



Balancing a Wetland

LESSON PLAN

What Can Be Learned?

The balanced inter-relationships between wetland ecosystem components are explored through two environmental games.

Materials Required

Ball of string
Wetland animal cards (see the Bird Identification activity for ideas on how students can help make a set of these cards),
4 x buckets for food cards
4 x hoops or rope for circles

The Activity

Brainstorm and identify the animal users of a wetland and their role within it.

Wetlands of Life Game

Have the group stand in a circle.

Ask the group what is one thing you might find in a wetland? (Example: A worm) Give the end of the ball of string to the first answer.

Then ask the group “What would eat that (a worm)?”, unroll the ball of string and give to the second response. Continue asking “What would eat that?” or “What would that eat?” until everyone is an animal/plant/bird/insect and is holding onto the piece of string.

Now “poison” one of the animals / plants and tell them to tug their string and fall down and die.

As they fall down they say their role out loud. Anyone who feels the string tug should sit down and say their role.

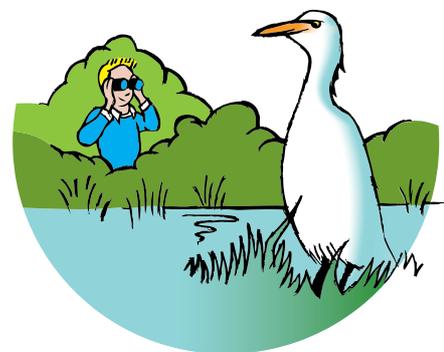
Ask various members of the group what their role was and how they were affected. Talk about the balance of a wetland and how / why everything is connected.

Wetland Food Chains Game

Students are the “birds” and must migrate from one end of the playing space to the other.

They must try and pick up a food card (situated in buckets placed within the playing space) on the way.

Make the hoops Wetland Reserves. Migrating birds can stop at the protected wetland reserves for a rest or to seek protection from predators.



Wetlands E-Set suited to upper primary students.

Ask the group to name a predator of migratory birds (fox, game shooter, dog, cat etc.) Nominate a predator to try and catch the birds during migration. If a predator catches a bird, the bird needs to hand over one of its food cards.

For the first five rounds, have one predator and plenty of food. You can stop at the end of five rounds and ask the birds about the food availability, wetland availability etc. Ask the same questions of the predator.

For the second five rounds, introduce two more predators. Stop after five rounds and ask the same questions as before, what are the changes to food / wetlands / energy usage? What have the predators noticed?

“Poison” one of the wetland reserves (by removing the hoop) and play another five rounds. What are the birds finding now? What are the predators finding now?

Continue changing the factors of wetlands, food and predators and have the group discuss the results of the impacts.

Finish the game by getting each group to discuss what they found easy / hard. What did the wetland mean to them? How did their impact affect the wetland? What do they think we need to do to help migrating birds? What do they think we need to do to help wetlands?



Japanese or Latham's Snipe
a migratory bird found in Tasmania's wetlands

(picture from: nature.ok.ru)

Wetlands E-Set - Lesson Plan

E-Sets are an Electronic Environmental and Educational set of notes for teachers

FURTHER INFORMATION

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