



What's a Habitat

LESSON PLAN

What Can Be Learned

A habitat is the natural environment of an animal - one which contains everything an animal needs to survive.

Some animals have extremely specific habitat needs; the 40-spotted pardalote, for example, can only live near, and feed on, stands of white gum. Other animals are able to tolerate variables in their habitat. There are always some basic requirements which must be met in order for an animal to be able to use an area as its habitat: food availability, shelter and a safe place to breed, without being overly threatened by predators (in particular introduced animals such as cats).

Materials Required

- For Habitat Hustle:
(like musical chairs)
- An open area
- Chairs (one chair less than the number of students in the class)

The Activity

Introduce the concept of a 'habitat'. Ask the students what they think 'habitat' means.

To start them thinking ask students to draw a picture of themselves/a human, and around the human draw all the things that are essential for humans to survive as a species.

- Why are humans good at surviving?
We can eat lots of different things.
- We can survive in hot and cold, wet and dry places.
- We can build our shelters/homes almost anywhere, using different types of materials.

Explain that some animals are not so lucky. Give some examples of animals with specific needs.

Urban native animals are able to cope with some changes to their habitat caused by human development, but they also have essential needs - needs that urban environments provide.

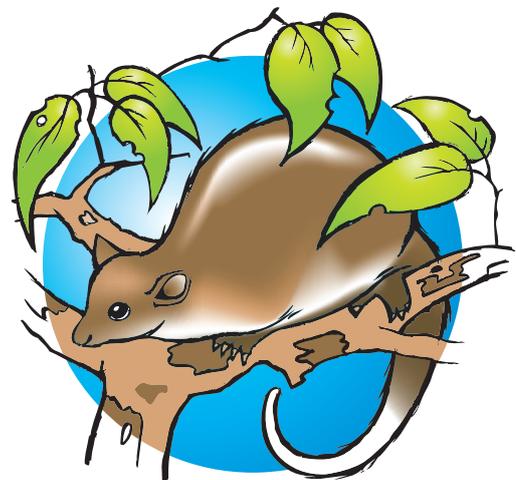
Explore with the students why animals need habitat and why it is so important in native animals' survival.

List some urban animals and talk about what each animal's habitat is like -

Animal	Food it needs	Shelter/ breeding	Urban threats

The role that humans can play in both destroying and protecting habitat can also be discussed.

Using a picture of a backyard environment (including things such as a house, shed, woodheap) have the students label where native urban animals might feed and shelter.



Urban Wildlife E-Set suited for lower primary students.

Note how some animals use human-built things as part of their habitat (e.g. possums in the roof of the house or shed, spiders in the corners of buildings or skinks in woodheaps).

Habitat Hustle

This game is suitable for a large group and so the whole class can join in. It highlights the importance of habitat in wildlife survival. It is best conducted outside in an open area.

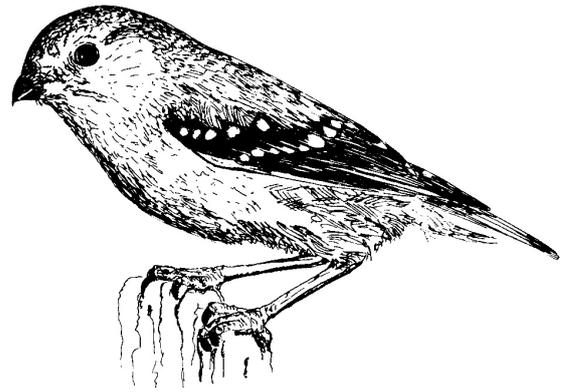
The game is similar to 'musical chairs'. A line of chairs is set up back to back and children adopt the movements and sounds of their designated animal.

Chairs represent 'habitat'. The children move around the chairs as their animal until 'Habitat Hustle' is cried out by the teacher.

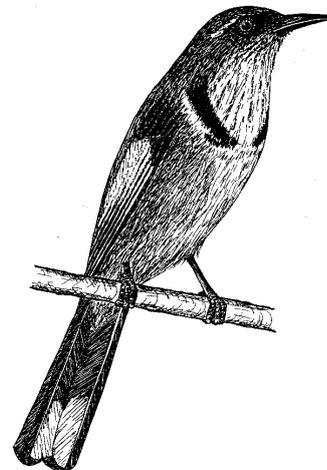
When this happens everyone must find a seat. Whilst the children are moving, one (or more) chair is removed so that every time the game 'stops' someone is 'out'.

Reasons for the habitat loss can easily be provided; 'Your tree is cut down', 'a dog has chased you out of the area', 'a rabbit has stolen your habitat', 'your tree blew down in a storm', etc.

** Extension: Some of the 'habitats' can be protected as a park or reserve, so that this habitat will never be taken away and so there will be several 'survivors'. This illustrates the importance of setting aside some protected areas in urban landscapes.



Forty spotted pardalote



Yellow-throated honeyeater

Two examples of Tasmanian birds with very different habitat requirements. See www.parks.tas.gov.au/wildlife/birds/endemic.html for further information.

Urban Wildlife E-Set - Lesson Plan

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

Head Office; 134 Macquarie Street Hobart Tasmania 7000
Internet: www.parks.tas.gov.au August 2007 © State of Tasmania