



# Trading Card Activities

## Wildlife Bingo

**Objective:** Students will listen for facts about wildlife to identify a species. (Informational reading through listening)

Create a simple 3 x 3 square grid (see below) either with a photo or name of the wildlife being featured each day or you can add other species that fit the topic or you can use species from other days as well. Use a photo if the student cannot yet read and use the name if students are reading as a way to introduce a new word. Create a master bingo sheet which organizes the wildlife into different categories – by where the species lives, or what the species eats, or how large it is in comparison to objects they know, or other facts about the wildlife. Call out the facts to the students and have them add a bingo chip, colored dot or any marker on the picture or name they think is the animal that you are describing. The student who correctly guesses all three wildlife in a row wins that round. The key to this activity is to vary the clues by category so students think about wildlife from multiple perspectives.

American beaver	wood duck	stick insects
Indiana bat	FREE	black bear
fence lizard	millipedes	squirrel tree frog

**National Wildlife Week** features 45 different species that you can highlight as part of lessons or activities with your students.

Each day we feature 9 different species on each set of trading cards that include:

- Photo of the Species
- Species Name (including common and scientific name)
- Description
- U.S. Habitat and Range
- Fun Fact
- Conservation Status

This information can be used in multiple ways— as a launching point for lessons or as self-contained activities. The suggested activities are just a few of the ways you might consider using the cards. The activities may be useful for a variety of subjects including gym, art or music.

## Twenty Questions

Students will use informational reading skills to determine what species is on the trading card their neighbor is holding based on the clues provided. Using the trading cards for the day or in combination with other days' cards, divide the students into small groups of two, three or four (depending on the size of group). Provide each student with a trading card and have the students read their cards independently. Remind the students not to show the rest of the group their cards. Each student may want to turn his/her back to the group while reading and looking at the cards. Pick one student in each group to go first. Have the remaining students in the group ask the student yes and no questions about the species. Questions can include: *Does your wildlife live in the forest? Does your wildlife eat plants? Does your wildlife fly? Does your wildlife live alone most of the time? Does your wildlife have fur?*



Have students take turn asking questions. Once the wildlife species has been guessed, have another student in the group be next to have their species guessed. Continue until all students have been able to participate as the wildlife being guessed or until the wildlife have all been guessed.

## Why Do They Do That?

**Objective:** Students will select a trading card and conduct research about the species and create either a picture or story (both) about their species for the group.

Have students select a species they would like to learn more about. The trading card provides starter information about species but not all the information about the species. Students can conduct research in the library or internet to learn additional facts about the wildlife. Research could be done as homework or as quick information gathering over 10-15 minutes of a class period. After researching and writing down facts about the wildlife, have the students either write a few paragraphs about their wildlife or have them do a drawing about the facts they learned. Have the students share verbally what they wrote or describe their drawings. At the end of the exercise, you can then direct the student to investigate more on a specific topic or make comparisons with other wildlife. If there is a common theme, see if the students can guess the common theme about their wildlife. Themes could include: All the wildlife swim, Wildlife that have live babies, Wildlife that live their whole lives on land, Wildlife that are urban dwellers, etc.)

## Who Are the Wildlife in My Neighborhood?

**Objective:** Students will conduct an investigation to locate wildlife in their neighborhoods.

Using the different trading cards, students can either create or participate in a scavenger hunt for wildlife and/or the habitat elements wildlife need to live. Some of the trading cards feature wildlife that can be found in your backyard. You can get additional names of wildlife in your state using National Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Watch program at [www.nwf.org/wildlifewatch](http://www.nwf.org/wildlifewatch).

**For older students:** Have the students create a list of wildlife that they can find in their backyard either by the name of species or with a picture. The list of wildlife could also include the habitat elements that wildlife need to survive, such as the names of plants the wildlife need to eat or other animals that the wildlife eat, places where the wildlife live (trees, meadow, etc), and water sources that wildlife need to use. Have the students work together to create a list of 20-30 different wildlife or habitat items. Have the students work together to design the list so that a younger class or their siblings can use the list to go on a hike to find the items they listed. The students then can either provide the list to a younger grade or they can be teacher assistants and lead the younger students on a hike to find the items. To design and execute an activity is a great activity to build leadership for older students. Have the students write a blog and/or take pictures of the students doing the scavenger hunt. Create a wall mural or newsletter about the activity to send home or share with the rest of the school or community.

**For younger students:** Create a scavenger hunt for students using the wildlife in the trading cards that can be found in your area. Supplement your list with a listing of species in your state from National Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Watch at [www.nwf.org/wildlifewatch](http://www.nwf.org/wildlifewatch). The hunt list can either be a picture list of what to find or it can be word list (or combination) depending on the age of students. Take the students outside during a class period or during recess over the course of a week to try to locate the species. They can work together in small groups. When they find an item on the list they can either check it off, take a picture (if you have cameras available) or write down where they were when they found it.

## Reporters for Wildlife

**Objective:** Students will conduct a research project and create an action plan for ways people can help a wildlife species to survive.

