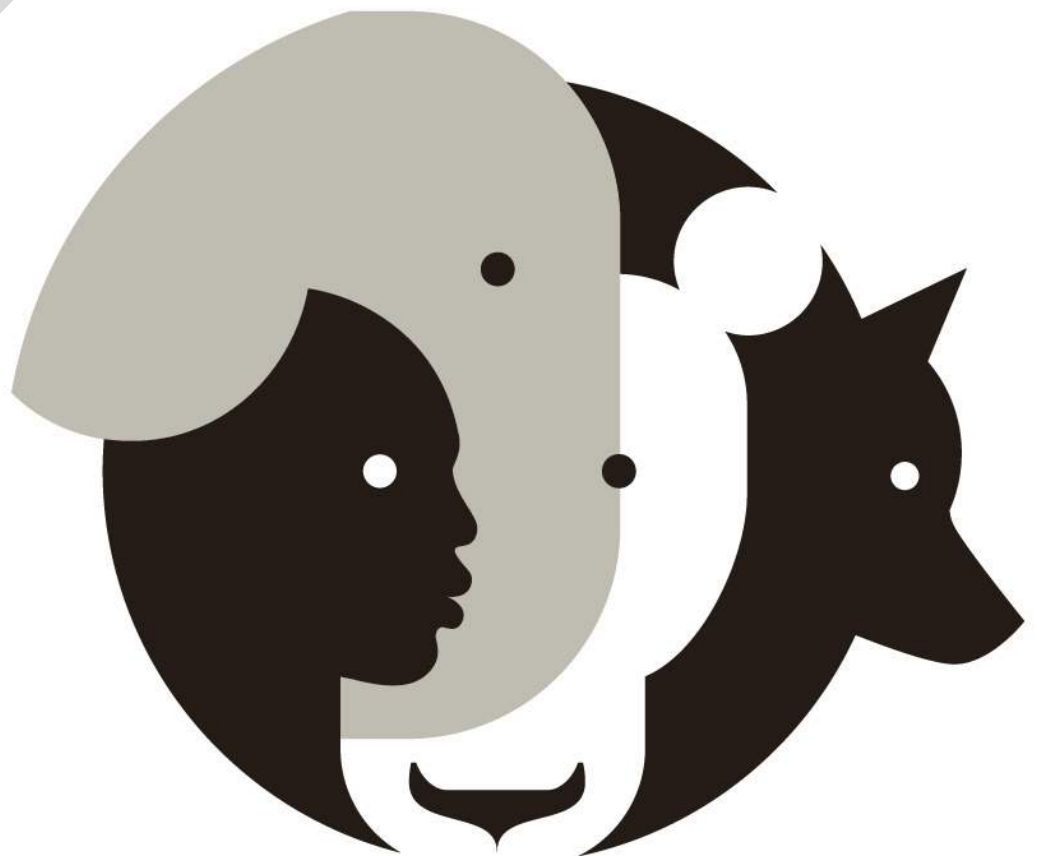


IN THE SHOES OF A BEAR

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY PROJECT SHEET



coexistence.life



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

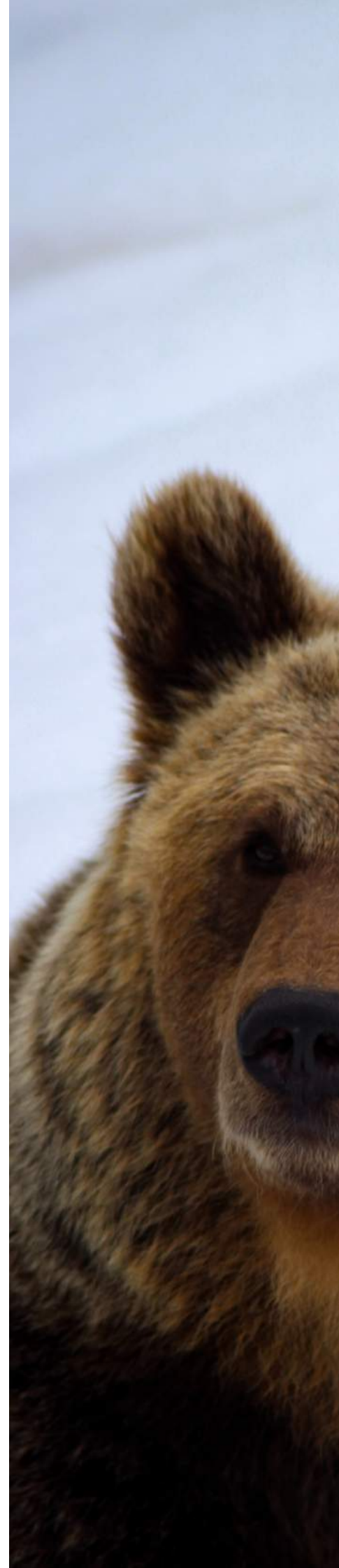
There are 7 Educational activities under the project "In the shoes of" that have a duration of approximately 50 minutes. Each of them is dedicated to a different animal. We have the Bear, the Tiger, the Shark, the Snake, the Elephant, the Wolf and the Bat.

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

TOPIC	Coexisting with bears
TARGET	Primary school, middle school and families
DURATION	Approximately 2 hours
OBJECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve knowledge about bears (biology, ecology, threats, coexistence,.etc.)• Understand the natural interactions between bears and other living organisms• Learn the importance of ecosystems• Familiarise children with bear behaviour• Learn how to behave in case of a bear encounter
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recorder• Microphone (it can even be fake)• Clipboard• Hand-made journalist badge• Images of bears, animals and plants with a clothespin• Ball of wool• Bear costume or a bear mask• Voting paddles (smiling, neutral and sad)



ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

STEP 1

YOUNG JOURNALISTS IN NATURAL SCIENCE

Children become journalists and question each other about bears. You will need a recorder, a microphone (handmade) and a clipboard with the questions you want to ask. Children will be thrilled to hear themselves and their peers as reporters and interviewees. Here are some questions you can use:

- Tell me the first three words that come to your mind when I say "bear".
- What does the bear eat, in your opinion?
- Why do you think people fear bears?
- Do you think feeding wild animals like bears is good?

You can choose the questions according to what you want them to remember. If you want to talk about diet, behaviour or prevention, your questions will be related to these topics.

Useful tips:

- Remember, children like to see and touch things, so everything will work better if you have materials with you, such as animal's scat, skulls or food (berries, nuts, ants, etc.). Pictures are good too
