

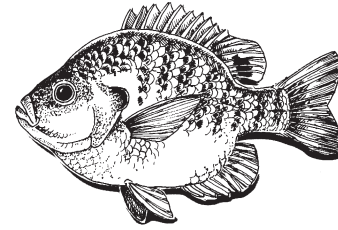
# Habitats Are Homes

## OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the basic concept of a habitat.
- Become familiar with your habitat and different kinds of habitats.
- Learn the four basic components of a habitat.

## GROUP SIZE:

6–8 children per adult volunteer



## TIME FRAME:

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes. Each activity will take about 5–15 minutes to complete.

## BACKGROUND:

Learning about our world begins with awareness of our surroundings. Our surroundings and the place where we live provide the components that are necessary for living and growing. Awareness of the components in our surroundings, or our habitat, can be categorized so that they are easier to notice.

The four components of a habitat are food, water, shelter, and space. Food and water sustain life and health. Shelter provides a protective covering. Space relates to the amount of space living creatures need to survive, not be overcrowded, or overpopulated. The table below describes examples of four living creatures and the four components supplied by their habitats.

<b>Animal</b>	Bluegill Fish	Blue Bird	Mouse	Dragonfly
<b>Habitat Type</b>	Lake	Forest and field	Field	Wetlands
<b>Food</b>	Insects, plants, other fish	Seeds or insects	Fruit, seeds	Small insects
<b>Water</b>	Lake	Stream or pond	Plants or ponds	Wetlands
<b>Shelter</b>	Reeds, rocks, protective areas	Trees, brush	Burrowing in grass, ground	Plants, trees, rocks
<b>Space</b>	Lake area	Forest and field	Field area	Wetland area



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## LIFE SKILL AREAS

- Develop hand-eye coordination by using scissors.
- Develop social skills through group discussion.
- Develop decision-making and critical-thinking skills by creating their own habitats.
- Identify, document, and organize the physical elements that make up healthy habitats.

## HELPS TO THE VOLUNTEER

*Try these suggestions:*

- Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.
- Try to create appropriate atmosphere by decorating the room with posters and props, using costumes related to the activity (i.e., animals, insects), pre-meeting preparation by the 4-H members, thinking about special seating arrangements (make an outline on the floor with tape in the shape of a butterfly, lake, or tree for example), and playing background music such as the sounds of birds singing.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

### 1. Getting Started

**ACTIVITY** “What Is Your Habitat?”

**Materials:** none

Write the word “Habitat” on a piece of paper or poster, so the children can see it, spell it, and sound it out.

**Application:** Lead a discussion in the direction of food, water, shelter, and space. Ask if anyone knows what the word habitat means. Ask them where they get all of their habitat components in their own house. Generate a discussion by asking these types of questions:

- What is your habitat?
- What are the important parts of your habitat? What do you need to survive?
- Where do you live? Where is your space? (my room, house, neighborhood)
- Where is your shelter? (my house, my parents)
- Where do you find your food? (store, garden, restaurant)
- Where do you get your water? (faucet, city water, well, rain, rivers, lakes)
- What kinds of things do you do after you get up in the morning?
- Make a list of everything said.

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## 2. Digging Deeper

### ACTIVITY “Making Your Own Habitat”

**Materials:** magazines, child scissors, glue sticks, construction paper, other types of pictures, crayons, and markers

Begin by reviewing the parts of a habitat. Have a poster on the wall with the four components of a habitat written on it (use the answers generated from “What is Your Habitat?”).

Give each child a piece of construction paper.

**Application:** Ask each child to think of their favorite animal. Using magazines or other types of pictures, have each child cut out and paste on his/her paper the things needed for the animal’s habitat. If they can’t find the pictures they want, have them draw the elements in their habitat. Have older 4-H members help the younger Cloverbud children if possible.

## 3. Looking Within

### ACTIVITY “Identifying Habitats”

#### Part A...

**Materials:** pictures of different habitats such as pond, grassy field, woods, and urban settings (Use calendars, magazines, coloring books, or books from your library.)

