

JUNIOR ANIMAL HABITATS BADGE – MEETING 1

Badge Purpose: When girls have earned this badge, they will know more about wild animals and how to protect animal habitats.

Activity Plan Length: 1.5 hours

Time	Activity	Materials Needed
10 minutes	Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls recite the Girl Scout Promise + Law. 	<input type="checkbox"/> (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster
20 minutes	Observing Wild Animals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls discuss animals that live in the wild. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Whiteboard, blackboard, or big paper <input type="checkbox"/> Writing utensils
20 minutes	Make a Habitat Collage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls investigate animal habitats. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Old magazines <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Glue sticks or tape <input type="checkbox"/> Paper
20 minutes	Explore Endangered Habitats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls explore endangered animal habitats. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Shallow bowls (one for each small group) <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking oil <input type="checkbox"/> Feathers (not dyed) <input type="checkbox"/> Dish soap <input type="checkbox"/> Spoons <input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels or cotton balls <input type="checkbox"/> Books and/or websites on endangered animals and habitats
10 minutes	Snack Chat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls enjoy a healthy snack while discussing what they have learned. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy snack
10 minutes	Wrapping Up	<input type="checkbox"/> (Optional) Make New Friends lyrics poster

Getting Started

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: (Optional) Girl Scout Promise and Law poster

Welcome everyone to the meeting, recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Activity #1: Observing Wild Animals

Time: 20 minutes



Badge Connection: Step 1 – Find out about wild animals

Materials Needed: (Optional) Paper, (optional) pencils

1. Imagine meeting a monkey or kicking up dust with a kangaroo. These animals live in the wild, so we won't get to spend time with them in their natural homes—their habitats. But that doesn't mean we can't find out more about where they live, how they play, and how we can help them!
2. As a large group, brainstorm and list wild animals that can be found near your troop's town, school, homes, or meeting place.
3. Next, have the girls survey the area with an adult. They can look out windows or venture outside, depending on the weather and time.
 - If outside, give the girls specific boundaries, and have them stay together with one or two buddies. Tell them they must be able to see and hear their adults while outside.
 - If inside, encourage them to take turns looking at one specific area at a time. Looking too quickly can cause them to miss some animal activity.
4. Ask girls to pick three animals they saw and talk about each one.
 - Why does this animal live here?
 - What makes this area a good natural home—or habitat—for this animal? What about the environment helps this animal survive?
 - Does this animal interact with humans?

Activity #2: Make a Habitat Collage

Time: 20 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 2 — Investigate an animal habitat

Materials Needed: Old magazines; scissors; glue sticks or tape; paper

Prep Needed:

- Ask families for old magazines, calendars, or other sources of wild animal pictures. (Warn them that girls will be cutting them for collages.)
1. There are specific ways that scientists group animals. Scientists use a system called “biological classification” to put living things into groups. There are seven ranks, or levels, in this system. The levels start with a large number of creatures and then get smaller.
 2. Habitats are just one way that scientists group animals by things they have in common.
 3. Have girls cut out 15-20 pictures of wild animals from old magazines. If you have a large group, you may wish to divide girls into smaller groups, so that each girl has a chance to find and cut out at least one to two wild animals.
 4. Ask the girls to group the animals by habitat. Remind girls that a habitat is an animal's natural home. Which animals live in the same area?
 5. Ask the girls to then group animals by how they look, how they move, or how they bear their young. Did the groups change?
 6. If there is time, ask the girls to think of other ways that they might group animals.

Activity #3: Explore Endangered Habitats

Time: 20 minutes

Badge Connection: Step 4 – Explore Endangered Habitats

Materials Needed: Bowls (one for each small group); cooking oil; dish soap; feathers (not dyed—color sometimes comes off in the water); spoons; paper towels or cotton balls; book(s) and/or website(s) about endangered animals and animal habitats



1. Although animals sometimes become endangered naturally, it is usually because of human activities in animal habitats. When animals no longer have their habitats, they have to adapt to new places to live. Some animals can't change and end up becoming endangered.
2. Have girls answer the questions below about an endangered animal habitat like the Arctic Circle, The Gulf of Mexico, or the Amazon Rainforest.
 - 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?
 - What can we do to help the habitat and the animals who live there?
3. Ask the girls which questions were hardest for them to answer. Do they know anyone they could ask for more information? Are there any questions where some people had heard one thing, and some had heard something different? Why is it hard to know all of the answers?
4. Oil spills, which have affected both the Gulf of Mexico and the Arctic Circle, are just an example of how human activities negatively impact habitats and the animals that live there. Find out how hard they can be to clean up by creating your own.
5. Divide the girls into small groups. Give each group a bowl with water and help girls add some cooking oil to the bowl.
6. Direct girls to try different ways of cleaning up the oil, such as gathering it into one place using string, skimming it off with a spoon, or soaking it up with paper towels or cotton balls. Let the girls experiment and make observations.
7. Have the girls pick up the feathers and note the texture. Have them pull apart some of the thin branches (called barbs) in the flat part (vane) of the feather, then run over the vane with their fingers to "zip" them back again. Tiny hooks, called barbules, help the barbs stay together, making the feathers act as both waterproofing and insulation.
8. Then dip the feather in the oil and try it again. What happens? Birds do have some natural oils in their feathers, but oil spills cause their feathers to mat down and separate, which makes the birds vulnerable to exposure. Put a few drops of dish soap on the feather, and see if you can restore its "zipper" qualities.
9. Discuss:
 - What else could you use?
 - What works best?
 - How do scientists try to clean up real oil spills?

RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS:

- Books:
 - *Will We Miss Them? Endangered Species (Nature's Treasures)* by Alexandra Wright and Marshall H. Peck
 - *Eyewitness: Endangered Animals* by Ben Hoare
 - *The Wonder Garden* by Jenny Broom
- Websites:
 - <http://www.kidsplanet.org/factsheets/map.html>
 - <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>

Activity #4: Snack Chat

Time: 10 minutes

Badge Connection: Questions link to multiple badge steps

Materials Needed: Healthy snack

While enjoying snack, here are some things for girls to talk about:

- If you could bring one animal back from extinction what would it be and why?
- What do you think you can do to help endangered animals?
- Why is it important to protect endangered animals?

Wrapping Up

Time: 10 minutes



Materials Needed: Make New Friends lyrics (optional)

Close the meeting by singing Make New Friends and doing a friendship circle.

More to Explore

- Field Trip Ideas:
 - Visit a local nature center, park, or zoo to learn about animals and their habitats.
- Speaker Ideas:
 - Invite a park ranger, conservationist, or someone who works at a zoo to come speak at your troop meeting.

