



Junior Animal Habitats Badge Activity Plan 1

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

Planning Guides Links: Outdoor Awareness and Environmental Stewardship

Fun Patch Link: Animal Awareness

Activity Plan Length: 1.5 hours

Involve Family and Friends: Participation from family and friends can enrich your troop's Girl Scout experience, both for the girls and for you. Use the suggestions below to make it easier for you to connect with additional support.

- Before the meeting:
 - Send a note to families to find those with interest in or expertise with the topic. Ask them to lead or support an activity or two, or even lead the whole meeting.
 - Offer this activity plan as a starting place and point out that they may choose alternative activities using the *Customize It!* section as a guide. For example: If an activity plan directs girls to sit outside and observe animal habitats, you may choose to go to the zoo and learn about animal habitats there instead.
- At home:
 - Encourage families to ask questions about their girls' badge activities. Some examples that work for any badge include: What did you learn? What surprised you? What does it make you think of trying next?
- Throughout the year:
 - Suggest to families ways that girls can share or display their Girl Scout accomplishments. Possibilities include a bulletin board, a scrapbook, a special memories box or family sharing time.

Girls Take the Lead: Include girl leadership through long-term planning, short-term meeting prep and specific activities at meetings.

- Long Term Planning
 - If you use "Plan Your Junior Year", share this with the girls at the start of the year. Have them ask friends and family to help out with specific meetings or activities. Let the girls brainstorm ways to make the plans their own, such as thinking of related field trip activities. If a girl has experience with a field trip, ask her to be assistant tour guide.
 - If you are adapting the "Plan Your Junior Year", get the girls' input on which badges to choose. Offer just a few choices in each category or timeframe to make decisions easier. Every girl should have at least one badge or journey she's excited about.
- Short Term Planning
 - Ask a family to help lead a badge. Make sure they have access to activity plans and any resources you might have. Keep additional requested materials to a minimum.
 - Choose two helpers to stay after a meeting for 15 minutes. Give them each an activity to introduce and either instruct or help guide at the next meeting.
 - Before a meeting, ask everyone to vote on some aspect of the activity: draw posters or perform skits, open with a song or game, etc.

- Use a rotating list of helper tasks, called a 'kaper chart', to share responsibilities. Examples include acting as emcee of the meeting, leading an opening game, bringing a snack next meeting or taking attendance.
- At the Meeting
 - During the opening, have 1-2 girls share their answers to a get-to-know-you question.
 - Have girls fulfill their kaper chart responsibilities.
 - Try to find something in each activity that you can let girls decide or manage.

Customize It: If your group wants to expand work on this badge, or simply try different activities, go for it! There are many ways to earn this award, including: completing the activities as listed in the Junior Skill-Building Badge set for *It's Your Story—Tell It!*, completing two of these activity plans, attending a council-sponsored event or customizing activities. Pick the one(s) that work best for your group. Girls will know they have earned the award if:

- They have learned about wild animals and animal habitats
- They have created an animal house
- They have learned about and helped protect endangered animals and habitats

Tips and Tools

- Just as girls need to be careful around pets, they need to be even more careful when observing wild animals. Girls should never feed or approach wild animals.
- Check out ways to stay safe using Safety-Wise at <http://gsrv.gs/safetywise>.
- Ensure that your activities are accessible to everyone. Ask in advance if any special accommodations need to be made. If you have questions regarding specific adaptations, please contact River Valleys at 800-845-0787.

Resources

- This lesson plan has been adapted from the Junior Skill-Building Badge set for the *It's Your Story—Tell It!* Animal Habitats Badge, which can be used for additional information and activities.

Getting Started

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Optional: Girl Scout Promise and Law printed out on poster board

Steps:

1. Welcome everyone to the meeting.
2. Recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Use repeat-after-me or say it as a group if girls know it by heart.

Girl Scout Promise	Girl Scout Law
<i>On my honor, I will try:</i> To serve God and my country, To help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law.	<i>I will do my best to be</i> honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, <i>and to</i> respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

3. Play a game so girls get to know each other better. Use the example below, if needed.
 - Find Your Herd: Have girls close their eyes while you walk around and whisper the name of an animal in their ear. (Alternatively, you can write up slips of paper with animal names beforehand, and have the girls draw from a hat.) Make sure there are at least two of each animal. On your signal, everyone opens her eyes and goes looking for others from her herd by acting and sounding like the appropriate animal. When you have your herd, try to think of something else you all have in common.

