

PHILADELPHIA ZOO

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

Habitats (3rd-5th)

Objectives

1. Describe what makes a habitat and some different types of habitats
2. Identify necessary resources for survival in a habitat
3. Learn simple action steps to take to help save wildlife

Vocabulary

Habitat: the natural environment of an organism where it lives and grows

Endangered species: a type of organism that is at risk of extinction

Extinct: an organism that has died out completely and is no longer in existence

Need: a requirement or necessity for an organism to survive

Adaptation: an alteration in the structure or function of an organism or any of its parts that makes that organism better fitted to survive in its habitat

Recommendations

Read:

["I See a Kookaburra!"](#) – Steve Jenkins

["Animals and Habitats of the United States"](#) – Jeff Corwin

["A Strange Place to Call Home"](#) – Marilyn Singer

["Nature's Patchwork Quilt"](#) – Mary Miche

["Ivan: The Remarkable True Story of the Shopping Mall Gorilla"](#) – Katherine Applegate

Research:

- Different habitats where humans can be found
- The care required for a type of pet
- The habitat, adaptations, and conservation status of a favorite animal

Discuss:

How do humans adapt to different habitats? Do all humans live in similar conditions?
How can we help provide a good habitat for a pet at home? Are pets easy to care for?
Compare and contrast habitats for a few different animals. Would one animal be able to survive in the other's habitat?

Classroom Activity

Found Object Habitat (individual or small groups)

Lots of animals in our area struggle to find shelter due to a loss of green spaces and wild lands. We can help provide habitats for wildlife by using discarded objects to create suitable homes that can be placed in a garden, yard, or around the school.

Materials: Can include soda bottles, shoe boxes, plastic or clay flower pots, non-toxic paint or markers, scissors, string, etc. Be creative!

Instructions:

1. Each student or group should choose what type of animal they would like to create a habitat for.
 - a. Birds: like privacy, mostly live in trees or other elevated places, only need a very small opening to pass through, like to have some kind of bedding
 - b. Frogs: like dark spaces, need moisture, must be able to enter at ground level, prefer dirt or soil underneath
 - c. Small mammals: like very small spaces, need protection on all sides, like privacy, are usually good climbers
2. Once they have chosen their animal, have the students decide what objects would be best suited to use for their habitat based on the descriptions above. Encourage them to take the following into account:
 - Does this type of animal live nearby?
 - Where will this habitat be placed?
 - Will it be safe from human traffic, flooding, wind, etc.?
 - How large should the habitat be?
 - How will the animal enter the habitat?
3. Assist students in building their habitats, and encourage them to be as creative as possible. There are no wrong answers!
4. As a follow up, have students check on their habitats after placing them outside. Share with the class if anyone finds evidence of wildlife in their habitat.

Here are two images of habitats made from recycled materials that you may find helpful for inspiration:



Take it one step further: **Build a Bat Box**

If you'd like your class to take it a step further, involve the whole class in the creation and placement of a bat box. Instructions for building one can be found [here](#) (the simplest box can be seen [here](#)). These bat boxes will need to be constructed by an adult with some level of handiness with carpentry. These boxes work best when hung on buildings, but can also be hung on trees. While the students may or may not be able to assist much with the actual construction, you can get them involved in the following ways:

- Have them choose the site for the bat box, either at school or at the home of a student or teacher
- Allow them to paint the box
- Set up a camera to record activity around the box at night, then have students watch the footage to see if there are bats living there
- Have them do research and create a short presentation about the importance of bats and share it with another class

For lots of information about bats, check out the following resources:

Philadelphia Zoo – [Vampire Bat](#) and [Rodrigues Fruit Bat](#)

[Bat Conservation International](#)

[PA Game Commission](#)

[NJ Fish and Wildlife](#)

Standards

PA Academic: 3.1 A2, 3.1 C2, 3.1 C3, 4.1 A, 4.1 C, 4.1 D, 4.1 E, 4.4 A, 4.5 C, 4.5 D

Next Generation Science: K-LS1-1, K-ESS2-2, K-ESS3-1, K-ESS3-3, 2-LS4-1, 1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2

New Jersey Core Curriculum: 5.1, 5.3A, 5.3B, 5.3C, 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