

Wetlands In Your Backyard

GRADE LEVEL: upper elementary, middle school

DURATION: one 30-40 minute class period

OBJECTIVES

After this activity, students will be able to:

- List the different habitat types found within their local area
- Identify, on a map of their local area, where these habitats are located
- Conclude where they might find wildlife in their local area

MATERIALS

- One copy of a map per student or team ; maps should show the local area and identify water features, land features, and development (use a printed map for older students or a conceptual map for younger students)
- Felt tip pens or colored pencils

PROCEDURE

1. Begin by defining what a habitat is and continue with a short discussion about the variety of habitats that can be found in the local area. Introduce the concept that community developments border these natural habitats and can impact natural habitats (potentially positively or negatively).
2. Pass out one copy of the blank map to each student or team.
3. Have students locate as many wetland habitats as possible on the map and identify them with a blue pen. Continue this procedure by identifying other types of habitats with a green pen, major roadways with a black pen, and other significant community development with an orange pen.
4. Discuss the following questions as a large group or in small groups:
 - Which habitats are suitable for wildlife to use? Which are unsuitable?

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Students will use map skills to discover the natural habitats and community developments that are found in their local area. Awareness of the habitats found in their 'backyard' will allow them to have a better understanding of the resources that migratory species might find in their local area.

Both migratory and non-migratory species rely upon a variety of habitats in order to thrive – seeking out food, shelter, and breeding areas. Migratory species often rely upon the resources of wetland habitats during their journey. Therefore, the health of the wetland can affect the migratory species as well. Wetlands have a direct interaction with the areas that border them, affected by both other natural habitats and community development.

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- Do you notice a difference between the types of wildlife found near your homes and businesses, compared to wildlife found in the natural habitats in your local area?
- How many types of habitat did you identify? Do you notice patterns where natural habitats are located?
- How does connecting multiple natural habitats affect animals? How does connecting multiple natural habitats affect people?

EXTENSION

1. Ask students to use the internet or library resources to find their own map on the internet.
2. Complete the activity again, but use a map from another location along the Pacific Rim Flyway. Compare and contrast the types of habitats with your local area.
3. Have students document observations from this lesson and share with another classroom via social media.