



Eco-Schools USA Schoolyard Habitats® Audit



Learning Objectives

- Investigate school grounds use.
- Record and analyze schoolyard habitat(s) data.
- Identify ways to green school space(s).
- Identify ways to increase native wildlife numbers and overall biodiversity.
- Increase use of the school grounds as a tool for interdisciplinary learning, service, and stewardship.

Curriculum Links

English, Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Geography and Citizenship

Eco-Schools USA Pathways

Please note the pathways listed below have the greatest overlapping qualities and connections to the Schoolyard Habitats pathway. If you would like to address two pathways simultaneously, please choose from those listed below.

Biodiversity, Water, Energy, Climate Change, and Healthy Living

Background

The Schoolyard Habitats Audit was developed as a tool for students to investigate the school ground's use and to be used as a basis for improving native wildlife habitat at school. Some of the questions may require the assistance of school staff, including facility managers, or require students and staff to perform additional research. A full Schoolyard Habitat How-To Guide is available at <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Schoolyard-Habitats/Create.aspx>

Schoolyard Habitats are more than just wildlife gardens or outdoor classrooms. The entire process of planning, building and maintaining a Schoolyard Habitat provides a wide range of benefits to students, teachers, the administration and the community, as well as to wildlife.

Some of the many **benefits of Schoolyard Habitats®** include:

- Increased student comprehension, performance and motivation
- Local site for interdisciplinary studies
- More opportunities and resources for creative, Project Based Learning instruction
- Reduced costs for school grounds upkeep and maintenance
- Restored habitat that gives local wildlife food, water, cover and places to raise their offspring

Procedure

1. The Eco-Action team should work together to gather the data needed to complete the audit.
2. Analyze the results and report the findings to the school community.
3. Formulate an action plan and be sure to monitor and evaluate along the way.
4. **Keep this report with your records. This information will be needed when responding to periodic Eco-Schools USA surveys, when applying for awards, and when communicating with the community and members of the media.**
5. Use this audit for both the pre- and post-assessment.

Pre-Audit

Post-Audit

Our school is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Schoolyard Habitat. If you are unsure of your school's status, please email eco-schoolsusa@nwf.org .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
What type of setting is your school located? Urban, Suburban, or Rural									
What type of green spaces make up your school property, inside and out? outdoor school gardens outdoor raised beds indoor hydroponics/aquaponics green roof(s) living walls wetlands/marsh native forests native grasslands/prairies	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____								
Does the school contain all five wildlife habitat requirements in a natural urban, suburban or rural setting – food, water, shelter, places to raise young and healthy and sustainable habitat?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
Our students know the types of wildlife that inhabit the community. If yes, please list a few below. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 50%; height: 20px;"> </td><td style="width: 50%;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>									<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Students know the birds and insects that migrate through the community? If yes, please list a few below. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 50%; height: 20px;"> </td><td style="width: 50%;"> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>									<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you raising wildlife for release into the schoolyard habitat(s)? ex. Monarch butterflies Are you raising wildlife for release into local natural areas? ex. Brook trout Please briefly explain:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
Our school provides at least one bird bath.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
Our school provides bird houses and nesting boxes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								
Our school has at least one insect house.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No								

Our school has at least one toad house. Reminder: Toads are different from frogs in that they have dry skin and prefer moist, open habitats like grasslands and fields and are great schoolyard friends as they eat harmful insects. N/A applies if your school location cannot support toad habitat.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Our school has a bat house(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
We have pollinator gardens in an effort to increase our local pollinator numbers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
We have planted four or more varieties of pollinator plants, both larval and nectar plants , to increase the pollinator biodiversity our school serves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are the habitats free from herbicides or pesticides?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the school have a working pond, stream, wetland or vernal pool system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
There are greater than ten varieties of vegetation inside and/or outside our school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What percentage of the schools vegetation is native?	_____ %
Our school has fallen logs or a log pile(s) that serve as both habitat for wildlife and for hands-on studies related to decomposition.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>List the natural tree and shrub varieties found on the school grounds and/or green roofs.</p> <p>It is important to have more than two varieties of trees/shrubs and even more important to have native trees on site to promote biodiversity.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Are the school grounds used for learning and teaching?</p> <p>If yes, please provide a brief description or bullet points.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What percentage of the student body uses the school gardens or other natural spaces on a regular basis? Regular basis is defined by the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA as 2 or more times a week.	_____ %
What is the average time a student spends in the garden or outdoor learning classroom each week?	_____ minutes

Eco-Action team members have included and worked with facilities and/or grounds keepers on maintenance watering and chemical use issues.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The school uses a sprinkler system to manage irrigation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
The school hand waters vegetation using hoses and buckets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The school utilizes a drip irrigation system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
The school uses a rain cistern and/or collection of rain barrels for garden irrigation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Pre-Audit Post-Audit

Notes and summary of analysis from data collected:

Pre-Audit

Post-Audit

Provide a map(s) of the green spaces in and around your school as it is at this time. Please include labels and a key.