



MEETING PLANS & IDEAS: NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT

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OBJECTIVES

This month's activities should:

- Help Scouts learn how to identify the living and nonliving components of the natural world.
- Illustrate how human beings interact with living and nonliving things.
- Help Scouts develop respect for the natural world as the home we share with other people and other creatures.
- Teach Scouts to appreciate the resources and beauty of the natural world.
- Help Scouts develop the skills they need to enjoy experiences in the outdoors.
- Introduce Scouts to naturalists and other people working to care for the environment.

LEADERSHIP PLANNING

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing nature and environment as your program feature during your planning meetings.

- What are the interests of our Scouts (service projects, earning badges and other awards, experiencing new places, exploring careers, etc.)?
- Who and what are the naturalist resources in our community?
- What expertise do we have in our unit?
- How far do we have to travel to experience habitats most of us have never seen?
- What supplies and technology will we need, and what are the costs?
- What is the best time of year to plan for the activities we want to do outdoors?
- Are any of our members studying these topics in school? What might they contribute in terms of leadership? How can we enrich their studies?
- To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

[Click above for fillable troop meeting planning form.](#)

PREOPENING IDEAS

[Preopening Ideas on Troop Program Resources](#)

- Set up laptops or tablets so Scouts can go [virtual birding](#) as they enter the meeting.
- On a table, place numbered leaves from various plants and trees. Have Scouts write the name of each plant on a piece of paper next to its corresponding number. The Scout with the most correct answers gets a prize at the end of the meeting. New members can work in small groups while older Scouts can participate individually.
- Have materials on hand to help Scouts and adult leaders learn about the [William T. Hornaday Awards](#) program.

OPENING IDEAS

Opening Ideas on Troop Program Resources

GROUP INSTRUCTION IDEAS

Birds

- Lead a brief discussion about the need for bird study and the ways in which birds are indicators of the quality of the environment.

Animals

- Discuss animals and how they are impacted by their environment. Discuss ways for Scouts to interact with animals in the wild without disturbing them.

Plants

- Explain photosynthesis and tell why this process is important. Tell at least five ways that humans depend on plants.

The Circle of Life

- Discuss the concept of the circle of life. Introduce the concept that every living thing depends on another living thing.

SKILLS INSTRUCTION IDEAS



Birds

- Discuss bird features and learn how to identify species.
- Learn how to use binoculars.
- Create a matching activity or game to help participants identify bird features.

- Explore a field guide to see what information it includes to help identify birds.
- Learn how to care for binoculars.
- Bird ecology: Prepare a set of questions for participants to answer by examining Christmas Bird Count results.

- ◆ Bird ecology: Discuss how the Christmas Bird Count is carried out, and let participants browse through a copy of the results.
- Practice focusing and using binoculars.
- Discuss the importance of bird counts.

Animals

- Describe the difference between “wild” and “domesticated” animals.
- Help Scouts name various pets and identify the animals that are their wild counterparts.
- Discuss human impact on animals in the wild.

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- Discuss animals Scouts may encounter on an outing.
 - Learn proper ways to deal with animals both on the trail and in camp.
 - Describe responsible hunting and fishing and how those sports can impact the environment.
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- Explain the meaning of “animal,” “invertebrate,” “vertebrate,” and “mammal.”
- Describe three characteristics that distinguish mammals from all other animals.
- Review how the animal kingdom is classified. Explain where mammals fit in the classification of animals.
- Classify three mammals from phylum through species.

Plants

- Learn about edible wild plants.
 - Identify edible wild plants in your area.
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- Discuss the process of growing a plant from a seed, including soil prep, watering, etc.
 - Using seeds and soils, plant something edible. (Either send seed cups home with Scouts or plant seeds at your meeting location.)
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- Learn about grafting plants.
- Discuss how hybrids and cross-pollination have improved or otherwise affected plants and food.

The Circle of Life

- Explain the concept of the food chain.
 - Give examples of typical food chains.
 - Learn the roles of producer, consumer, predator, prey, and decomposer.
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- Discuss the process of photosynthesis.
 - Identify ways plants support human and animal life.
 - Explain how photosynthesis affects the environment.
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- Identify the five kingdoms and how they support each other.
- Discuss the concept of evolution and how life adapts over time.
- Discuss the future of Earth and how human activity affects the circle of life.

BREAKOUT GROUP IDEAS

Discussion

- New members work on nature-related rank advancement requirements.
- Older members review the [requirements of the Bird Study merit badge](#) and plan for future completion of the badge.

Getting Ready for the Main Event

- Duty Roster Planning

- Equipment check

Preparation for the meeting's game or challenge

GAME AND CHALLENGE IDEAS

[Library of Games and Challenges on Troop Program Resources](#)

- [Name That Fish](#)
- **Bird Art Gallery**
 - *Materials:* Twenty pictures, each depicting a different kind of bird, numbered but not identified; pencil and a sheet of paper for each Scout
 - *Method:* Post the pictures on the walls around the room. Allow the Scouts to move about with their pencils and papers and try to identify the bird in the pictures. Without consulting each other, they write down the names on their sheets. After a certain time limit, all sheets are turned in for judging.
 - *Scoring:* Add the number of correct identifications made by each patrol and divide by the number of members to get the average. The patrol with the highest average wins.
 - *Notes:* Depending on the challenge presented by the birds you've selected and the expertise of the Scouts, you may want to allow patrols to use field guides.
- **Edible Plants Who's Who**
 - *Materials:* Twenty (or more) edible plants, each in a numbered No. 10 can; a card at each can that gives the name of the plant and the part that is edible (for instance, "Cattail: pollen for flour, shoot for greens, root (rhizome) for starch"); pencil and paper for each player
 - *Method:* Patrols walk silently around the cans as they read the descriptive cards and try to learn about the plants and their edible parts. All of the identifying cards are then removed. The patrols again walks around the cans. Scouts try to identify and list all the plants and their edible parts. Each patrol goes into a huddle and makes a list of plant names and edible parts.
 - *Scoring:* Score 5 points for each plant correctly identified. The patrol with the most points wins.
- **Circle of Life**
 - *Materials:* Twenty or more pictures of different producers, consumers, predators, prey, and decomposers
 - *Method:* Place all pictures face down on the table. Patrols take turns flipping two cards and trying to make matching pairs of a category. (For example, lichens and worms would match because they are both decomposers.) If a matching pair is made, the patrol keeps those two cards. If the pair is not a match, the pictures are turned back over.
 - *Scoring:* The patrol to make the most matching pairs wins.

CLOSING IDEAS

- [Leader's Minutes](#)
- [Closing Ceremonies](#)

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TROOP LEADER RESOURCE LINKS

[Advancement Resources](#)

[Awards Central](#)

[Boy Scouts](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[SCOUTBOOK](#)

[Scouting Forms from the National Council](#)

[ScoutCast](#)

[Scouting Magazine](#)

[ScoutStuff.org \(Retail Site\)](#)

[ScoutingWire](#)

[Sign in to MyScouting.org](#)

[Take Youth Protection Training](#)

[The Outdoor Adventure Planning Guide](#)

[Troop Leader Guidebook Appendix](#)

[Uniforms](#)