Eco-Interactions

Stay at Home Field Study!

Medina County Park District

Eco-Interactions is a field study about how animals interact with their environments. Interactions are how animals either use or change the world around them. Some examples of animal interactions are: an animal finding sticks and collecting them to build a lodge, an animal using its claws to dig a hole in the ground to make a home, or an animal using its beak to drill into a tree in search of food. All of these are interactions that animals have with their environments.

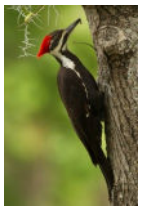
The environment can also influence an animal. Sometimes, where an animal lives may change what the animal does to survive. A great example of this is camouflage. Whether an animal intends to hide from a predator that might want to eat it or from prey that it may want to eat, camouflage is very useful. Owls are animals that are great at using camouflage to disguise. Owls sit very still and often go completely unnoticed as they silently sit in the tops of trees. Camouflage allows an animal to hide in plain sight, making it difficult to see.

Eco-Interaction Activities

Follow along for activities that you can do in your own home or backyard to learn about eco-interactions!

Using the columns below, draw a line from the animal to its interaction with its environment, then check your work in the answer key below.

Beaver

Woodpecker 

Fly

Worm

Castings in Soil

Gall in Plant Stem

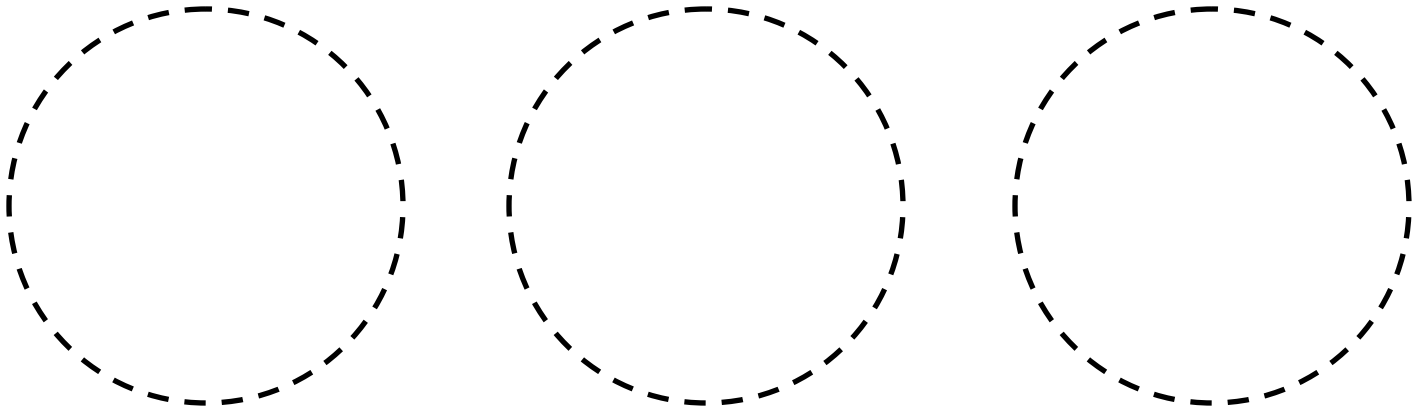
Dam in Water

Hole in Tree

Answer Key: Beaver + Dam in Water, Woodpecker + Hole in Tree, Fly + Gall in Plant Stem, Worm + Castings in Soil

Look out your window or walk in your backyard. Explore your environment for five minutes. How many different examples of animals interacting with their environments can you see? Describe what you see.

Draw your favorite example here:

The environment also interacts with animals by influencing their camouflage. This interaction can be observed by playing a game of Hide and Seek. What colors would you need to wear to match or blend into your couch, a wall, or your bed? Try using camouflage by playing Hide and Seek at home.

Another way to play Hide and Seek is to hide objects. Color each circle differently, cut each circle out, then hide each circle around the house. Where are the circles best camouflaged?