

IN THE SHOES OF A BAT

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY PROJECT SHEET



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ACTIVITY DETAILS

PROJECT TITLE

In the shoes of...

A journey around the world to discover the most fascinating and the most feared animals by man

PROJECT DURATION

There are 7 Educational activities under the project "In the shoes of" that have a duration of approximately 50 minutes. Each of them is dedicated to a different animal. We have the Bear, the Tiger, the Shark, the Snake, the Elephant, the Wolf and the Bat.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The activity is structured in two different moments. At first, we discover what the kids know/think about the selected animal through the children's words. With the help of a microphone and a tape recorder, the children put themselves in the shoes of a journalist. They carry out a simple interview asking simple questions to their mates. It is the starting point for them to learn some curiosities about the species explained by the educators (conservationists, biologists, and zoologists). The second part of the activity involves greater dynamism and creativity. On the topic discussed, fun games and experiments are proposed to involve children and facilitators.

PEOPLE INVOLVED

- School teacher or school facilitator (operator), if the activity is carried out at school.
- Educator: Expert in conservation, zoology and biology of large predators.
- Students: Age 6+



ACTIVITY TABLE

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| TOPIC | Coexisting with bats |
| TARGET | Primary school, middle school and families |
| DURATION | Approximately 1 hour |
| OBJECTIVE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve knowledge about the biology, ecology, threats and coexistence with bats• Dismiss false beliefs about bats <p>Learn the advantages of coexisting with bats</p> |
| MATERIALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microphone• Recorder• Pictures to support each section• Plastic animals toys: a set of realistic-looking insects for kids• Pictures of prey and food• Drawing of a typical bat habitat• Pencils (one for each kid)• Bat box• A piece of fabric for the blindfold |



ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

STEP 1

YOUNG JOURNALISTS IN NATURAL SCIENCE

Children become journalists and question each other about bats. You will need a recorder, a handmade microphone and a clipboard with the questions you want to ask. Children will be thrilled to hear themselves and their peers as reporters and interviewees. You can choose the questions according to what you want them to Remember. Since beliefs can be hard to change, even if they are scientifically wrong, in this case, we suggest focusing on false belief and old myths. Questions related to misconceptions will offer the opportunity to clarify what truly goes on in the bat cave. Here are some questions you can use:

- Tell me the first three words that come to your mind when I say 'bat'
- Why do you think some people are afraid of bats?
- Do bats fly into your hair and build a nest?
- Do you think bats are flying rats?
- Do you think bats are annoying pests?
- Do you think bats want to drink your blood?
- Do you know how they hung upside down without falling?

Useful tips:

- You may want to handmade a journalist badge with the name of each child
- Remember that everyone would want to play the journalist role, so make sure to have enough questions
- To support this activity you can use pictures or a PowerPoint presentation to explain in depth each of the statements



STEP 2

LET'S PLAY WITH INSECTS HUNTED BY BATS

This activity aims to learn about the bat's diet. For this, we recommend you to have a polybag of insect figurines (e.g. praying mantis, monarch butterfly, rhinoceros beetle, housefly, great horned beetle, grasshopper, bedbug, cockroach and a common ant) in the representation of insects that are and are not prey. The kids are asked to extract the plastic insect toys from a bag and to distinguish those that are bat's prey from those that are not. The facilitator will then discuss the results and provide further explanation accordingly. Here are some examples:

- Bat's prey: fly, spider, dragonfly, praying mantis, grasshopper, mosquito
- Not bat's prey: Cicada (it is mainly diurnal while the bat is mainly nocturnal); ladybug (the red colour makes it look toxic) and scorpion (it is poisonous).

Useful tips:

- Alternatively, to the plastic insects, you can use printed images of insect.
- Remember, children like to see and touch things, so everything will work better if you have this kind of materials with you. They will also appreciate other physical support such as animal's skulls, a bat box or a bat detector. Pictures are also good.



STEP 3

FIND THE BAT SHELTER

Each kid will be provided with a drawing depicting the typical habitat of the bat (e.g. a picture of a rural landscape with a house, trees, a well, a woodshed). The children will work individually on the picture, they will draw an “x” over the possible places where a bat could find shelter (e.g. under the roof, close to the shutter, on the tree). All the possible places will be discussed with the educator.

Useful tips:

This activity will show the opportunity offered by coexisting with bats (they are mosquito eaters) and their ecological role. A bat box can help when explaining while bats can be supportive neighbours.

STEP 4

LET'S PLAY THE BAT AND PREY GAME

The goal of this activity is to understand how bats use their hearing to move around. The sounds that bats emit bounce off the surfaces and come back to them: This way, they can move in the dark, find food and communicate with their peers. Children standing in a circle will be like trees in the woods to delimit the playing field. Two children in turn will be in the centre of the circle playing the role of the bat and its prey. The bat/kid will be blindfolded and will have to emit a sound to which the prey/kid will have to respond as if it were the returning sound wave. At this point, the bat/kid will have to try to touch the prey/kid only by relying on his hearing and the direction from which the sound is coming.

Useful tips:

The game offers the opportunity to talk about how we can hear the sounds emitted by the bat and to explain how a bat detector works.

