

HUNTINGTON BEACH

STATE PARK

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Huntington Beach State Park offers a wide variety of nature-based and history-based educational opportunities to its visitors. Its diverse habitats include beach, sand dunes, salt marsh, freshwater marsh, brackish marsh, maritime forest, rock jetty and maritime grasslands. Many of these habitats exist in close proximity to each other, leading to an exceptional abundance of wildlife habitat. Most of these habitats are also easily accessible to the public for nature study and wildlife viewing. In fact, Huntington Beach is considered by many birders to be the best site for bird watching in South Carolina.

The park's Education Center contains an exhibit hall featuring a touch tank, several aquariums, a number of live animal exhibits (including a baby alligator), and a variety of interactive exhibits. The Education Center also contains a classroom with a number of compound and dissecting microscopes and audio-visual equipment, a wet lab with a dozen aquariums and a variety of living and preserved marine organisms,

and the "Eco Lab" with a plankton farm and biotope aquariums that represent the different wetland habitats of the park.

Huntington Beach is also the site of the historic "Atalaya" castle. The former winter home and studio of noted American sculptress Anna Hyatt Huntington and her husband, Archer Milton Huntington. Atalaya is also listed as a National Historic Landmark.

Directions

From Murrells Inlet: Drive 3 miles south on Hwy 17. Park entrance is on the left.

From Georgetown: Drive 20 miles north on Hwy 17. Park entrance is on the right.

Reservations and Program Information

For reservations, contact:

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Interpretive Ranger

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Photos by Brian Gomsak

Huntington Beach



Huntington Beach: *Pre-Site*

Content Area:
Science

Grade Level:
4

Time to Complete:
30 minutes

Title of Program:
Environmental Detectives

South Carolina State Standards Addressed Standards

Standard 4-2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and patterns of behavior that allow organisms to survive in their own distinct environments. (Life Science)

Indicators

4-2.1: Classify organisms into major groups (including plants or animals, flowering or nonflowering plants, and vertebrates [fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals] or invertebrates) according to their physical characteristics.

Explain how the characteristics of distinct environments (including swamps, rivers and streams, tropical rain forests, deserts, and the polar regions) influence the variety of organisms in each.

4-2.6 Explain how organisms cause changes in their environment.

Lesson Description

Students search their environment (classroom) for evidence of wildlife. The major purpose of this activity is for students to understand that people and wildlife share environments.

By investigating microenvironments, the students should be encouraged to generalize from the information they acquire that wildlife exists in some form all over of the world.

Focus Questions

1. What animals do you think you will find in your classroom?
2. Are these animals vertebrates or invertebrates?
3. What do these animals need to survive?
4. Are there any areas on earth where you couldn't find animals?

Culmination Assessment

1. Have the students write a paragraph describing what creatures they saw, including the description of the environments in which they lived.
2. What indirect evidence, such as webs, droppings, or feathers, was found?
3. Could these animals have survived in any other environment? Why?
4. The post-visit activity.

Materials and Equipment

- Paper and pencil

Teacher Preparation

Explain to the students that people often think of wildlife only as large animals living in the wild. But wildlife includes all animals that are not domesticated by people. This includes small organisms - even those that can be seen only through a microscope.



Spiders, insects, reptiles, worms, fish, birds and mammals may be considered wildlife.

Wildlife occurs in a variety of forms and can be found all around us. Even when we think we can see or hear no animals at all, they exist somewhere around us - maybe even under our feet. There are even tens of thousands of life-forms on our skin. People are never truly alone in an environment.

Procedure

Caution the students to observe but not touch or disturb the animals they see.

1. Have the students explore the classroom looking for signs of wildlife. It might be a spider web, dead insects near lights, or insect holes along baseboards and behind books. After this search discuss with the students what they found and emphasize that we are sharing our environment with other living things. Why did these creatures make their home in the classroom environment?
2. Work in pairs. Take the class on the school grounds and give everyone five minutes to find an animal or some sign that an animal had been there. Afterwards, sit with the class and discuss what they found and the characteristics of each environment.
3. Talk with the students about life in the indoor and outdoor environments. Emphasize that they have observed that people and wildlife share environments.

Extensions

When the students go home, have them survey their yards, homes or neighborhoods and look for wildlife. If they can't name the creatures they see, have them write descriptions and bring their notes back to class.



