



In this two-part classroom activity, students observe animals around them and learn more about how climate change affects animals through research.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

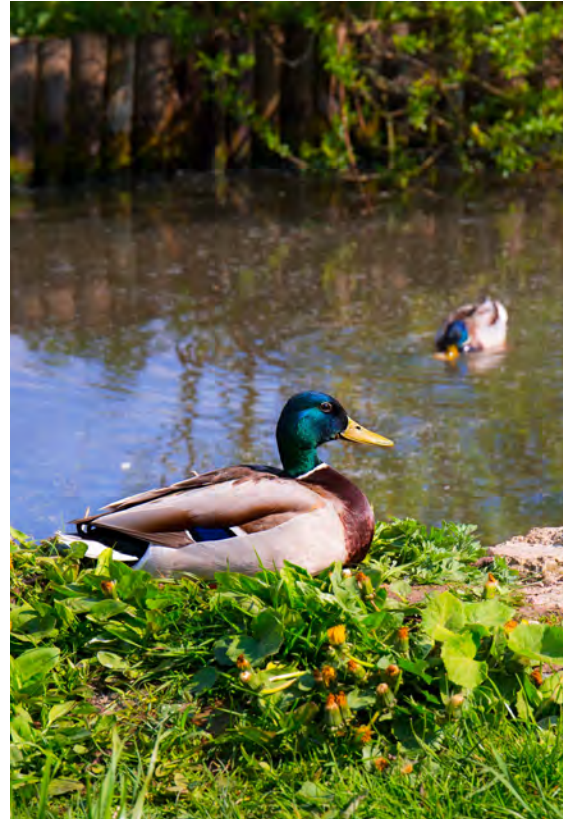
- Identify effects of climate change on animal habitats
- Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats
- Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all
- Make a claim about the merit of a solution to a problem caused when the environment changes and the types of plants and animals that live there may change
- NGSS: 2-LS4-1; 3-LS4-3; 3-LS4-4

### IN THIS ACTIVITY, STUDENTS WILL:

- Observe local animals
- Think about why animals live in different climates
- Research and learn more about one local animal
- Share their research with others and identify ways to help animals

### MATERIALS:

- Scrap paper/wipe board
- Materials for observation (i.e., binoculars)
- Clipboards and pencils
- Resources for research about local animals (books, an encyclopedia, magazines, internet, etc.)
- [Observing Animals handout](#) (one per student or group)
- [My Amazing Animal handout](#) (one per student or group)



**GRADE LEVEL: 2-6**

**OBSERVING  
ANIMALS  
HANDOUT**

**MY AMAZING  
ANIMAL  
HANDOUT**

## Setup

Before beginning, identify at least two different locations your class can observe local animals, for example, the school yard or a nearby park or forest. A popular choice is near a bird feeder.

Decide on when the observations will take place:

- Date
- Time of day
- Length of observation
- Frequency of observations (a one-time thing, every week, once per season, etc.)

The following resources can help you identify common species in your area:

<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

## Instructions

**1.** Choose one or several of the questions below. For each question, ask a student to give more details about the animal they saw. For younger kids:

1. Raise your hand if you have ever seen a wild animal... eating insects, eating a plant, etc.
2. Raise your hand if you have ever seen a wild animal... looking for food.
3. Raise your hand if you have ever seen a wild animal... sleeping, resting, yawning.
4. Raise your hand if you have ever seen a wild animal... moving fast, running away, jumping.
5. Raise your hand if you have ever seen a wild animal... moving slowly, walking.

Next, ask each student to list up to 5 wild animals they have seen in their local area using scrap paper or a wipe board. Ask students to share their answers and make a master list on the board.

**2.** Explain the activity: *We are going to observe animals in the school yard/at the park/other location.* Ask:

*Which animals from the list do you think we might see? Why? Can you add any others?  
Which animals from the list do you think we will not see? Why?*

Cross out any animals the class thinks they will not see and add any additional animals from the list.

**3.** Distribute the [Observing Animals in their Habitat handout](#) and explain to the students how to fill it out. With younger students, give an option to draw their observations instead of write.

**4.** Explain how the observation activity will take place:

*We will observe for 5-10 minutes.  
Once you have identified an animal, fill out your sheet.*

# PART 1: Observations

The observations can take place as a whole class, individually or in small groups.

- Start the observation period.
- Once an animal has been spotted, the students can begin to observe and fill out their worksheet.

## Results and Discussion

Following the observation period, after returning to the classroom, have the students look at their observations and discuss.

### ABOUT THE ACTIVITY:

1. Which animals did we see? Explain why you think we saw these animals.
2. Which animals were missing that you thought you might see? Why do you think this is the case?
3. Why do you think we didn't see a \_\_\_\_\_ (animal)?
4. What do you think was the best spot to see and hear animals? Why?
5. What do you think was the worst spot to see and hear animals? Why?

### GOING FURTHER:

1. Why don't we see tigers or penguins in our area?
2. Why do you think there are only certain animals that we can observe in our area?
3. Why do we see different animals in the summer and the winter?

## PART 2: Research

For grades 3 and higher, explain the activity:

1. Each group selects (or is given) an animal that is less common in your area than it used to be. To find lists of endangered species by state, visit:  
<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/species>
2. Each group fills out the [Amazing Animal handout](#) by doing research using resources available in the classroom (books, an encyclopedia, magazines, internet, etc.)
3. Each group presents their animal to the class, for example through an oral presentation, a slideshow presentation, a poster, a dramatic tableau or a written report. Be sure students share what they found for solutions to help their selected animal.
4. In their presentations or reports, have students share which solutions they think would be the most successful and why.

## Discussion

1. What did you learn about these animals that you didn't know before?
2. We now see some animals from Southern climates in Northern areas. Why do you think that is?
3. How does climate change affect animals?
4. What can we do to help?

**Extension activity:** The class can undertake a project to protect local animals.

## Resources

### **Plant and Animal Identification Guides:**

Merlin Bird ID at <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>

iSeek App at <https://www.inaturalist.org/>

### **What species live near you? (Earth Rangers)**

<https://www.earthrangers.com/EN/CA/my-missions/what-species-live-near-you/>