Activity #1: Observing Wild Animals

Badge Connection: Step 1—Find out about wild animals

Time Allotment: 20 Minutes

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard, blackboard or big paper
- Paper and Pencils

Steps:

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 live near your troop's town, school, homes or meeting place. Have a couple of girl helpers write these on the board or big paper.
3. Next, have the girls survey the area. They can look out windows or venture outside, depending upon weather and time. If they don't see any animals, they can still look for signs of animal homes or activity.
 - 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 (or saw signs of) 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 is it about this environment helps this animal survive?

- Does this animal interact with humans?

Activity #2: Make a Habitat Collage

Badge Connection: Step 2—Investigate an animal habitat

Time Allotment: 20 Minutes

Prep Needed:

- Gather materials and supplies.
- Ask families for old magazines, calendars, or other sources of wild animal pictures. Warn them the girls are cutting them apart for collages
- You can also check out an Intro to Nature OTTERS kit from a River Valleys service center, to see examples in the picture cards from the kit. You won't cut them up for collages, but you can have the girls use the cards to practice sorting. You can also use the Owls and Crows trivia questions for extra information and filler activities.

Materials Needed:

- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or tape
- Paper

Steps:

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 small groups, so that each girl has a better chance to participate.
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 the 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

Badge Connection: Step 4—Explore Endangered Habitats

Time Allotment: 20 Minutes

Prep Needed:

- Gather materials and supplies.

Materials Needed:

- Cooking oil
- Shallow bowls
- Oil spill clean up materials: spoons, cotton string, cotton balls, small sponges, paper towels
- Feathers (not dyed – color sometimes comes off in the water)
- Dish soap
- Information on endangered animals and animal habitats. Here are some suggestions:
 - Books:
 - *Will We Miss Them? Endangered Species (Nature's Treasures)* by Alexandra Wright and Marshall H. Peck
 - *Eyewitness: Endangered Animals* (DK Eyewitness Books) by Ben Hoare
 - Websites:
 - <http://gsrv.gs/1DK2CJI>
 - <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>

Steps:

1. 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. Animals can become endangered because of cyclical changes, or because of human activities in animal habitats.
2. Have girls answer the questions below about an endangered animal habitat like the Arctic Circle, The Gulf of Mexico, or the Amazon Rainforest.
 - a. Why is it in danger?
 - b. What is happening to the animals?
 - c. What are people doing to help the habitat?
 - d. Are the animals able to adapt?
 - e. 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 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 one example of human activity negatively affecting habitats. Create a small scale spill and experiment with clean up.
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 to clean up the water?
 - What works best?
 - How do scientists try to clean up real oil spills?

Activity #4: Snack Chat

Badge Connection: Questions link to multiple badge steps

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Steps:

1. While enjoying snack, here are some things for girls to talk about:
 - a. If you could bring one animal back from extinction, what would it be and why?
 - b. What do you think you can do to help endangered animals?
 - c. Why is it important to protect endangered animals?

Wrapping Up

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Optional: Make New Friends printed on poster board

Steps:

1. Instruct girls to get into a Friendship Circle. Have girls stand in a circle and cross their right arms over their left, holding hands with the person on each side of them.

2. Sing "Make New Friends."

Make New Friends		
Verse One	Verse Two	Verse Three
Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, the other is gold.	A circle is round, it has no end. That's how long, I will be your friend.	You have one hand, I have the other. Put them together, We have each other.

3. After the song, ask everyone to be quiet.
4. Assign a girl to start the friendship squeeze by gently squeezing her neighbor's hand with her right hand. Then, that girl squeezes with her right hand. One by one, each girl passes the squeeze until it travels around the circle. When the squeeze returns to the girl who started, she says "Goodbye Sister Girl Scouts" and the girls unwrap and face outward instead of inward.
5. squeeze along. Girls can also put their right foot out into the circle when they receive the friendship squeeze, so that everyone can see it travel along the 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.

Suggestions

Do you have any suggestions to improve this activity plan? Do you have ideas for other possible badge-earning activities? Please email troopsupport@girlscoutsv.org.

Family Follow-Up Email

Use the email on the next page as a template to let families know what girls did at the meeting today. Feel free to add additional information, including:

- When and where you will be meeting next
- What activities you will do at the next meeting
- Family help or assistance that is needed
- Supplies or materials that girls will need to bring to the next meeting
- Reminders about important dates and upcoming activities

Hello Girl Scout Families:

We had a wonderful time today learning about animals and their habitats and are on our way to earning the Animal Habitats Badge.

We had fun:

- Learning about wild animals and their habitats
- Creating animal houses
- Learning about endangered animals and their homes

Continue the fun at home:

- Create an animal habitat in your backyard with your Girl Scout (the Audubon Society has some good resources to get you started).
- Organize a local habitat cleanup and spend a few hours with your Girl Scout making an area nicer for our animal friends.

Thank you for bringing your Junior to Girl Scouts!