

Wetland Ecosystems

Overview

Students learn about wetland ecosystems by studying life in a local pond, slough, marsh, fen or bog. Through classroom studies, and studies in the field, students learn about organisms that live in, on and around wetlands and about adaptations that suit pond organisms to their environment. Through observation and research, students learn about the interactions among wetland organisms and about the role of each organism as part of a food web. The role of human action in affecting wetland habitats and populations is also studied.

General Learner Expectations

Students will:

5–10 Describe the living and nonliving components of a wetland ecosystem and the interactions within and among them.

Specific Learner Expectations

Students will:

1. Recognize and describe one or more examples of wetland ecosystems found in the local area; e.g., pond, slough, marsh, bog, fen.
2. Understand that a wetland ecosystem involves interactions between living and nonliving things, both in and around the water.
3. Identify some plants and animals found at a wetland site, both in and around the water; and describe the life cycles of these plants and animals.
4. Identify and describe adaptations that make certain plants and animals suited for life in a wetland.
5. Understand and appreciate that all animals and plants, not just the large ones, have an important role in a wetland community.
6. Identify the roles of different organisms in the food web of a pond:
 - producers—green plants that make their own food, using sunlight
 - consumers—animals that eat living plants and/or animals
 - decomposers—organisms, such as molds, fungi, insects and worms, that reuse and recycle materials that were formerly living.
7. Draw diagrams of food chains and food webs, and interpret such diagrams.
8. Recognize that some aquatic animals use oxygen from air and others from water, and identify examples and adaptations of each.
9. Identify human actions that can threaten the abundance or survival of living things in

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wetland ecosystems; e.g., adding pollutants, changing the flow of water, trapping or hunting pond wildlife.

10. Identify individual and group actions that can be taken to preserve and enhance wetland habitats.
11. Recognize that changes in part of an environment have effects on the whole environment.