

A Sense of Wonder...

Animal Clues

Method

Children make up clues for an animal and the other children try to guess what the animal is.

Materials

Paper, pencil, rope or string to mark boundaries

Location

Large grassy area, or large open room, if weather is bad

Number of Participants

You really need 6 as a minimum but would be better with at least 8 or more.

Procedure

Divide children into two equal teams. Have each team choose an animal and then think of six to eight clues for that animal. (Example below.) When both teams have their clues ready, have them form two lines facing each other about two feet apart. Draw a line about 15 feet behind each team, which will be that team's home base.

Team A reads a clue. (You may have one student on each team read the clues or let team members take turns.) Team B tries to guess Team A's identity. If they guess the wrong animal, one student (previously appointed) on Team A will say "No." Team B will read one of their clues and the game will continue. When a team guesses the right animal, all the members of that team will chase the members of the team which gave the clue back to their home base. Any members tagged before they reach their home base will become a member of the opposing team. Each team will then choose a new animal and make up a new set of clues.

Sample clues – for a bat

1. I have two feet, but seldom walk.
2. I am nocturnal (or I'm active at night).
3. Some of my kind migrate during winter, but others hibernate.
4. I can eat 1,500 insects in one night.
5. I am the only mammal that can fly.

Nature Note: Lethal Litter

Litter is a familiar eyesore. In addition to being unsightly, litter can injure and kill wild and domestic animals.

Plastic ringed can or bottle holders occasionally get caught around the necks of fish and ducks, geese and other water birds. Once in place, they can impede the fish's or bird's movements, and may result in starvation or strangulation. "A river otter released by the West Virginia DNR in the last 1980s was seen "sporting" one of these unsightly necklaces just minutes after being set free. Some West Virginia Welcome! Fortunately, the otter managed to free itself a few hours later.

Discarded fishing line also causes problems for wildlife. For example, a young osprey introduced to West Virginia lost a leg and ultimately its life after becoming

entangled in carelessly abandoned fishing line. Many similar cases have been documented among shorebirds and waterfowl.

Discarded bottles and jars are probably the most ubiquitous hazard. Bottles can be death traps for shrews, mice and other small mammals that squeeze in, but can't crawl out and subsequently starve. The unofficial record for dead shrews in a single bottle is 16.

Glass bottles and jars which litter the countryside are frequently broken. Animals may lick the shards of glass trying to eat the residue and suffer painful cuts. Treading on broken glass is dangerous to animals and humans.

Plastic bags and resin pellets, balloons, Styrofoam pieces and other bits of litter may be mistaken for



Courtesy of Melbourne Zoo

food and eaten by wild animals. The trash may get stuck in the esophagus or stomach and eventually kill the animal. Sea turtles occasionally die after eating plastic bags that look like jellyfish, a food source for the turtles.

People can help by disposing of their waste properly, participating in organized clean-ups, and educate others about the problem and what they can do to keep from being a part of the problem and how to be a part of the solution.

The death of an animal due to littering is slow, agonizing and needless. Proper disposal of trash means a safer, more beautiful West Virginia.