

Predators & Their Prey

Purpose

The following activity will help students discover the ecological interactions between predators, prey and their environment. This activity may be extended to include plant/animal adaptations.

Materials

5 Hula Hoops | "Food Tokens" (cardboard, 3 x student) | Gym Vests

Activity

In a large, open space (gym, outside):

1. Depending on the grade level, introduce the relevant **key terms** (predator, prey, shelter, habitat, carrying capacity, food chain)
2. Select some students to be a **predator** and some students to be a **prey**. Select about one predator to four prey species. Use the list below for sample pairs.

Predator	Prey
Hawks	Ground Squirrels
Lynx	Hares
Wolves, Cougars	Deer, Caribou
Foxes	Mice
Grizzly Bears	Salmon

3. Identify the rules of the game as "**freeze tag**" - predators freeze prey. Give predators a gym vest or other identifier.
4. Designate one end of a field as **shelter**, and the other as **food**.
5. Scatter 5 Hula Hoops across the play area. These are **shelter**.
6. Scatter the "**food tokens**" on the food side of the field.
7. Have the **prey** start at the shelter end of the field; the **predators** start in the field. Prey must reach a food token and bring it back to the shelter three times to be successful in a round. Each round has a time limit of ~3 minutes. Prey can stand in a Hula Hoop for protection from predators.

Debrief

- Why are there fewer predators than prey?
- What was it like being a prey animal? A predator?
- How did prey escape capture? How did predators catch prey?

Variations

- Use an aquatic theme (salmon/ zooplankton). You can even play the game in the shallow-end of a pool (Hula Hoops float!)
- Increase/decrease the amount of available food, the shelters, and the predator - prey ratio.