

Predator - Prey Game

Overview

Participants play a tag game to learn about predator and prey relationships.

Objectives

K-4

- 1. Identify and find prey.
- 2. Describe the role of camouflage for predator and prey
- 3. Discuss the role of predator-prey relationships (optional)
- 4. Discuss the value of data collection (optional).

Recommended Ages

- > Families
- > K-4th grade

Activity Time

Approximately 15 minutes

Materials

- > Copies of animal templates
- > Copies of animal cards
- > Copies of data sheets (optional)
- > Small post-it notes (optional)

Activity in Action

Send us your pictures and comments on this activity to bday@birdday.org.

Activity Adapted From

Savannah River Ecology Lab www.uga.edu/srel

Background Information

A predator is an animal that kills and eats other animals. The animal that is killed is the prey. The relationship between these two animals is known as predation. For example: owls eat rodents. The owl is the predator and the rodent the prey.

In order to survive and reproduce, many prey have developed cryptic coloring to escape predation. Camouflage, the ability to blend in with the surroundings, can determine whether a prey remains hidden or is identified by its predator. Some prey have adapted to reproduce in large numbers, such as rodents and insects, so that at least a few will survive to adults and reproduce.

Predators face challenges in finding and catching prey. They have developed special adaptations that help them find their prey such as the excellent eye sight of raptors and finely tuned hearing of owls.

Predators benefit the environment by keeping prey populations at a level that can be supported by the environment. By eating prey that are sick or weak, predators help keep disease and sickness from spreading. Predators also reduce the impact to humans. Barn swallows keep pesky flying insects in check, eating up to 850 in a day! Birds significantly reduce insects at vineyards, apple orchards, and many other crops, saving farmers millions. They keep our forests healthy by eating a multitude of insects that might otherwise weaken trees and forest overall, aiding the forest products industries.

Birds are important predators in our environment.

Get Involved! Discover easy, fun ways to learn and connect with others while spreading bird conservation awareness—join the EFTA Flock at BirdDay.org

Find free educational materials (and much more) at BirdDay.org

Have you registered your IMBD event? It's quick, easy, free, and an important way to measure IMBD success each year. To register, go to birdday.orr or send your even infomation to bday@birdday.org.

Predator-Prey Game

Directions for the Predator-Prey Game

Preparation

- 1. Copy and laminate predators cards. Punch holes at the top of each and string with yarn. Each student will wear one predator card.
- 2. Copy predator outlines in a variety colors to allow them to blend in or not with the environment where you place them. A good discussion point is what color blended better into the environment and why, and which did not. To make it challenging for older kids, consider taking pictures of the places where you will hide the prey. Print out the pictures of the places and use the prey templates to cut out their shapes, then hide in the same place from the picture.
- 3. Optional data collection: This is an optional part of the game that will depend on your time frame, students grade, and your teaching objectives. Students can "be the scientists" by gathering data about their prey for discussions after the game. Discussion questions might include:
 - Which prey was easier or more difficult to find and why?
 - Did your predator find enough prey to survive and others of their kind?
 - What happens to predators when their is not enough prey?
 - What happens to prey when there is not enough predators?
 - Why do scientists record data? What is the value of the information?

Predator - Prey Game

1. Predators can only eat these particular prey items for the game.

Predator Eats:	Prey
Hawk	Mice and snakes
Falcon	Birds
Swallow	Insects
Egret	Frogs and fish

- 2. Predators cannot talk to other predators; they must be stealthy, although they can make predator noises. Discuss what stealthy means and ask kids what those behaviors might look like for each predator.
- 3. Predators have 5 minutes to stalk and locate their prey.
- 4. When the predator finds a prey item that it can eat, the predator must "kill it" by placing a sticky note on it) and take time to eat it by recording the location of the prey in general terms on the data sheet. Other predators cannot eat prey that has already dead (indicated by the sticky).
- 5. After 5 minutes the predators must return to their "refuges", safe place, where game participants can gather to see what prey the predators found.

