

Animal Activities

Create an Animal Soundbox

You can create an animal soundbox just by varying the vibrations on this simple instrument!

What You'll Need:

- 1-quart milk carton
- Scissors
- String
- Paper towel
- Water

Cut the top off of a 1-quart milk carton, 4 inches from the bottom. Using scissors, punch a small hole in the center bottom of the carton, and thread the end of a 24-inch piece of strong string through the hole. On the outside of the carton, tie a knot that will not pull through the hole.

Wet a paper towel, squeezing out the excess water. Hold the milk carton with one hand. With your other hand, put the wet paper towel around the string about 10 inches from the carton. Give the wet towel a quick pull while pressing it with your fingers. It will make a squawking noise that is amplified by the milk carton.

By varying how much string you leave between the wet towel and the box, you can produce sounds resembling a rooster's crow and a lion's roar.

Wildlife Safari

This wildlife safari animal activity shows us that there's wildlife even in our town and neighborhoods! When we think of wildlife, we think of bears, cougars, bison, and other large animals. But any animal that normally lives without the care of people can be considered wildlife.

This includes birds, insects, fish, and other small animals. You can find wildlife anywhere -if you know how and where to look.

What you'll need:

- Notepad
- Pencil or pen

Go for a walk or explore your backyard. Sit under a group of trees and look up in the branches. Watch for birds moving around in the trees. You may also see squirrels in the branches or running around on the ground as they hunt for food. Where there are squirrels, there may also be predators, such as hawks, falcons, or foxes.

Look closely at the grass, the leaves of the trees and shrubs, and in the crevices of tree bark. You're likely to find insects, spiders, and other small animals.

Try watching a patch of sidewalk next to a wall or a building. It's 'just' concrete, but look closer. Ants may have made a nest in a crack in the concrete. Other insects may use a wall to warm up. Birds come to hunt the insects. You may also see bats hunting insects. Don't be frightened of bats -- 'nature's mosquito control' won't harm you.

You don't need to live in a jungle or a forest to observe wildlife in nature. There are hundreds of animals living in our town, too. Enjoy the safari!

Wild Flashcards

You can increase your animal knowledge a lot when you craft Wild Flashcards for all of your favorite animals. With just a few simple supplies, you and a friend can become animal experts in no time.

What You'll Need:

- 4x6" index cards
- Pen
- Reference books
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers (optional)

Once you've got all your materials gathered, you're ready to make some 'wild' flashcards. For each card, write a fact or two about an animal on one side of the card. (Read reference books and magazines to learn about animals.) On the other side of the card, put the animal's picture and name. You can cut pictures out of old magazines, or draw them yourself.

You can use your flash cards to help your friends learn about animals. First read them the fact, and then ask them to name the animal. (Example: I live in the water, but I'm not a fish. I'm the world's largest mammal. Who am I? Answer: a blue whale!)

Or, show them the pictures while covering up the animals' names, and have them guess the names. See if you can stump them, or have them make some cards and see if they can stump you. You and your friends will be animal experts -- in a flash!

Keeping Warm

How do animals that live outdoors stay warm in the winter? Try this fun animal crafts experiment to find more about keeping warm.

What You'll Need:

- Glass jars of equal size
- Water
- Thermometers
- Various natural insulating materials, such as leaves, soil, and dry grass
- Graph paper
- Pencil

Mammals have fur and birds have feathers to keep them warm, but even fur and feathers aren't enough protection against stormy winter nights. How can animals keep warm enough to survive?

To find out, fill several glass jars with warm water. Record the air temperature, then put a thermometer in each jar and record the water temperature. Now insulate each jar with natural materials. Pile dry leaves around one jar and dry grass around another. Mound soil around a third. Leave one jar uninsulated for comparison.

Record the temperature of the water in each jar every five minutes until the jars all reach air temperature. Make a line graph to show how quickly the temperature fell in each jar. Which materials insulate the best?

If you were an animal living in the wild, which materials would you choose when building a nest?

Zoo Babies

Animals often have different names as babies. A baby dog is called a puppy, for example. In this Zoo Babies activity, try to match the animal in Column 1 with its baby name in Column 2.

Column 1

tiger

cow

seal

horse

kangaroo

eagle

goose

swan

turkey

deer

rooster

Column 2

eaglet

poult

joey

fawn

cygnet

gosling

kitten

foal

chick

whelp

calf