Show each picture to the children. Talk about how habitats are different for different living things.

#### Part B...

**Materials:** pictures of animals and pictures of habitats (from Part A) (Use calendars, magazines, coloring books, or books from your library.)

Ask children to match each animal to its own habitat. Help them by making a table. Use the following table as an example.



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Animal	Habitat
Robin	Grassy area with trees, residential area
Geese	Lake, pond, wetland with nearby fields for food
Squirrel	Woods
Bat	Field with trees and structures on its edges
Bass	Pond
Frog	Pond, stream
Butterfly	Field

### 4. Bringing Closure

**ACTIVITY** “Make Your Home a Wildlife Habitat”

**Materials:** none

Bring the idea of habitat into children’s homes through awareness of their surroundings by connecting their learning and these activities.

**Application:** Is your home a habitat for living things other than your family? Discuss how your home can be the habitat for plants, birds, insects, and other animals. What changes can we make around our own homes to improve the habitats of songbirds, butterflies, fish, and other living things? What would provide food, water, shelter, and space?

Contact your state’s Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife for information on building bird boxes and flower varieties for creating backyard habitats. For more environmental activities relating to animals and habitat, ask your librarian.

### 5. Going Beyond

**ACTIVITY** “Habitat Walk”

**Materials:** good walking shoes

Take a walk in the area around the meeting place. Identify several different habitats. Ask children what animals might live in each habitat. Talk about those things that they see in the habitat. Review the four elements; water, shelter, food, and space.

**Application:** Have the children think about how having a greater awareness of their community through the perspective of habitat helps them understand their world.



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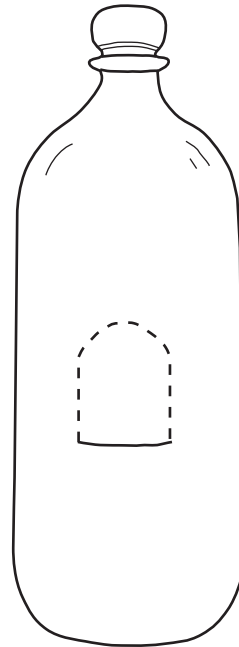
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### ACTIVITY “Making a Bird Feeder”

**Materials:** plastic milk jug or 2-liter pop bottle for each child, scissors, small nail to make holes in bottom of jug, large nail to make holes for hanger, string for hanging, and bird seed

Following the bottle diagram below, cut a flap on each side of the plastic jug or bottle. Fold the flap down on the outside. Using the small nail, poke several holes in the bottom of the container to allow water to drip through. Using the large nail, poke a hole on each side of the container several inches below the top. These holes are for the hanger. Tie a knot in one end of the string. Make the knot large enough so that it will not slip through the hole. Pull string through the hanger hole so that the knot is on the inside. Bring the string back through the opposite hole from outside to inside. Tie a large knot on the inside of the container. Put bird seed in the container. Hang outside in a safe place, near bushes or trees for shelter. Help them identify where a safe place would be for a bird to feed.

**Note to the Volunteer:** Each child will need close supervision while making the bird feeder. You may need to start the cutting for them. It is a good idea to have a bird feeder made ahead of time for a model.



Dotted line is the cutting line.

Solid line is the folding line.

## Reading Adventures

This listing of reading materials can be used as background information, for sharing before the group activity to set the stage for learning, or for sharing afterwards to reinforce the activity.

*Animals and Their Homes*, by Jennifer Cochrane & Jill Coleman

*Animals Around the World*, by Robin Kerrod

*Ecology for All Ages*, by Jorie Hunken

*Habitats*, edited by Tony Hare

*Habitats: Making Homes for Animals & Plants*, by Pamela M. Hickman

*In the Snow: Who's Been Here?*, by Lindsay Barrett George

*In the Woods: Who's Been Here?*, by Lindsay Barrett George

*Under the Ground*, by Gallimard Jeunesse

*What's inside?: Animal Homes* by Hilary Hockman

*Who Lives Here?*, by Dot & Sy Barlowe