



**TRAIL
LIFE
USA**

Nature and Wildlife

Name _____

The natural world surrounds us. Depending on where you live, you may find rich forests, high mountains, vast deserts, or wide open prairies. Some Trailmen live by an ocean or along the shores of great lakes, rivers, streams, or brooks. Each of these areas supports different types of plants and wild animals. Each grouping of natural elements, plants and animals is called a habitat. This Trail Badge introduces you to the plants and animals that live in the habitat(s) near where you live, and to introduce conservation topics and activities to protect these habitats.

Do eight of the following requirements with at least one from each topic

Plants

- ____1. Take a tree identification hike. Identify at least twelve different trees. Explain which features are used for identification and which features depend on the time of year or the season.
- ____2. Identify five different plants with edible fruits or nuts. Explain which features are used for identification (for example: bark, leaves, flower, etc.).
- ____3. Find out what types of wildflowers grow in your area. Go on a wildflower hunt and record what types of wildflowers you find and where you found them. Draw pictures of them and compile a booklet with all the information you have.
- ____4. Go on at least one nature hike focused on plants. Bring along a field guide to local plants and trees and identify at least 15 different trees and other plants you see along the way.

Animals

- _____5. Identify three wild animals that are native to your state from four of these groups: birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects and spiders, fish, mollusks and crustaceans (i.e. twelve animals in four groupings) Then, for each of the twelve animals, report on the following: diet, habitat, shelter, benefits to humans, if it is endangered, and how it is protected if endangered.
- _____6. Fossils can give us clues about what types of plants and animals once lived in an area. Go on a fossil hike. Using a piece of paper and a crayon/pencil, make rubbings to record at least five different fossils you find. Using the library or Internet, identify at least two of the fossils you recorded.
- _____7. Go on at least one nature hike focused on animals with your. Bring along a camera and a field guide to local animals. Categorize the animals you observe into the following six categories: birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects and spiders, fish, mollusks and crustaceans. Find, photograph, and identify at least three wild animals that are native to your state from four of these six groups.

Habitats

- _____8. Explore the edge of a pond or lake, or the side of a stream. Make a list of the things that you find, breaking your list down into categories such as plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects and spiders, fish, mollusks and crustaceans, etc. Explain how the different things you found are all interdependent. Explain how the animals in your region might use this habitat (e.g. cover, feeding, nesting, etc.).
- _____9. Visit a wildlife refuge or a nature center. Learn how it provides a habitat for wildlife. Find out if there are ways that the area is being managed to provide a habitat for different types of wildlife. Make a list of the things that you find, breaking your list down into categories such as plants, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects and spiders, fish, mollusks and crustaceans, etc.

- ____10. Take a hike with your Unit or family. Stop at three different habitats along the way such as a meadow, stream, and forest. At each stop wait silently for at least five minutes. Record the features of the habitat that you see and what sounds you hear. Describe how the sounds differ for each habitat and explain what that tells us about each habitat.
- ____11. Organize and lead a micro nature hunt for a younger unit or patrol. Mark off separate 3 foot by 3 foot areas for each Trailman. Supply each with a magnifying glass and journal and help them investigate what is there. Have them draw pictures of the insects and plants they observe to record their findings. Collect and show the books to your Mentor if he is not at the activity.

Conservation

- ____12. Participate in a conservation project through a local park, school, conservation organization, etc.
- ____13. List at least ten ways that your Troop, Unit, patrol, or family can help to conserve nature. Create a short video, presentation, speech, pamphlet, or other creative way to present this information and make a presentation to your Troop, Unit, patrol, or family.
- ____14. Plan and lead a conservation project in your area.
- ____15. Research an endangered species in your area. Prepare a brief presentation for a younger Unit with pictures or puppets of the animal, which explains why it has been declared endangered and what critical habitat means.
- ____16. Identify at least five careers involving nature and wildlife and talk to a person in one of these careers. Report the following:
- Required educational training or experience
 - Daily activities of the job
 - Factors that influenced the selection of this career field
 - Which careers interest you
- ____17. Research two conservation organizations. For each organization, describe how three of their conservation activities exercise good environmental stewardship.

Trail Badge Mentor Signature

Date

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