

Saint John's Outdoor University Class Overview

Habitat Exploration

Objective: Students will explore the basic needs of animals and how those needs are met in habitats such as the prairie, wetlands, forest, and oak savanna. Students will also investigate how certain characteristics may help organisms adapt to different environments and increase their chances of survival. Animal life cycles and human effects on animals and habitats will also be discussed.

Field Activities:

Beaver Dress-up: This activity will transform a student into a beaver while the classes discusses the adaptations beavers have for survival.

Prairie Insect Collection: This activity will allow the students to collect and examine insects common to the prairie. Students will use equipment to safely capture insects and closely study the body parts, and field guides to identify the types of insects caught.

Wetland Dipping: This activity will allow students to get a closer look at the aquatic invertebrates living in the wetlands. Students will use equipment to catch and examine the insects in various stages of metamorphosis.

Camo Critters and Thicket: This activity allows students to both passively and actively investigate animal adaptation to change in the environment. Students will explore how camouflage helps animals to survive and then determine for themselves actions that allow animals to survive.

Life Cycle Scavenger Hunt: The forest is full of animals and plants in various stages of their life cycles. In small teams, students will work on a scavenger hunt and explore for examples of animal and plant life cycle stages.

Key points and themes covered in each class:

- The basic needs animals need to find in their habitats: food, water, shelter, space
- Common habitat types found in Minnesota: wetland, prairie, forest, oak savanna
- Common animals found in Minnesota habitats
- Types of adaptations animals have and how the adaptations help the animal survive
- Different types of life cycles animals go through
- How humans may positively and negatively affect animals in their habitats
- Appropriate and safe ways to handle animals found in nature
- How to explore appropriately and safely in nature