- 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 that you have enough questions for everyone



STEP 2

BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM

With this activity we want to teach the following concepts:

- What is an ecosystem?
- What is a trophic chain?
- What is an eco-chain?

Our goal is to underline the importance of every single species. We want kids to understand that every organism is connected to the other. How do we do it? Turning kids into an eco and trophic chain!

The children will stand in a circle; an educator will remain in the centre. Each child will be provided with a clothespin with the image of an animal or a plant. The educator in the centre will represent the bear. Each child will represent the animal/plant attached to his shirt with the cloth spin. A wool wire will be used to connect the children/animals/plants to each other and to the bear. There will be one or more reasons for the connection (e.g. pray/predator, coexistence in the same habitat). In the end, the children and the educator will be all tied together.

Of course, the list of the organisms depends on the geographic area you are at, here some examples we used for the Alps ecosystem.

- Roe deer (connected with bears because they feed on their carcass,...)
- Ants (connected with bears because they feed on them)
- Spruce (connected for example to the ants for the anthill in the case of *Formica rufa*)
- Beech (connected to roe deer and bear because they feed on beechnuts but also because they lay down on its comfortable leaves)



- Rosa canina (connected to bears because they feed on its berries)
- Bees (connected to bears because they feed on their larvae but also connected to Rosa canina because bees are pollinators)
- Squirrels (connected to Spruce and Beech because they nest on them)

Useful tips:

- Make sure everyone has a role to play during the activity
- You can also show what happens when a chain link is lost. You can cut all the links connected and see that how the ecosystem loses its balance. (For example: what happens if all the bees die? You can eliminate the “bee kid” and see what happens to all the others).
- Don't worry if it turns out as a mess... it's a game!

