

# PHILADELPHIA ZOO

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

## Animal Behavior (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)

### Essential Question

Why is the study of animal behavior important?

### Objectives

1. Understand how animals learn.
2. Learn how and why we study animal behavior.
3. Understand the steps of the scientific method.
4. Understand how to learn from observation of animal behavior.

### Vocabulary

**Behavior:** ways that an organism interacts with other living things in their environment.

**Conservation:** protection of animals, plants, and natural resources to prevent them from being destroyed.

**Ethogram:** A table of different kinds of behavior or activities observed in an animal, used for recording data on animal behavior.

**Scientific method:** A method for problem solving consisting of several steps aimed at proving or disproving a hypothesis.

### Recommendations

Read:

["Animal Defenses: How Animals Protect Themselves"](#) – Etta Kaner

Research:

-How song birds figure out what type of song they should sing

Discuss:

-What types of behaviors do we exhibit that you think are unique to humans?

-How do we learn new behaviors? How do our behaviors change as we grow?

## **Classroom Activity**

Use the included worksheets to have students complete the following tasks.

**As individuals:** Have students spend some time researching an interesting or unique behavior that has been observed in a non-human animal. They should use appropriate sources to find the answers to the questions provided on the worksheet. If they are having trouble getting started, you can share with them an example or two from this list:

- Aye-aye feeding behavior
- Albatross 'dancing'
- Gibbon 'singing'
- Frog 'waving' (also called 'semaphore')

**As a class:** If time allows, have students present their findings to the class. Consider giving them a certain challenge associated with their presentations:

- They must present their information in under 2 minutes
- They must describe the behavior without telling the class what animal they are talking about, and their classmates will guess
- They must describe the animal and the behavior, but not give the explanation for the behavior, and their classmates will try to guess what it means.
- Treat the presentations like a game of charades – students will act out their behaviors and see if other students can guess what animal they are referencing or what the behavior is.

## **Standards**

**PA Academic:** 3.1 C1, 3.4 D2, 3.4 D3

**Next Generation Science:** MS-LS1-8, MS-LS1-4, MS-LS4-4

**New Jersey Core Curriculum:** 5.1, 5.3C, 5.3D

**Common Core:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1

# Amazing Animal Behaviors

Conduct research on an interesting or unique animal behavior. Find a few good sources to use – websites of zoos or aquariums, encyclopedias, or conservation organizations are good places to start. (Hint: if a website ends with '.org,' it is probably a good choice!) Be prepared to present this information to your classmates!

**Species:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where is this animal found?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is their interesting behavior? Describe it in detail below.**

**Why does this animal do this?**

**Think for yourself:** How do you think the animal learns how to do this behavior? Or is it an instinct and the animal does not have to learn it at all?