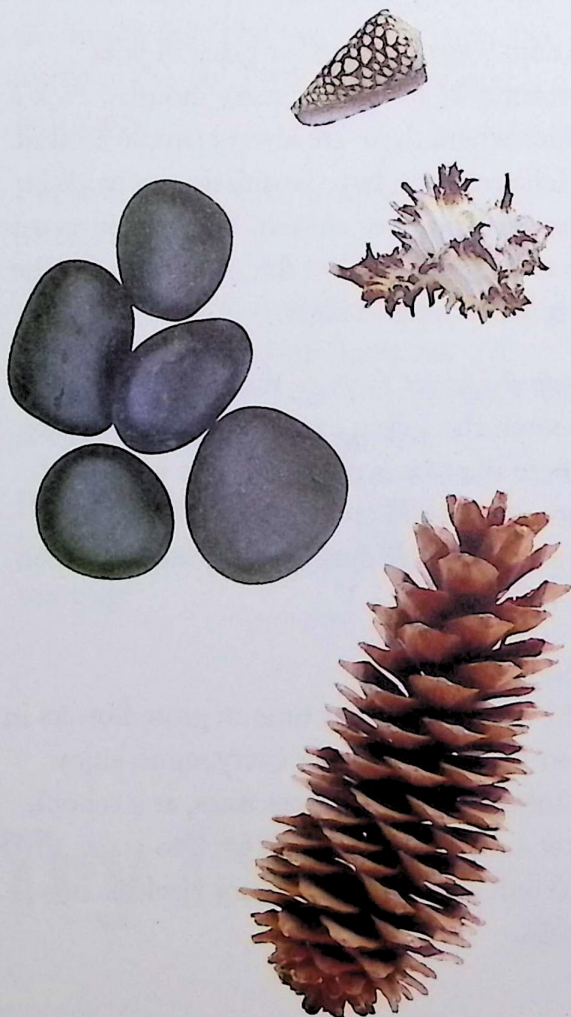


# Eco-Explorer



“Eco” is short for *ecology*. Ecology is the study of how plants and animals live together in the environment. Have fun trying these activities as you become an eco-explorer.



## 1. Exploring Nature

Try to find both living and nonliving things in the natural environment. You'll need a pencil. When you find an item, check it off.

Do your best not to harm, move, or take away any of these things. Animals and plants may depend on them.

### *Nonliving Things*

- dew drops
- smooth rock
- shiny rock
- sand
- broken rock
- water
- sunlight
- clouds
- rock piles/cliffs

### *Living Things*

- flat green leaf
- green leaf with pointy edges
- green leaf with insect holes
- green pine needles on a tree
- insects (ant, caterpillar, beetle, butterfly, or any other)
- flower
- cactus

- \_\_\_ mushroom
- \_\_\_ moss
- \_\_\_ squirrel
- \_\_\_ chipmunk
- \_\_\_ bird
- \_\_\_ worm

*Signs of Living Things*

- \_\_\_ ant hill
- \_\_\_ bird nest
- \_\_\_ bones
- \_\_\_ broken twigs/branches
- \_\_\_ brown leaves lying on the ground
- \_\_\_ bits of fur/feathers
- \_\_\_ spider web
- \_\_\_ animal footprint



## 2. What's a Habitat?

Unscramble the words below. The clue underneath the blanks will help you. Then you will discover the four most important things that an animal (or plant) needs in order to survive.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
o f o d

Clue: When you are hungry and your stomach is growling, you need to find some of this.

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
t a w r e

Clue: When you are thirsty, this is the best liquid for you to drink, and it's not soda!

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
p a s e c

Clue: This one word means a place to live and it rhymes with place.

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
t e l h s e r

Clue: If you were outside and there was a bad storm, you would look for this type of place.

Check your answers on page 105.

Now you know what is found in a habitat. A habitat is the place where an animal (or plant) lives and finds the four things above that it needs to survive. It is like the animal's (or plant's) address.

## 3. Make a Habitat

Pick one of the animals from the following list (or any other one you like) and make a pretend habitat for it to live in. Don't forget to include food, water, and shelter for your animal!

- Squirrel.
- Lion.
- Shark.
- Bear.
- Hawk.
- Monkey.

Make a habitat in a shoebox with buttons, clay, colored construction paper, cotton balls, felt, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, and other materials.

# Try It!

## 4. Food Chain

Plants make food for all living things and use the sun's energy to grow. When animals eat plants, they get energy. You also get energy from eating food. Your food may be plants or animals.

A food chain shows how energy is passed from one living thing to another. All food chains start with plants. You can make your own food chain.

You will need:

- 8 1/2" by 11" sheets of paper.
- Crayons or markers.
- Pencils.
- Tape.
- Pictures of plants and animals.

