



Animals Around Us II

Recommended grade levels: 3-5

Recommended Time: 50 min

Associated NGSS concepts: (3-LS4-4), (3-LS4-2), (3-LS4-3)

KEY VOCABULARY

Observation– using all 5 senses to think closely about a thing or person

Cohabitate – to live in the same place together

Adapt– become comfy with new conditions

Demeanor– how something looks to someone else

Companion species– species that have adapted to live with and among humans, wild or domestic

Urban Wildlife– Wildlife that lives in cities and towns

LESSON WALKTHROUGH

Discuss

Ask students if they ever see wild animals in their everyday lives. Where do these animals live? Which animals are they? Keep the discussion to wildlife and extend conversation from just naming animals to thinking about the whole environment in their wildlife encounters. Where have they seen them? How have they seemed in demeanor? (ie. nervous, hesitant etc)

Imagine

Integrate **Activity Block 1** into this discussion to help students generate a list of animals that they know which live close to people.

Brainstorm

Discuss with students how the wild animals we see in our everyday lives **cohabitate** with us. They have learned how to live their lives in the middle of our towns and cities. Some animals have adapted to living amongst people and built environments, animals that have adapted over a long time to live amongst us are called **companion species**. Companion species can be domestic, like cats, dogs, sheep, or wild, like raccoons, pigeons, or foxes. Wild animals and people have been cohabitating for a long time and that can come with difficulties.

Ask students to share with the class any problems they can think of that wildlife and people may have when living close to each other, drawing from the list of species generated by the students during the previous activity. Dive deeper into discussion by asking questions about what hazards certain built structures could pose for wild animals, flipping the subject and the object Have students talk about the

Extend the activity by having students return to imagining their animal, and asking what trouble could these species have with living alongside roads, houses, and businesses.

Group Up

Students will form small groups and complete either Adaptable Animals or Danger Detectives, found under **Activity Block 2**.

Wrap up

After the activity is complete, gather students again and review some of the core questions of the lesson:

- What animals do you imagine live in your neighborhood that are not pets?
- Where do wild animals live? Where do you think animals live in a city?
- What is hard to do for city animals? What problems might they have?
- How can we live better with our wild neighbors?

ACTIVITIES

BLOCK 1

Listening and spotting exercise (sedentary, access to outdoor space)

Students will sit outside. The instructor will issue the following challenge: “we are going to sit still and observe the world around us for clues of wild animals. You will only have 15

seconds to observe so concentrate hard, you can look for animals or you can listen for animals, ready, set, go”

Discuss what they heard or saw. Which animals did they notice? Do they see them often in their daily lives?

Listening exercise (sedentary, access to outdoor space)

Repetition of listening and spotting exercise but students must keep eyes closed, more suitable for older groups.

*If not enough wildlife present during the exercise you can ask students which animals they were expecting to hear or see. It can also be good to telegraph the upcoming lesson by asking students why they think they didn't see or hear many animals. Was there too much noise? Too many fidgety students? Are there fences or big roads nearby?

Imagining wildlife exercise/ listening exercise (indoor, noises only)

Students will remain seated in their spots. The instructor will tell them they are going to do an imagination exercise. They are going to “become” the animals they might see when they are walking in their neighborhood. The instructor will turn the lights off and give students age appropriate time to think of their animal. Instruct the students to “become their animals” when

the lights are turned on, making the noise the animal would when they imagine it in its habitat, in the same volume and frequency they would imagine it would be.

After several rounds of this exercise the teacher will call attention back to the class and ask students which animals they are and what else they imagined when they became their animals. The instructor will also ask who else they heard, around them.

Imagining wildlife exercise (mobile + noises)

Repetition of Imagining Wildlife/ Listening exercise however instead of remaining seated students are allowed to roam and physically “become their animals”.

BLOCK 2

Adaptable Animals (recommended for K-2)

How do wild animals adapt and cohabitate with us? Are these adaptations mutually beneficial? In this activity students will explore the wild animals that live close to us among cities and towns. They will be sorted into groups and each group will be given a coloring page of an animal web.

The animal web coloring page gives students the opportunity to color in the animal but also think about how these animals adapt and live amongst people. The teacher's job in this exercise is to lead the class on a discussion about the animal they chose and have

students brainstorm and draw vignettes about how these species adapt to live in populated areas.

The instructor should also lead the discussion to think about whether these adaptations are mostly beneficial for the wild animal or if it is potentially harmful. An extension of this exercise will be to ask students in class discussion ways they can be more wildlife friendly.

Materials Needed: Adaptable Animals Worksheet (several species offered), pencil, colors

Danger Detectives (recommended for 3-5)

Students will be sorted into groups with each group receiving a particular built item worksheet: dumpster, road, fence, etc. Each student gets their own worksheet. Groups all receive the same worksheet.

They will be tasked to become wildlife wellbeing engineers and must work together to think about the problems that wild animals may face when encountering these objects. Their job is to make a report to the city mayor (the instructor) about the dangers at risk for wildlife who may encounter these built objects.

An extension of this exercise will be to ask students to work in their group and create an invention or public education intervention that will make these built environments more wildlife friendly. Some examples of these practices can be found in our [Wild 5 Challenge](#).

Materials needed: Danger Detectives Worksheets, Pencil, Colors (optional but recommended, worksheets double as coloring pages)

EXTENSION EXERCISE

Nature Journaling

Nature journaling is more than just listing and drawing wildlife you see. It is about observing and recording nature and the living species and nonliving things in it. Nature journals are a mix of science and art. In this extension of the lesson, instructors will help students set up a Nature journal. Certain elements of their journal must include: a species name (common or scientific are acceptable), the date, time of day, weather, and other environmental elements nearby. Students should also be encouraged to add their thoughts and observations to annotate the drawing of their items.

Attached to this lesson plan is a cover and recommended page layout printable in both color or black & white versions. Page 3 & 4 can be printed over to make more pages if wanted.

Students will fill out an example page for reference based on an animal discussed in class, in addition to simply the animal, they will also be challenged with drawing the environment the animal might be in that is a mix of natural and built.

Drawing your wild neighbors (extended notes):

For a further extension of “Drawing your wild neighbors” have students write their observations alongside their drawing. Have them note any further questions or considerations they have for their own research.

Materials Needed: Nature journal worksheets (separate download), Pencil, Colors







