

Web of Life Field Trip Package



Description

Students will learn about biodiversity, the roles specific species play in a food web, and develop an understanding and appreciation of the checks, balances, and interconnectedness of a healthy ecosystem.

This information package can help you summarize ideas to help you get the most from your trip to the zoo.

Links to the Current BC Curriculum

Grade 3

- Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems (Big Ideas)
- Biodiversity in the local environment (Content)
- Make predictions based on prior knowledge (Curricular Competencies)
- Make observations about living and non-living things in the local environment (Curricular Competencies)
- Identify some environmental implications of their and others' actions (Curricular Competencies)

Grade 4

- All living things sense and respond to their environment (Big Ideas)
- Biomes as large regions with similar environmental features (Content)
- Observe objects and events in familiar contexts (Curricular Competencies)
- Make observations about living and non-living things in the local environment (Curricular Competencies)
- Identify some simple environmental implications of their and others' actions (Curricular Competencies)

Preparing for the Program

Location: This may be a student's first visit to the zoo, and being prepared will help ease any nervousness some younger students may have about visiting a new place. These are some things that teachers should review with their students prior to and upon arrival at the zoo.

- Where the zoo is in relation to your school.
- Duration of the trip to the zoo and mode of transportation to the zoo.
- Designated meeting place set out at the zoo in case any adult or student gets separated from the group, and point this out on the map upon arrival.

5048 – 264 Street, Aldergrove, BC Canada V4W 1N7
Tel: 604.856.6825 | gvzoo.com



Vocabulary: Before attending the zoo, students should be aware of the following words as they may be used during the program.

- **Biodiversity:** the variety of different types of living things in an ecosystem.
- **Biomes:** large regions with similar environmental features (e.g. climate: long-term weather patterns).
- **Carnivore:** an animal that eats other animals.
- **Decomposer:** an animal that breaks down dead or decaying matter.
- **Detritivore:** an animal that eats dead things.
- **Ecosystem:** a community of living organisms in relation to the non-living things in their physical environments.
- **Food Chains:** plants and animals are interconnected by what they eat.
- **Food Web:** food chains linked together.
- **Habitat:** where an animal lives to find food, water, shelter, and space.
- **Herbivore:** an animal that eats plants.
- **Interconnectedness:** all living things are related to and interact with each other in the environment.
- **Omnivore:** an animal that eats both plants and animals.
- **Web of Life:** the interconnectedness of a complex system within an ecosystem.

Dressing for the weather: There are not many indoor or covered areas at the zoo, so it is important to dress for the weather.

- If raining: waterproof shoes and jackets are necessary.
- If sunny: sunscreen, hats, and water bottles are necessary.

Safety Guidelines: Here at the zoo, we want you to have fun, but our priority is the safety of our visitors and animals. These rules will help keep you and the animals safe.

- Do not feed the animals.
- Do not touch the animals.
- Respect all barriers and fences.

Information Guide

There are diverse types of animals in the world, and each one has a key role to play in their **ecosystem**. An ecosystem is a community of living organisms and non-living things that exist in a physical environment.

A physical environment is also known as a **habitat**. Habitats are where animals live to find food, water, shelter, and space. Many animals can live in the same habitat because these environments share similar environmental features.

Large regions that share similar environmental features are called **biomes**, and there are five major types of biomes in the world. These include aquatic, desert, forest, grassland, and tundra.

The animals that live in each of these biomes are **interconnected**, which means that they are related to and interact with each other in the environment. All the animals and non-living things in an ecosystem contribute to the web of life through **food chains** and **food webs**. Plants and animals make up the food chain as they are interconnected by what they eat, and food webs are different food chains linked together.

Healthy ecosystems will have lots of **biodiversity**, which means there are diverse types of species living in that ecosystem with many members of those species. To have good biodiversity you need to have plants and animals that are different from each other and that eat different things. We categorize animals based on what they eat. There are five categories: **herbivores**, **omnivores**, **carnivores**, **detritivores**, and **decomposers**. If an ecosystem does not have all these categories, there is low diversity, or not a lot of varied species, and may be considered fragile.

Every animal depends on one another to survive and must interact with each other for their habitat's survival. This includes us humans, so we must help animals survive by doing our part. Some of the best ways that we can help is to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. By making sure that we always follow the 3R's, we can reduce our impact on animals and habitats all over the world.

Another way to ensure that we are doing our part to help wild animals is to discourage their involvement in the pet trade. Some of the animals at the Greater Vancouver Zoo were once someone's pet. While it might seem like a cool experience to own an exotic animal, we are usually unable to meet the elevated level of responsibility. Furthermore, when taken out of their natural habitats, many animals aren't able to retain their hunting abilities and instinctive behaviours. This can be detrimental to their overall wellbeing and ability to survive if reintroduced in the wild.