

# Urban Wildlife Safari



## Summary

First, youth play a memory game using a special deck of cards to match a wild animal with its description. Then they go on a wild animal safari around their program site and discover features of the animals that help them meet their needs.

## Learning Objectives

Youth will:

- Learn that wild animals also live in the city.
- Describe ways that animals in the greenbelt and at the program site meet their survival needs.

## Materials

### For the group

- Hand lenses
- Prizes, such as nature stickers or small treats (optional)

### For each group of two to four participants

- 1 set of *Urban Wildlife Memory Game* cards
- Resealable sandwich bag

### For each participant

- Copy of *Things you can do for wildlife* handout

## Correlation to California Content Standards

### Science

- Life Science: All organisms need energy and matter to live and grow. (Grade 4)
- Life Science: Living organisms depend on one another and on their environment for survival. (Grade 4)
- Life Science: Plants and animals have structures for respiration, digestion, waste disposal, and transport of materials. (Grade 5)
- Ecology (Life Science): Organisms in ecosystems exchange energy and nutrients among themselves and with the environment. (Grade 6)



## Background Information

Living in the city among buildings, roads, and other human constructs, it is easy to forget that we are surrounded by nature. The greenbelt is not just “out there” beyond the city boundaries. There are elements of the greenbelt right here where we live, work, and play. If you pause to take a look, you might see gulls circling overhead, a squirrel scampering across a power line, or ants scurrying along a crack in the sidewalk.

A city neighborhood can be a great place to learn about nature. By observing the habits and life cycles of the creatures that share our habitat, we can also begin to understand the nature that lives beyond our neighborhoods.

This activity focuses on the wildlife that the youth might find at their school or program site. The term wildlife includes any non-domesticated animal living in a natural state. Wildlife may be insects, spiders, birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, or amphibians.



A mourning dove perches on a backyard fence. Photo ©2004 Tom Greer.

## Preparation

**Step One:** Copy and cut apart the cards on pages 22-23. Place each set, containing picture cards and clue cards, in a sandwich bag and seal.

**Step Two:** Scout out the program site for good places to find wildlife. The most likely places will be in and around plants and soil. A tree or shrub may have insects and spiders among the leaves or around the base; sidewalk cracks may be busy with ants; and a loose brick may have pill bugs crawling underneath.

## Procedure

**Step One:** Introduce the activity by asking the youth whether they have been to the greenbelt, and asking them to think about the wildlife they saw there:

? **Did you see any wildlife in the greenbelt? What did you see?**

? **What is wildlife?**

(Wildlife is any undomesticated animal living in a natural state, not in captivity. Wildlife generally can fend for itself, getting its own food, water, and shelter; escaped domesticated animals are not considered wildlife.)

? **What are some examples of wildlife?** (Wildlife can include insects, spiders, amphibians, mammals, birds, reptiles, and others. Keep asking until the youth give a range of examples.)

? **What wildlife have you seen living in the city?**

**Step Two:** Show the students how to play the *Wildlife in the City Memory Game* (see page 23). Give each small group a set of cards for playing the game.

**Step Three:** If a group finishes before the others, have them try to sort the clue cards, putting together those that are alike in some way. For example, some of the cards show ways that the animals protect themselves, while others describe how they get food.

**Step Four:** When most of the groups are done, have the remaining groups finish up by turning any unmatched cards face up and matching them.

**Step Five:** Tell the youth that they will be going on a wildlife safari around the site. They will work in pairs to find as many different animals as they can. Point out that:

- They should be quiet and walk slowly so as not to startle the wildlife.
- The wildlife is not to be touched, disturbed, or harmed in any way.
- They will try to find as much wildlife as they can.
- They will be looking for ways the animals get their needs met in the city.
- Everyone who finds at least one animal will get a prize (optional).

**Step Six:** When they find an animal, they may use the hand lenses to get a closer look. Help them examine the animal more carefully by asking:

? **What can you see about this animal that helps it protect itself?**

? **What can you see that helps it get the food and water it needs?**

? **How does this animal move around? How does moving help it survive in the city?**

? **What else about this animal helps it survive in the city?**

**Step Seven:** If it seems they are having trouble finding animals, gather the youth together and ask them for ideas of good places to look, such as under rocks, among the leaves of a tree or bush, or in sidewalk cracks. Point out that these places give protection from sun and predators, and that they provide the food and water that these animals need. Give them time to keep looking.

**Step Eight:** Have the youth share with the group what they found. With the whole group, go around and look at the more interesting animals, asking the above questions. Hand out the prizes.

## Wrap-up Questions

? **What is something good about wildlife in the city?**

(For example, it can be beautiful to watch, make soothing sounds, and help us learn about nature.)

? **How is city wildlife different from greenbelt wildlife? How is it the same?**

(Think about how animals meet their needs for food, water, and shelter.)

? **If you were a wild animal, do you think you would prefer to live in the city or in the greenbelt? Why?**

? **What can you do to help wildlife?**

Distribute the *Things you can do for wildlife* handout.