Using the trading cards, have the students identify one to three species they would like to investigate. Students will conduct research about the wildlife to learn more about the wildlife, their status, what scientific studies or citizen science research is being done on the wildlife, what threats may be facing the wildlife, and what role the wildlife plays in their community or in another community and why the species may need assistance. (Who, what, where, when and why). Not all species are endangered or threatened, but many species, even if abundant, play an important role in their ecosystem, for instance, as prey for another species. Some wildlife are impacted by factors such as a loss of habitat, lack of water, climate change, etc).

After completing the research, have the students create an action plan for how they would assist the wildlife, addressing what could be done not just what is already being done. The action plans could include advocacy ideas – do policies need to change, townhall meetings need to be held, local laws changed, informational meetings conducted or recommendations made for habitat restoration, such as creating a greenway for the wildlife or planting more trees or creating a wildlife habitat garden or even conserving resources (reduce, reuse and recycle). Encourage the students to think outside the box. After creating the action plan, have the students share with each other and, if appropriate, select one or two ideas that could be executed, perhaps as a community service project.

After the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico many students heard about the plight of the wildlife in the Gulf and wanted to do something. Students held fundraisers, assisted at their local wildlife rehab centers, created wildlife habitat for migratory species, and many other activities. These activities allows students to get involved and to think about how they can make a difference.

## Wildlife Matching

**Objective:** Students will learn that wildlife can be categorized and matched by many different traits.

Wildlife matching can be done either as a typical matching game where there are two of each of the trading cards provided to the students and then they take turns locating flipping over a card and trying to find its match. You can use all the cards or just one day's poster's cards.

### Variations:

- 1) Mammal Mingle:
  - Students pick a trading card at random and then research what it eats, what eats it if anything, how it is or has been important to people (for providing food, clothing, transportation, for research, as a carrier of disease, as a pet, etc.), how it has influenced people (in art, music, literature, etc.), special behaviors or characteristics, family life, habitat, and conservation status.
  - Have each student write up or print out their research notes on a sheet of paper, leaving room at the top to glue on the trading card. Then punch holes in the top corners of the research notes sheet and use a string to make a lanyard so each student can wear the research notes around his/her neck.
  - Have the students mingle with each other, learning about each others' wildlife, until each student can identify one or more species with which his/her wildlife has something in common. You can do several rounds of this until the students find several things their wildlife has in common with others. Students should take notes about the wildlife that share something in common with their species.
- 2) Matching games can also be done based on categorization. Students can mix and match wildlife based on different themes that you call out. Themes might include:
  - where wildlife live
  - what the wildlife eat
  - the color of the wildlife
  - predator or prey

- migratory or non-migratory
- size (smallest to largest)
- many more!

## Can You Catch Me?

**Objective:** Students will learn about predators and prey (food web).

This activity is based on the game cat and mouse, in which the students take the role of either be prey or predator. The game is an active game physically—it gets students up and moving. It is also a game that can change quickly based on what wildlife are being acted out, meaning at one moment a student is the chaser and the next being chased.

Using the trading cards, identify which wildlife are prey and predator. You may need to add in a few other species if the prey or predator for a species is not represented. Have the students stand in a circle and hold hands (or for older students provide them with a towel or ruler to hold between students), give each student an animal (bighorn sheep, toad, spider, etc.). Then call out two animals (one prey species and its predator). The animal that is prey will try to escape the predator by being staying inside the circle (being sheltered) and the predator will be outside the circle trying to get to the prey (by reaching in). The other students are providing a barrier to prevent the predator from reaching the prey. When you call out “Food Breakout!” the students providing the circle of shelter let go of each others’ hands, so the student playing the predator is able to enter the circle. The student playing the prey will no longer be “safe” inside the circle (remember all prey in the natural world also need to eat and becomes vulnerable when they leave shelter to do so). The predator can now chase the prey. You can alternate between calling “Food Breakout!” and “Shelter!.” “Shelter!” indicates that students should re-hold hands, trapping either predator or prey inside the circle. You can also say “Hide,” which means that the students in the circle can choose to either hold tight the circle or break the circle at times by raising and lowering their arms (again – wildlife may hide but it does not always keep them safe). The round ends when the predator touches the prey. Then you can switch students. Pre or post discussion for the game can include: Where would specific wildlife shelter or hide from a predator? Remember that humans are also predators – top of the food chain for some of the larger species who you might not think have a predator. Many species can also have multiple predators – so you may wish to have more than one student being prey for multiple predators.

## Wildlife Journey

**Objective:** Students will learn about perils that wildlife face in the struggle to survive.

Using the trading cards (Habitat and Range) students can investigate where wildlife live and how far they may travel. Wildlife travel to find food, to find mates, to find shelter and to escape winter’s cold. Even the smallest wildlife on the cards will journey for food (ants, fireflies, toads, etc.). This game allows students to learn about what wildlife might encounter as they work their way through an obstacle course.