Huntington Beach: *On-Site*

Content Area:
Science

Grade Level:
4

Time to Complete:
2 hours

Title of Program:
Environmental Detectives

South Carolina State Standards Addressed Standards

Standard 4-2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and patterns of behavior that allow organisms to survive in their own distinct environments. (Life Science)

Indicators

4-2.1: Classify organisms into major groups (including plants or animals, flowering or nonflowering plants, and vertebrates [fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals] or invertebrates) according to their physical characteristics.

Explain how the characteristics of distinct environments (including swamps, rivers and streams, tropical rain forests, deserts, and the polar regions) influence the variety of organisms in each.

4-2.6 Explain how organisms cause changes in their environment.

Lesson Description

The students will be introduced to the following environments: salt marsh, brackish water pond, maritime forest, dune and ocean.

When the students arrive they will be given a booklet to be completed as they visit the different environments.

Focus Questions

1. How are the salt marsh and brackish water ponds different?
2. How are they alike?
3. What are some of the characteristics of maritime forests, dunes, beaches, brackish water ponds, and salt marshes?
4. How do these characteristics influence the variety of animals and plants found there?
5. What are some of the dominant plants and animals in each environment?

Culminating Assessment

At the end of each visit to the different areas, students will discuss their findings and notate them in their booklet.

Students will discuss the differences and similarities between the environments found in the park.

Teacher Preparation

The following are different environments the students will visit. Familiarize the students with each area's descriptions:

Mullet Pond: (on the right as you come over the causeway) the water in this marsh is called brackish because it is fresh water that contains a small amount of salt.



Salt Marsh: (on the left as you come over the causeway). This coastal wetland is between the ocean and land. It contains a unique community of organisms that is adapted to the salt water which is controlled by the ever changing tide.

Maritime Forest: These woodlands by the sea are specially adapted for survival in sandy soil and strong ocean winds containing salt and sand.

Sand Dunes: These mounds form when wind-blown sand is captured by plants and debris. As more sand is captured, the dunes grow.

Beaches: These occur where the ocean waves and currents deposit sand along an open shoreline.

Procedure

The students will be met at the causeway parking lot (after you cross the causeway, go right and there is a parking lot immediately to the left) where they will be given their booklets and instructions for the program.

Starting on the Mullet Pond side of the causeway, we will walk down the sidewalk discussing the plants, animals and conditions governing the life in this body of water. We will then cross over the causeway to observe the life and conditions in the salt marsh. Water samples will be taken from both sides and tested for salinity.

When the students return to the parking lot they will discuss and complete the comparison sheet in their booklet.

The class will then go to the North Parking lot where they will observe the maritime forest, dunes and beach environments. The students will be shown plants and animal signs, and a water sample will also be taken from the ocean and tested for salinity.

When the students return to the parking lot, they will discuss and complete the questions in their booklet.



Huntington Beach: *Post-Site*

Content Area:
Science

Grade Level:
4

Time to Complete:
60 minutes

Title of Program:
Environmental Detectives

South Carolina State Standards Addressed Standards

Standard 4-2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and patterns of behavior that allow organisms to survive in their own distinct environments. (Life Science)

Indicators

4-2.1: Classify organisms into major groups (including plants or animals, flowering or nonflowering plants, and vertebrates [fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals] or invertebrates) according to their physical characteristics.

Explain how the characteristics of distinct environments (including swamps, rivers and streams, tropical rain forests, deserts, and the polar regions) influence the variety of organisms in each.

4-2.6 Explain how organisms cause changes in their environment.

Lesson Description

This is an extension of the pre-site-activity. When the students go outside to the school grounds they will become aware of things in nature put there by man.

Focus Questions

1. What were some of the man-made items found?
2. How do the students think they got there?
3. How do they affect animals, plants and people?

Culminating Assessment

Discussion following this activity should encourage the students to be responsible for their actions while they are around nature.

Materials/Equipment

- pencil
- clipboard
- paper

Teacher Preparation

Divide the class into groups of two and give directions to where each will go to look for signs of human influences.

Procedure

Explain that each group will take a walk around the same areas they did before but this time they will look specifically for things that were put there by humans. This will include physical things as well as sounds and smells.

Other Teacher Resources

[Ranger Rick's Nature Scope](#) - Great nature and science hands on activities series for K-12. National Wildlife Federation 1412 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