*Squirrels are lively residents of Bay Area urban parks. Photo by Sherry Ballard © California Academy of Sciences.*



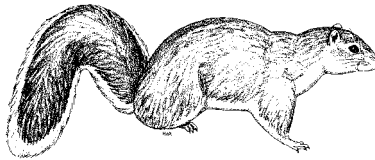
*Insects are common Bay Area garden visitors. This damselfly can be distinguished from a dragonfly by its ability to fold its wings when at rest. Photo ©2000 Nick Kurzenko.*

# Urban Wildlife Memory Game

(copy and cut cards apart)



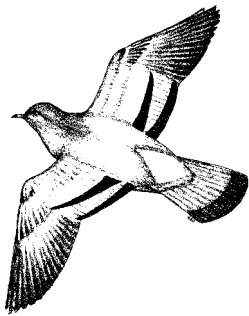
**Raccoon<sup>†</sup>**



**Squirrel<sup>\*</sup>**



**Opossum<sup>Δ</sup>**



**Rock Dove (Pigeon)<sup>\*</sup>**



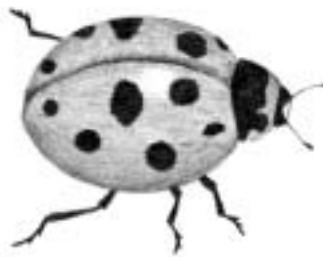
**House Fly<sup>†</sup>**



**Pill Bug (Roly-poly)<sup>†</sup>**



**House Spider<sup>†</sup>**



**Ladybug<sup>†</sup>**



**Snail<sup>†</sup>**



**Honey Bee<sup>†</sup>**

This animal is usually active at night and its black “mask” helps it hide.

This animal is active during the day and “squirrels away” food for winter.

# Urban Wildlife Memory Game

(copy and cut cards apart)

This animal looks like a large rat. It carries its young in a pouch and can “play dead” to protect itself from enemies.

This animal gets its name because it often flies in the house. It sponges up food with its mouthparts.

This animal makes webs to catch prey for food.

This animal has a hard shell and glides on its long, slimy “foot.”

This “cooing” bird eats seeds and grains. It uses bridges and balconies for its nests.

This animal has seven pairs of legs and a hard armor. It can roll up into a ball to protect its soft underside.

This animal eats insects that munch on plants. We call it a “lady,” but it can be male or female.

This small animal lives in a hive and eats nectar and pollen.

## Game Rules

**Players:** Two to four people may play at a time.

**Object:** The object of the game is to get as many pairs as possible.

**Making a Pair:** A pair is the clue card and the picture card of the same animal. Each clue tells about a way the animal meets its survival needs.

**How to Play:** Shuffle the cards and deal them all face down in four rows. The player to the left of the dealer goes first. The player turns over two cards, leaving them in place. If a clue is turned up, the player reads the clue out loud. If the cards match, the player removes the two cards and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, the player turns the cards back over as they were originally, ending the turn. Play continues in the same manner. The next player turns over two cards and, depending on whether they match, takes the cards or turns them back over. The game continues until all the cards have been matched up.

## Illustration credits:

† Erin Moutinho

\* Lisa Hall

Δ Ellen Blonder

\* and Δ Courtesy of California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System, California Department of Fish and Game. Used by permission.

# Things you can do for wildlife

- When you see a spider or insect indoors, capture it in a container and let it outside instead of squishing it. Watch it for a few minutes to see where it goes and what it does.
- Tell a friend about why it's good to have wildlife in the city.
- Make a bird feeder. An easy way is to take an empty toilet paper roll and punch two holes at one end of it. Spread peanut butter on it, roll it in birdseed, and then hang it outside by a string tied through the holes. Place it somewhere that gives the birds places nearby to hide.
- Suggest to your teacher that you grow a butterfly garden. This is a garden that is designed to attract butterflies. It has special plants that butterflies prefer, and water and shelter for them. For more information, go to [www.milkweedcafe.com/bflygarden.html](http://www.milkweedcafe.com/bflygarden.html). For specific information for California, visit [www.laspilitas.com/butterflylist.htm](http://www.laspilitas.com/butterflylist.htm).
- Volunteer to care for injured wildlife at WildCare in San Rafael: (415)453-1000 x21 or [www.wildcaremarin.org](http://www.wildcaremarin.org), or the Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek: (925)935-1978 or [www.wildlife-museum.org](http://www.wildlife-museum.org).
- Volunteer to restore wildlife habitat in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Go to [www.parksconservancy.org/volunteer/dropin2.html#steward](http://www.parksconservancy.org/volunteer/dropin2.html#steward) or call (415)4R-PARKS.

## Find out more...

- Pick one wild animal that you've seen in your city and go to the library to find out more about it.
- Check out the National Wildlife Federation website, [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org). Click on "For Kids and Teens" and learn about some amazing animals and things you can do to help wildlife.
- Ask your parent or guardian to take you on a free Greenbelt Outing to look for wildlife. Go to [www.greenbelt.org](http://www.greenbelt.org).

