



The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium endeavors to foster a lifelong connection with nature in children and adults by creating a meaningful link between people and wildlife. These activities are designed to be done either at home or at school. Before diving into the materials, here are some tips to help you plan:

These activities are structured around the 5E Lesson Plan model, commonly used in science education:

ENGAGE - Sparking interest in a topic

EXPLORE - Student-led investigation of concepts

EXPLAIN - Clarification of concepts

EXTEND - Student-led application of concepts

EVALUATE - Opportunity to demonstrate understanding of concepts

This activity packet will guide students as they explore wildlife and wild places. We encourage parents and teachers to utilize all five activities chronologically to provide students a complete learning experience. These activities can be done in a day, or over a longer time span. It is ideal because the educator can tailor the timing around the needs of the learners.

Each section has a brief activity description and a list of materials needed. The instructions are written for the learner; however, we encourage adults to work closely with their students. (Be sure to supervise students when doing any outdoor activities.) Most importantly, we hope you have a fun and engaging experience!



OHIO WILDLIFE

5 STEPS TO A MEANINGFUL ZOO PROGRAM

ENGAGE

Introduce how changes in an environment are sometimes beneficial to the organism and sometimes harmful.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Read *"When Winter Comes"* by Nancy Van Laan.

On a piece of paper, draw two columns. Label the first as "Beneficial" and the second as "Harmful." Write down what changes you thought were beneficial to the animals and which you thought were harmful. Discuss your answers with a partner.

ESTIMATED TIME

30-40 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED

"When Winter Comes" by Nancy Van Laan
Paper
Pens or pencils

EXPLORE

Explore how zoos are trying to reintroduce native species back in to the wild in Ohio.

Watch *"The Wilds American Burying Beetle Release"*

What steps does The Wilds need to take to introduce burying beetles back in to the wild? Discuss with a partner.

30-40 minutes

EXPLAIN

Explain how there are many different species that coexist in the wild and close to home in Ohio.

Read *"There's an Opossum in My Backyard"* by Gary Bogue.

Make a list of the animals that were in the story. Then write how they interact with one another.

Next, draw two columns. Label the first as "Beneficial" and the second as "Harmful." In each column list whether the interaction is a positive or negative one. Do they learn from one another? How do they help the environment?

20-30 minutes

"There's an Opossum in My Backyard" by Gary Bogue
Paper
Marker, crayons or pens/pencils

EXTEND

Extend the understanding that there are animals/insects are everywhere in our environment.

With an adult's permission, go on a Scavenger Hunt in your school yard or the Zoo.

Write a list of all of the "bugs" you can find and where you found them. With a partner, share where you found each one. Is there a pattern? Talk about what you noticed.

20-30 minutes

EVALUATE

Think about what considerations would need to be made to reintroduce an animal to its native habitat.

Watch Columbus Zoo Video: [Hellbender Release](#)

With a partner or small group, talk about what you would do if you were in charge of finding a good release site for these animals? What would you have to consider before you returned them to the wild?

Write a list of all the considerations you would make and why.

40-50 minutes

Paper
Marker, crayons or pens/pencils



OHIO WILDLIFE CHART

With an adult's permission, go outside and explore. What do you notice? Choose three animals and draw a picture of them in the first column. Then fill out the remaining columns with your observations. **Remember, do not approach or touch any wildlife!** It's best to view them from a safe distance.

| ANIMAL Sketch the animal. | WHAT DO I NOTICE ABOUT THE ANIMAL? What does it look like? Describe the environment around it. | WHAT IS THE ANIMAL DOING? (Walking, flying, eating, sitting, sleeping, climbing) | QUESTIONS I HAVE ABOUT THIS ANIMAL |
|---|---|--|---|
| EX.  | EX. Blue feathers with a black beak. White and blue chest feathers. | EX. flying in the sky | EX. How do birds fly? |
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PICTURE BOOKS



***WHILE GRADE LEVELS ARE LISTED, ALL BOOKS ARE APPROPRIATE FOR ALL AGES.**

| PICTURE BOOK | AUTHOR | GRADES |
|--|----------------------------|------------|
| <i>The Ohio Wildlife Encyclopedia: An Illustrated Guide to Birds, Fish, Mammals, Reptiles and Amphibians</i> | Scott Shupe | K-5 |
| <i>Little Ohio</i> | Marcia Schonberg | K-2 |
| <i>Ohio Wildlife: A Folding Pocket Guide to Familiar Animals</i> | James Kavanagh | K-5 |
| <i>There's an Opossum in My Backyard</i> | Gary Bogue | K-5 |
| <i>On Meadowview Street</i> | Henry Cole | 3-5 |
| <i>May I Come In?</i> | Marsha Arnold & Jennie Poh | 3-5 |
| <i>The Skunk</i> | Mac Barrett | 3-5 |
| <i>Animal Tracks of Ohio</i> | Tamara Eder | K-5 |
| <i>Opossums - (Neighborgood Safari)</i> | Martha London | K-5 |
| <i>Bats - (Neighborhood Safari)</i> | Martha London | K-5 |
| <i>Alphaprints: Rocky Raccoon and other Woodland Friends</i> | Roger Priddy | K-2 |
| <i>My Life With Raccoons</i> | Susan Fox | K-5 |
| <i>Antlers Forever</i> | Frances Bloxam | K-2 |
| <i>The Lucky Buckeye</i> | Kristal Leebrick | 3-5 |
| <i>Playing Possum</i> | Jennifer Black Reinhardt | 3-5 |