

Habitat Inquiry

OCEP - 2012

1. Select a nearby outdoor site for your study. You may choose the schoolyard or natural habitats adjacent to the school. Ideally, this will be a place that students can visit repeatedly for other outdoor classroom studies.
2. Visit the site and gather information:
 - a. Note whether an area within a site is natural, disturbed, restored, or something else. Allow students to create and agree upon a common 'rule' for determining these definitions, either before the site visit or between multiple visits.
 - b. Note the major plant and animal species found.
 - c. Draw a map of the area. Include a title, North arrow, scale, and key. Show various habitat types that can be found at the site.
3. Focus on one of the native species found in the outdoor site.
 - a. Research the habitat requirements for the species.
 - b. Report findings to peers.
4. Inquiry: In which areas of the site do you expect to find the most of your targeted animal species? The least?
 - a. Make a prediction.
 - i. Example #1: Ladybugs are more likely to be found in the grassy field than on the asphalt parking lot or the bark chipped playground.
 - ii. Example #2: More moss will be found on level ground than on inclined ground.
 - b. Test the hypothesis by surveying the areas and counting numbers of individuals. Isolate confounding variables.
 - c. Analyze and graph data.
 - d. Make a conclusion:
 - i. Did the data support the hypothesis? Why or why not?
 - ii. What new questions do you have about the species?