Predator Survival Guide (prey needed to stay alive)

Predator	To survive, it needs to eat:									
Hawk	4 mice	OR	2 sna	akes	OR	1 snake &	2 mice			
Falcon	1 pigeon	OR	2 blackbirds							
Egret	3 Fish	OR		2 Frogs	OR	1 fish & 2 frogs	OR	2 fish & 1 frog		
Swallow	10 insects									

Adapted from the Savannah River Ecology Lab (www.uga.edu/srel)

EFTA Conserving Birds by Connecting People

Find free educational materials (and much more) at BirdDay.org



I am a Barn Swallow. I eat insects.



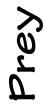
I am a Peregrine Falcon. I eat birds.

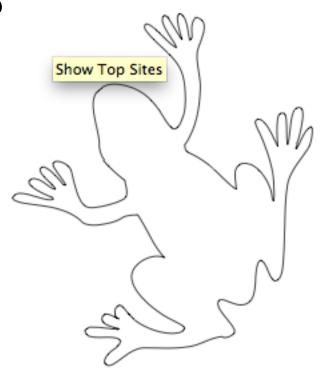


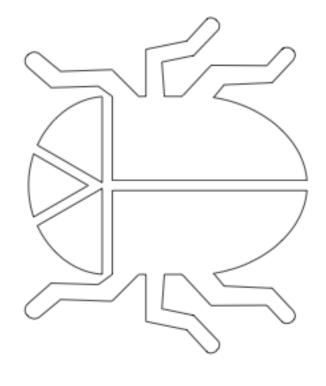
I am a Great Egret.
I eat fish and frogs.

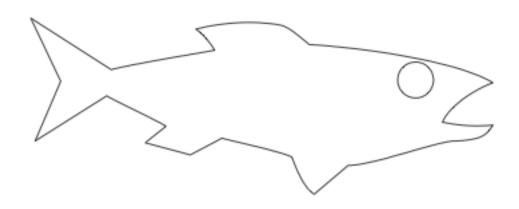


I am a Red-tailed Hawk. I eat mice and snakes.

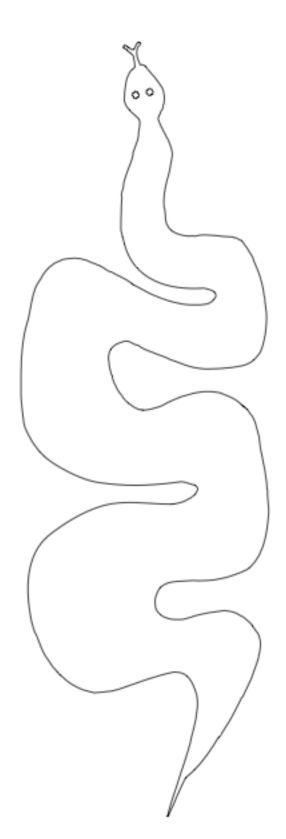


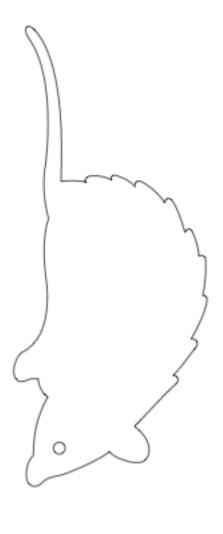






Prey





Predator - Prey Data Sheet

				•							
I am a Predator (circle one)		e): Hav	vk	Falcon	Egret		Swallow				
The Prey I ea	t:	Mice	Snakes	Frog	gs	Fish	Insects	Birds			
			My Dat	a: I found p	rey						
	Type of pre	y		Where I found it							
1st prey											
2nd prey											
3rd prey											
4th prey											
5th prey											
6th prey											
7th prey											
8th prey											
		Му	Data Summ	nary: What	I ate						
Possible Pre	y Species	Total of each	prey I "ate"	1							
Snakes											
Frogs											
Mice											
Fish											
Insects											
Birds											

Did you find enough prey to survive? (See the Predator's Survival Guide)

Did other predators "like you" (your same species) find more or fewer prey than you did?