**Before the game:** Have the students (or you) research the perils wildlife may encounter in their journeys. Ants may encounter rainstorms, chemicals spread on lawns and gardens, and birds. Whales may encounter other whales, changing weather and tides, tourist and fishing boats, or underwater volcanic eruptions. Map out where and how far various wildlife travel. What is their habitat and range? Have the students use objects to represent the barriers that a species may encounter to create an obstacle course for the students to run as one or more of the species. Remember the distance that wildlife have to travel should also be represented (an opportunity to use math and talk about scale). Have the students take turns trying to run each others’ obstacle courses to try to make it to the end.

**During the game:** Remember that some obstacles come up and change quickly (such as when a stream floods), so adding obstacles during the course can be important too.



## Where In the U.S. Am I?

**Objective:** Students will explore what was in a location a long time ago vs. now.

Tracing family history is a great way for students to learn about what life was like before them. Use the trading cards to identify what the landscape and habitat range for wildlife may have been a long time ago (before European settlement) versus what it is now. Many species have historic ranges that are very different from the modern ranges where they exist today. The bison was once found through much of the United States, but wild bison are now confined to a few small protected areas. You can give students an idea of how far bison once ranged by looking at the number of towns and cities on the U.S. map that are named “buffalo” (a popular synonym for “bison”).

Have the students identify one of the wildlife species on a trading card that they would like to learn more about. Students will use the card as a starting point and then conduct additional research online or at the library to find the historic and current range of the species. Each student will create two maps using overhead sheets, transparency paper or computer software to compare the landscape of the historic and the current range of the species. Students should add in features such as the topography of the landscape (using NASA imagery or topographical maps), cities, towns, railroads, roads, other man-made features that have changed over time, and natural features such as lakes, streams, rivers, parks, etc. The two maps should be designed to represent a large enough area for comparison that when laid over top of each other the changes are clearly visible.

Discussion for this activity can include topics such as human influences on the landscape, historical changes, changes due to natural processes such as floods, volcanoes and storms, etc. It is a good opportunity for students to visually see how changes in 1000, 100 or even 10 years can impact wildlife. Not all changes are bad. For instance, many cities have made a commitment to adding more parks or more greenspaces to help wildlife survive.

## Natural Chorus

**Objective:** Students will use their listening skills to capture the sounds of the natural world around them.

The sounds of nature are at times not always heard above the noise of our own lives – listening to music, sounds of traffic, or our own voices – so we often overlook the sounds of nature that surround us. But many adults use the sound of nature (such as waves crashing on the shore) as a sleep aid. Through this activity students will take time to listen to the sounds of nature around them and then create a symphony of nature.

**Pre-activity:** Have the students write a list of all the sounds of nature they can identify in one day and what wildlife or element of the natural world (such as a stream or the wind) they think is making the sound. Students should listen in the early morning, mid-day and evening at a minimum. The pre-activity is a warm up for slowing the students down and getting them to use their listening skills to take in the world around them.

**Activity:** Using the trading cards, pick a few species and have the students think about what sound that particular wildlife may make or if they think the wildlife does not make sound. The internet is full of resources for identifying wildlife by their calls, such as bird calls from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's database of bird calls (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1059>) or many other species (<http://macaulaylibrary.org/>). Have the students find their wildlife online and listen for their calls. You can even download the sounds and create your own listening session to see if students can correctly identify the wildlife by playing their call only using the trading cards as flash cards to hold up.

Once the students feel comfortable with identifying wildlife by their call, they will collect sounds of wildlife in their neighborhood by using a digital recording device – a cell phone with a recording option, a video recorder, a tape recorder or other recording device – even a computer has a microphone. Students will collect sounds for a couple of days in the morning, around lunch and in the evening. Have the students bring their recordings in and then have a group of students work together to create a mix of all the



compiled wildlife sounds from the recordings. You can use a program such as DJ Mixer or even iTunes. It also might be fun to have a local DJ come in and demonstrate this activity to the students.

After they have created their song, have the students create images or a PowerPoint to accompany their music. This can be played at an assembly or parents' night or even to a younger school grade. This is a great project to do as a whole school to highlight how nature influences music.

### **Add on activities:**

Wildlife calling contest: Host a wildlife calling contest for students. Have the students try to make the calls of wildlife or have a local sportsman's club that may have different duck, turkey or other wildlife calls come in and demonstrate. You can even have the students view some online wildlife calling contests as well. Here are a few:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fMk5ODsQ84>
- <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=1177586253076>
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr\\_XNnVfDU8&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr_XNnVfDU8&feature=related)

Songs of Wildlife – Chorus and Band: Working with the music teachers, students can create a concert for their school featuring songs about wildlife. There are thousands of songs about wildlife or nature (fun camp sounds, operas, symphonies, and inspirational). As part of the concert, real wildlife sounds could be incorporated with a video about wildlife.

## **Wildlife Mobiles**

Have each student select a wildlife trading card. Provide art supplies and explain that each person will be making a mobile that focuses on some aspect of his or her species. The trading card can be at the center of the mobile. Here are some suggestions for themes:

- People's attitudes toward the species
- A food chain that the species is a part of
- The species and its relatives
- Aspects of the community or ecosystem the species belongs to (habitat type, predator/prey, map of its range, etc.)
- How the species interacts with, or is utilized by, people