1. Cut a few pieces of paper in half the long way.
2. Find a picture of a plant or draw one. Tape it to one of these strips of paper.

3. Loop the ends of the strip of paper together and add tape to make a closed circle. You now have the first link in your food chain.
4. Find or draw a picture of something that can eat your plant. Tape it to another strip of paper. Put one end of the strip through the first link and tape the ends to make another closed circle. Now your food chain has two links.
5. Find or draw a picture of something that eats the animal that is eating your plant. Make a third loop. Follow the directions in Step 4.
6. Keep going.

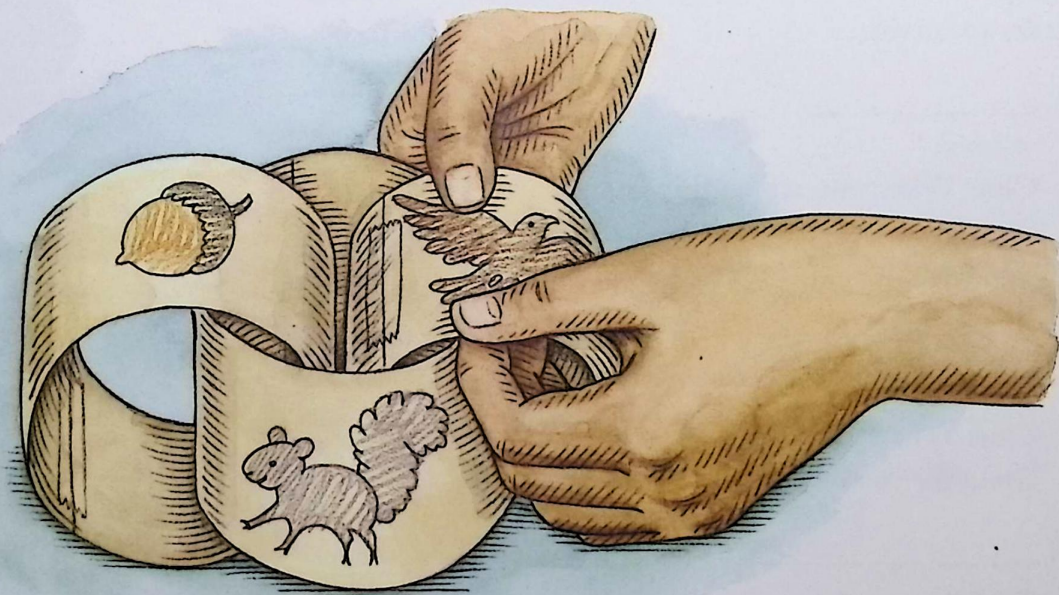
Here are some food chain ideas for you to start with:

grass—prairie dog—rattlesnake

acorn—gray squirrel—red-tailed hawk

flower—beetle—skunk—great horned owl

mayfly—sunfish—wood stork—alligator



## 5. Speak Up for Animals!

Some animals that live on the earth are endangered. If we do not protect them, they will be gone forever.

Put together a show that will tell people more about endangered species.

1. Pick an animal from the list below or find another animal that lives near you that is endangered.
  - Peregrine falcon.
  - Black rhinoceros.
  - Florida panther.
  - Mountain gorilla.
  - Galápagos tortoise.
  - Karner blue butterfly.
  - Black-footed ferret.
  - Giant panda.
  - Orangutan.
2. Look up why your animal is endangered. You can go to the library or ask an adult to help you search the Internet for information.
3. Write about why you feel it is important to save your animal, where your animal lives, and why it is endangered. What can people do to help?
4. You may want to choose some music for the opening and closing of your talk show. You can include animal sounds.
5. After you've put on your show once, you might like to invite your parents or another troop to come and see it!

## 6. Helping Wildlife

As a Girl Scout, you care about the earth. When you recite the Girl Scout Law, you promise to "use resources wisely." Pick at least one of the activities from the list that follows to help wild animals. Work with your leader or another adult.

You can:

- Put up bird nest boxes. You can find directions on how to make them in many bird books. You can even make them from old milk cartons. Or put out birdbaths. You can use big plastic saucers like the ones found under plant pots.
- Make brush piles by piling up lots of dead branches and leaves. Small animals, like snakes, toads, chipmunks, and turtles, often hide under them.
- Snip six-pack rings with a pair of scissors. You know, those plastic rings that are used to hold together six-packs of soda. Why? Because the rings can cause harm. Animals can get their necks or beaks caught in them. In many cases the animals can't eat, so they die.
- Plant a garden for butterflies. Butterflies are only attracted to certain flowers. Also, some flowers may not grow in your area. Check at the plant store to see which ones will be best for this project.
- Put out a bird feeder and keep it filled all winter.

# Try It!

Answers to word scramble on page 103:

1. food 2. water 3. space 4. shelter