STEP 3

HOW TO BEHAVE WHEN ENCOUNTERING A BEAR

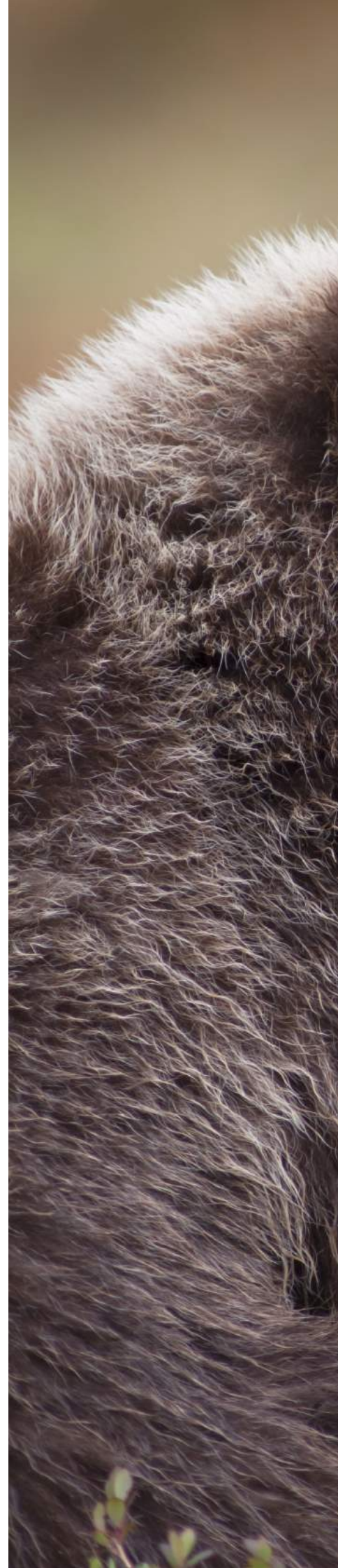
A school member will have to play the role of the bear. For this, the school member will have to wear something that identifies as the bear. This can be a mask, a costume or a badge. The facilitator will then read different situations that can occur when humans come into contact with bears. Then, the bear will have to act according to the instructions of the facilitator and the children will have to react in the way they think is right (based on their instinct and/or knowledge). After each action-reaction, the rest of the class will vote (using voting paddles) whether they think that is the correct reaction/behaviour to have when encountering a bear.

The paddles can have smiley or sad faces, thumbs up or down, or similar. After voting, the correct reaction to have when encountering bears will be performed by the facilitator and explained allowing time for children to recreate the right behaviour.



Here are seven possible situations and solutions:

1. The bear is there, but who knows where. The child is wandering through the woods and does not want to meet the bear. (Solution: make noise if you are alone, chat, sing or clap your hands. Remember the bear do not want to meet you)
2. The bear and the child are far away, the bear does not notice the child. (Solution: make sure not to get close to the bear area, keep calm and if you are really far away, enjoy the moment!)
3. The bear sees the child but walks away. (Keep calm, don't run, don't scream, just make sure you and the bear are not going in the same direction)
4. The bear sees the child and stands upon his paws (Keep calm, don't run, don't scream. The bear is studying you and it's trying to understand and see better what's going on. Walk away slowly and the bear will go away)
5. The bear sees the child and stands still. (Keep calm, don't run, don't scream and do not make fast moves. The bear needs to know that you are not a threat. Walk away slowly)
6. The bear sees the child and approaches walking or running. (Keep calm, don't run, don't scream and do not make fast moves. The bear needs to know that you are not a threat. Walk away slowly)
7. The bear attacks the child. (Lay down, cover your head and neck with your backpack and protect your belly)



STEP 4

WALK LIKE A BEAR AND SAY GOODBYE

Children are taught to imitate the bear steps. Once they learn it, children can walk away from the space the activity took place walking like a bear. This is a fun way to wrap up the activity and say goodbye to each other.

