

TEACH OUTSIDE!

So much learning can happen outside the walls of a classroom. That's why we are so excited that you have received this kit to use with your class outside!

While nature is an excellent teacher, sometimes we can use some extra help to guide our students in exploration and connections to the outdoors. Please use this resource as you see fit to do just that! The attached activities can be completed with minimal resources or using the resources that you are receiving in your class kits.

If you like these activities, we encourage you to sign up for our **Watershed on Wheels Program** where Toronto and Region Conservation Authority educators will lead your class through engaging curriculum-linked programming. Best of all, these programs are FREE for schools in Peel Region!

You can learn more at:

<https://trca.ca/programs/watershed-on-wheels/>



Run, Squirrel, Run!



MATERIALS: None

LOCATION: A flat field

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Being squirrels is a lot of fun, but it can also be hard work! Especially if there is a great big hawk trying to eat you! In a forest, there are lots of places for squirrels to hide, but in a meadow they are right out in the open!
- For this game, the teacher (or person who is "it") will be a Hawk, while everyone else will be squirrels in a big open field. When the hawk yells "Run, squirrels, run!", all of the squirrels will run as fast as they can towards the other side of the yard.
- When the hawk yells "hawk in the sky!" everyone has to freeze. If the hawk catches anyone moving, they will swoop in and gobble them up. They will move to the side and wait for the next game to start.
- The hawk can begin a new round by yelling "run, squirrel, run!" again. Once they yell "hawk in the sky!" it's important that the squirrels that have already been caught don't help catch squirrels moving (after all they are in the hawk's belly!)
- The game will end when all (or most) of the squirrels have been caught.

Bat and Moth



MATERIALS: Blindfold

LOCATION: A flat field

INSTRUCTIONS:

- On a flat, even field, have students form a large circle.
- Explain that instead of using sight, bats primarily use echolocation, a way to "see" in the dark using sound and echoes! They use echolocation to find their food and navigate their environment. One student will be the bat. They will be blindfolded and will walk (never run!) around the inside of the circle listening for their meal: a moth.
- The moth won't be blindfolded, and will also walk (never run) in the inside of the circle avoiding being tagged by the bat. To mimic echolocation, when the bat says "bat", the moth has to respond with "moth". You can give them a limited number of times to say "bat", or time each round before giving a new pair of students a turn.
- The students forming the circle are the forest, and their job is to safely contain the bat and moth. They should stay as quiet as possible. When the bat comes close, they can whisper "tree" and put up their arms as gentle bumpers.
- The game ends when the bat tags the moth or their time's up.



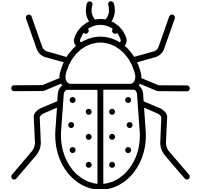
Bioblitz!

MATERIALS: Magnifying glass, note book or white board, nature guides (optional)

LOCATION: Any outdoor space (like a school yard or nearby park!)

INSTRUCTIONS:

- A bioblitz is a quick inventory of the living things you can find around you!
- Discuss what groups of living things you can look for (like insects, flowers, birds, trees etc.)
- Send the students out into the school yard or a designated space (it's good to set boundaries here) and have them look for as many living things as they can find and count them. They can make a tally or use notebooks/whiteboards to draw some things they see
- You can make groups (ex, the insect group, tree group etc.) so that student are able to keep track of their findings easier and can share back with the whole class.



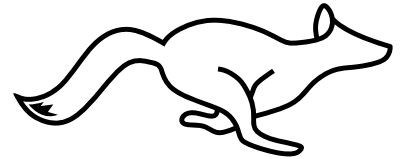
Camouflage

MATERIALS: Pylons

LOCATION: An area with ample trees and stumps for hiding spots

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Set up pylons in a circle about 2.5 metres across. This is the fox den.
- Ask students what foxes like to eat (small rodents like mice and voles). Explain that in this game, one student per round will be a fox and everyone else will be mice. The goal of the fox is to spot prey to eat, and the goal of the mice is to hide as close to the fox as possible without being seen!
- Standing in the den with their eyes closed, the fox will call "camouflage!" and count down from 20-30 seconds. The mice will run and hide, staying as close to the fox as they can. When the fox reaches zero, the mice freeze wherever they are. The fox opens their eyes and tries to spot the mice. If they see someone, they can call out the mouse's name and describe their location or clothing. The teacher confirms that they're correct, and that mouse returns from their hiding spot to an area that represents the fox's stomach. They stay there until the end of the game. The eaten mouse cannot help the fox find other mice!
- When the fox can't find any more prey, they close their eyes again and call "camouflage!". While they count down from a lower number (15-25 seconds), the mice must run back to the fox den, touch a pylon, and run back to find a new hiding place.
- When the fox hits zero, they open their eyes and repeat the above process. This time after spotting prey and calling "camouflage" they count down from a lower number (10-20 seconds).
- At the end of the third round, the mouse who is hidden closest to the fox den without being spotted is the winner! If appropriate, they can be the fox in the next round of the game.



Bird Symphony



MATERIALS: 3 hula hoops (or rope to make circles), whistle (optional)

LOCATION: Any outdoor space where students can spread out and make noise

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Each bird has their own song to find and talk to their families and friends. Each student is going to be transformed into one of 3 kinds of birds and, using their bird's special song, they will have to find their friends and families with the same call!
- For the first round, lay out three hula hoops on the ground. Explain that each of these hula hoops is the home of a different kind of bird. One belongs to the crows (caw-caw, caw-caw), one belongs to the chickadees (chicka-dee-dee-dee), and one belongs to the great horned owls (whooooo-whoo-whoo-whooooo). Practice making each of the bird sounds together.
- Once all of the students can make all of the calls, secretly assign them a bird group, and, on your call, instruct the students to walk around (mingle) while making their call. Blow the whistle and instruct them to move to their designated bird's home hula hoop while making their bird call. Is everyone in the home making the same call? Great!
- For the next rounds, explain that this time, you will not be telling them where their home is. Instead, they must find their family and form groups just by making their call and listening to each other's calls. Once they have found some members of their family, they can move to an empty hula hoop and continue calling for any last members who still might be out there.

EXTENSIONS:

- Play bird calls on an iPad or phone and get the students to pick which calls they want to do!

Leaf Traces



MATERIALS: 1 mini whiteboard/student, 1 dry erase marker/student, at least 1 fallen leaf/student

LOCATION: An area where a variety of fallen leaves can be found and where students can spread out. (Or, you can have students bring in some fall leaves to scatter evenly in the activity area).

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Ask students to form pairs. Partner 1s will find a leaf to draw or trace in one half of the activity area and Partner 2s will find a leaf to draw or trace in the other half.
- Explain to students that they'll be practicing their nature observation and art skills. With their backs turned to their partner's side, they will find a leaf, trace or draw it on their whiteboard, then return the leaf where they found it. When you give them the signal, they'll all return to the centre of the playing area where Partner 1 will give their whiteboard to Partner 2. Partner 2 will search Partner 1's activity area, looking for the leaf that matches the whiteboard tracing. When they've found it, they switch whiteboards and sides to find Partner 2's leaf.

EXTENSIONS:

- Have students identify the tree species their leaf is from using a simple ID key
- Instead of leaves, have students sketch mini nature scenes they observe in the yard for their partners to find.

