

## **JUNIOR: ANIMAL HABITATS**

Hey Girl Scout! Have you ever seen a bird's nest or a beaver dam? With this badge learn how to make your own animal habitat. Find out more about where animals live, how they play, and how humans can help them. When you have earned this badge, you'll know more about wild animals and how to protect their homes.

### **Step 1: Find out about wild animals.**

1. Wild animals may seem very different from your pets at home, but at one time, all animals were wild!
2. Observe a pet or tame animal for at least 15 minutes. Write at least three things about how it behaves. Then watch a show about an animal related to the one you observed. If you watched your cat, you might watch a show about lions. What behaviors do wild and tame animals share? What is different?

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

### **Step 2: Investigate an animal habitat.**

1. One habitat can contain a lot of different animals. You might think of it as a city in the wild kingdom. Scientists use habitats to group animals by things they all share.
2. Cut out 15-20 pictures of wild animals from old magazines. Group the animals by habitat. Then group them by how they look, how they move, or how they bear their young. In what ways did your groups change.

Supplies:

1. Magazines
2. Scissors

### **Step 3: Create an animal habitat.**

1. You have watched how animals use their habitats and thought about why they live in that area. It is now time to take a look at the houses they build in their habitats. Each habitat has unique challenges for animal builders.
2. Many animals use insulation to keep their homes cool in hot temperatures or warm in the cold. They may line a nest with feathers, or burrow into snow or mud to hold in body heat.
3. We are now going to do an experiment.
  - Mix a package of Jell-o. Before it sets, put part of the liquid into a small container with a lid or sealed top. Pour the rest into a mixing bowl.
  - Insulate the small container the way an animal might insulate its nest. You could bury the container in leaves and sticks in the yard or use materials in your house, like socks.

- Keep the container in its warm, insulated place while the mixing bowl with the rest of the Jell-o stays out in the air - in the same area as your "nest" container.
- When the bowl of Jell-o has set, uncover and check your "nest." If it is still liquid, you'll know your insulation would have kept the animals inside warm. If it set, try building your animal home again!
- Think about what made them work? What materials did not work as well?

Supplies:

1. Jell-o mix
2. Mixing bowl
3. Small container
4. Water

#### **Step 4: Explore endangered habitats.**

1. When the animals no longer have their habitat, they have to adapt to a new place to live. Some animals can't change, and end up becoming endangered.
2. Choose one of the following endangered animal habitats, and answer the questions. Choices: Arctic Circle, Gulf of Mexico, or Amazon Rain Forrest.
3. Questions:
  - Why is it in danger?
  - What is happening to the animals?
  - What are people doing to help the habitat?
  - Are the animals able to adapt?

Supplies:

1. Computer
2. Paper
3. Pencil

#### **Step 5: Help protect animal habitats.**

1. You can take steps to help protect animals' homes and prevent them from becoming endangered.
2. Choose an endangered animal and dress up like the animal. Make a video for your girl scout troop. Tell them where you live, why your home is endangered, and how others can help. If there is a specific organization that protects your habitat, share its name and mission.