Wildlife



From the dandelion growing in the crack of a sidewalk to the blue whale that calls the ocean depths its home, wildlife can be found in almost any part of the world. Try your hand at observing and helping some of the wildlife that lives in your community.

1. Wildlife Symbol Party

Every state in the U.S.A. has a state bird, flower, and tree to represent it. Which were chosen by your state? Why? Have a wildlife symbols "party" at which each person chooses an animal or plant that best represents her. Everybody then takes turns trying to figure out why the other person chose her symbol.

2. It's All in the Details

Field scientists often sketch, draw, or photograph the plants and animals they study. Try your hand at drawing or taking pictures of a plant or an animal you can easily observe. Use your pencil or camera to capture details, such as the shape of a flower, the color of a bird's eye, or the design on a butterfly's wing.

3. Creature Feature

All birds have a beak, but the shape and size of it depends on what the bird eats. For each of the following, choose something from your kitchen or from a toolbox that best matches how each bird uses its beak as a tool to eat its food.

- Hawk (tears meat)
- Flamingo (strains water for tiny creatures)
- Hummingbird (drinks nectar from long flowers)
- Woodpecker (picks larvae hiding under tree bark)
- Goldfinch (cracks seeds)

4. We Are Family

Scientists group all organisms (living things) according to characteristics that they share. Pick two of the wildlife groups listed here and learn what characteristics all of its members share: amphibians, birds, fish, insects, mammals, reptiles, plants.

5. Touch-Me-Not!

Have you ever touched poison ivy or seen a scorpion use its stinger? If so, you know firsthand how plants and animals use poison to protect themselves or catch a meal. These poisons can hurt or even kill people. Learn to identify one or two poisonous plants or animals in your area. Where are you likely to run into them? What should you do if you touch, or are bitten by, one of them?

6. Staying Alive

Find two animals or plants in your state or region that are considered endangered (in danger of dying out). Why are they endangered? What's being done to protect them? Participate in a project that helps wildlife in your community.

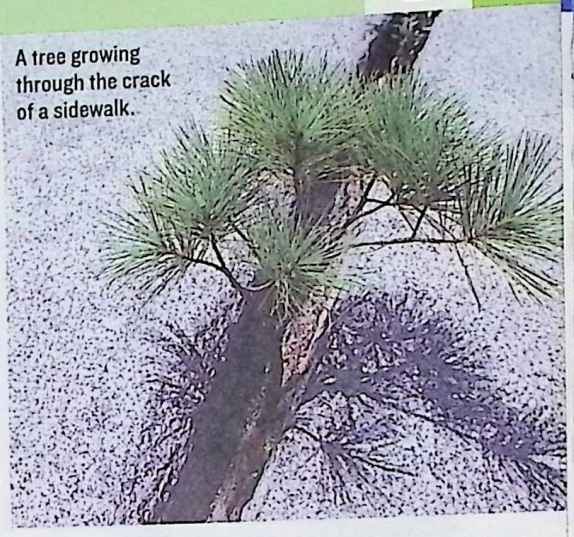
7. Take a Closer Look

People use different tools to help them get a closer look at plants and animals. Use two of the following items to see a plant or animal up close: binoculars, magnifying lens, microscope, spotting scope, zoom camera.



8. Animal Watcher

Scientists and nature lovers use field markings (special patterns, marks, or shapes found on the animal's body), behaviors, and the song or call of that animal to identify animals and birds. Use these three things to identify at last three kinds of birds or other animals in your neighborhood.



A tree growing through the crack of a sidewalk.

9. Nature's Remedies

Many medicines, home remedies, and beauty aids are made with plants. Find out the healthful properties of three of the following: aloe, ginger, chamomile, peppermint, ginseng, hot pepper, garlic, coriander, foxglove, and chocolate. Ask a librarian, a pharmacist, or someone at a health food store, or go online if you need help.

10. How Was Your Day?

Field biologists learn a lot about animals by observing them doing everyday things, such as eating. Pick a wild animal that you can easily observe in your backyard, a neighborhood park, a zoo, an aquarium, or a wildlife preserve. Watch the animal for a while to try to discover three of the following: what it likes to eat, where it spends most of its time, how it gets around, how it keeps clean, how it communicates, and how it cares for its young.