



Junior – Animal Habitats

Let's work on the Animal Habitats badge together! Start your adventure by watching this [video](#) and use this guide to complete the requirements.

Material List:

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Jell-O
- Small jars with lids (at least 3 jars are recommended)
- Poster board/paper
- Markers/crayons

Step 1: Find out about wild animals

A lot of people have animals in their homes as pets, most of these animals are domesticated or tame animals (comfortable with humans). However, these animals often have a relative that lives in the wild, for example your pet dog is a cousin to the wolf. The process of domestication can often take thousands of years.

Scientists will observe, or watch, animals to learn more about them. In this activity you will need to observe two similar animals for at least 15 minutes each. As you make your observations be sure to take notes. After you have observed both animals, what were some similarities? How about differences?

Ideally it is recommended that you watch one domestic animal and one wild one. Below are some links to live cams at zoos and aquariums, but also consider including your pets or the animals who may live outside your window.

- [Indianapolis Zoo](#)
- [Houston Zoo](#)
- [San Diego Zoo](#)
- [The Georgia Aquarium](#)
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)

Step 2: Investigate an animal habitat

A quick definition of habitat is an animal's home, but a habitat is a little more than just a place for an animal to live. There are actually four different things an animal needs from its surroundings to be able to survive; food, water, shelter, and a place to raise their young. Take some time to explore the outside world around you. See if you can find some animals sharing your neighborhood. Are they domestic or wild animals? Can you find possible sources of food, water, and shelter for them? What features do they have in common, what are their differences?



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Step 3: Create an animal house

Take a closer look inside a couple of bald eagles' nests.

- [Southwest Florida Eagle Cam](#)
- [Decorah Eagle Live Cam](#)

Do you notice how the eagles use things like grasses and feathers in their nests? These act as insulators to help keep their homes warm. Many animals use insulation to help regulate the temperature of their home. They find items from their surroundings that can help keep their home cool in hot weather and warm when it's cold. [Try this experiment](#) to see what household items you can use to create an insulated nest.

Step 4: Explore endangered habitats

When animals lose their habitat, they must adapt to new places to live. However, sometimes animals can't change and end up becoming endangered. Some animal habitats are at risk of disappearing, and so are the animals calling that place home. Take a closer look at one of these endangered habitats.

- The Arctic Circle
- The Gulf of Mexico
- The Amazon Rainforest

Why is it in danger? What is happening to the animals? What are people doing to help the habitat? Are the animals able to adapt?

Step 5: Help protect animal habitats

In this step, share what you have learned about animal habitats and why it is important to protect them.

Consider making a sign/poster that you can post in a window for others to see, inspiring them to take steps to help protect animal habitats. Make sure to get permission before hanging your poster.

Or, if you want to take it one step further, consider building your own backyard habitat for local wildlife. Make sure to have permission before building your habitat.

For a chance to enter the weekly drawing for a camp shirt complete this [survey](#).