **we find all together**? □

Write down some animals your **partner found** that **you did not find**:

Animal Groups

Work together with your partner to place your animals into two or three different groups. Animals that are similar should be kept together. **You can choose how to group your animals!** For example, you can place all red animals in one category, all brown in another, and all black in the third. Follow the steps below to complete the activity.

1. Come up with your own way of sorting your animals.
2. Write the category of each group in the second row. You can choose two or three groups.
3. Underneath that, write down all the animals that fit in that category.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3