



# **SCHOOL EXPLORERS CURRICULUM**

**GRADES TK - K**

# SCHOOL EXPLORERS

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### NGSS ALIGNMENT

**K-LS1-1:** Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

**K-ESS3-3:** Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.

### OBJECTIVE

Students will be able to observe and recognize the patterns of what plants and animals need to survive as well as describe ways people help animals and the environment.

### MATERIALS

**For chaperones:**

- Tour pages
- Student activity instructions
- Map (optional)
- Bingo (optional)

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# TEACHER GUIDE

## HOW TO USE CURRICULUM PACKET

In this curriculum, you will find a *Chaperone Guide* for a self-led tour and activities. Make copies depending on your chaperone headcount. Students do not need any copies of the materials, however, you may print individual bingo sheets for students if you prefer.

### **Self-Guided Tour**

Assign chaperone groups. Each chaperone will be able to lead the group using their *Chaperone Guides*. The headings on each page indicate the section of the zoo that correlates to where the tour is. There are talking points for certain enclosures, denoted by the subheadings named after the animal. For the talking points, there are italicized questions to spark discussions that can be led by each chaperone. Underlined words can be found in the Glossary.

### **Using the Map**

Attached is a map with marked locations of the tour. The map includes dashed lines to indicate suggested walking paths. Numbered and starred locations, also referenced in the self-guided tour, denote enclosures with provided talking points. Some enclosures are multispecies habitats meaning there may be multiple animals for each star. You may print a map for each chaperone, or just use the written tour.

### **Facilitating the Activities**

In this packet you will find two activities along with reflection questions. The chaperone-led activities are movement and observation based. Both activities will be done during the tour and include movement breaks requiring an open space. We recommend Village Watutu, the open space by African Aviary, Gecko Gulch, and the open space at Wild Prairies.

At the end of the of each activity, you will find reflection questions. Encourage your chaperones to engage students in discussion.

# TEACHER GUIDE

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Use the space below to plan your itinerary.

**TIME**

**ACTIVITY**

**LOCATION**


## CHECKLIST

Item

Count

Item

Count

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# SCHOOL EXPLORERS

## CHAPERONE GUIDE

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### INSTRUCTIONS

Included in this booklet is a map of the path you will be taking with your group, marked with a **dashed line**. As you move through the park, refer to the **Self-Guided Tour Pages** for talking points. If it is in italics, it is a question to say out loud for your group. **Activity 1** and **Activity 2** will be done as students walk through the zoo on the self-guided tour. For **Movement Breaks**, find an open space and allow 30 minutes for students to complete. Underlined words can be found in the glossary.

### MY GROUP

List your student group below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



## WILDLIFE WATCH

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

**Goal/Objective:** Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals need to survive.

**Topic Overview:** All living things—animals, plants, and people—need certain things to survive. These include food, water, space, and shelter (a safe place to live). By observing animals at the zoo and talking about their environments, students can begin to recognize the patterns of what is needed to survive.

**Activity Time:** Activity is done throughout self-guided tour.

**Location:** African Safari

**Chaperone Materials:**

- School Curriculum Packet

### INSTRUCTIONS

As you explore the habitats in the African Safari section of the zoo, help students observe what animals and plants need to survive: food, water, space, and shelter.

At each animal stop, pause and ask:

- *“What do you think this animal eats?”*
- *“Where might they get water?”*
- *“Do you see shade or a place it can rest?”*

Encourage students to describe what they see—like grasses in the savannah, watering holes, mud, etc.,—and connect it to the animal’s survival.

Use simple language and let students share their ideas, even if they’re unsure. At the end of the tour, ask: *“What do all living things need to survive?”* to help them see patterns across different habitats.

### INFORMATION FOR CHAPERONES

All living things—plants, animals, and people—need four basic things to survive: food, water, space, and shelter. At the zoo, we can observe how different animals meet these needs in different habitats. For example, a desert animal may get water from the food it eats, while an animal in the rainforest has access to plenty of rainwater. Some animals live in trees, some dig burrows, and others use rocks or dens for shelter.

As you walk with students, help them notice these patterns by asking questions like, “Where do you think this animal gets its food or water?” or “What kind of shelter does this animal use?” Your goal is to guide them in making simple observations and connections, helping them understand that while animals may live in different environments, they all need the same basic things to live.

# 📍 THE SAVANNAS

## BIG IDEA

All living things—animals, plants, and people—need certain things to survive. These include food, water, space, and shelter (a safe place to live). By observing animals at the zoo and talking about their environments, students can begin to recognize the patterns of what is needed to survive.

## RHINO SAVANNA

**Animals in Habitat:** Black rhino, waterbuck, springbok, pelican

**Habitat:** This area resembles an African savanna—it's warm all year and has big open spaces, lots of grass, and just a few trees.

### Ask the Students:

- "What do you think these animals eat here?"

**Answer:** These animals are herbivores—plant eaters! They graze the grass and browse on leaves.

- "Where do they get water?"

**Answer:** They can find water at the ponds.

- "Do they have shade or shelter?"

**Answer:** They can go underneath the bridge or up the hills behind the barrier pillars.

- "Where would you take a nap if you were a rhino?"
- "What helps these animals stay protected?"

**Answer:** Shelter and water can help keep them cool in the heat.

*"Even though these animals are very different, they all need the same basic things to survive—food, water, air, and shelter. Let's keep watching to see how other animals in Africa get what they need too!"*

# 📍 THE SAVANNAS

## GIRAFFE SAVANNA

2

**Animals in Habitat:** Giraffe, ostrich, greater kudu

**Habitat:** This area is part of the African savanna too, but it has more tall trees for animals like giraffes that eat leaves way up high. There's still lots of open space and short grass, and the weather is warm most of the year.

### Ask the Students:

- "What do you think giraffes eat here?"

**Answer:** Giraffes are herbivores- plant eaters! They eat twigs, leaves, and flowers. (They love acacia leaves!)

- "How do you think giraffes reach their food?"

**Answer:** Giraffes use their long necks to reach branches for food.

- "Where do these animals get water?"

**Answer:** They can find water at the pond.

- "Do you see any shade or places to rest?"

**Answer:** The trees help provide these animal's shade.

- "What other animals do you see in this habitat?"

**Answer:** There are three species in this habitat! Giraffe, greater kudu, and ostriches!

## MOVEMENT BREAK

Find an open space to give your students a chance to move and get their wiggles out! Invite them to act like the animals they've just seen:

- "Can you stomp like a rhino walking through tall grass?"
- "Let's hop like a springbok jumping across the savanna!"
- "Flap your wings like a pelican flying over a pond!"
- "Stretch high into the sky like a giraffe eating leaves!"
- "Gallop like a waterbuck through the savanna!"

# VILLAGE WATUTU

## AFRICAN SPURRED TORTOISE

3

**Animals in Habitat:** African spurred tortoise

**Habitat:** This area looks like the dry deserts where African spurred tortoises live. It's hot, there's not much water, and the ground is sandy.

**Ask the Students:**

- "What do you think the tortoise eats here?"

**Answer:** They eat grasses and plants!

- "How much water do you think they can store in their bodies?"

**Answer:** They can go a long time without drinking water by storing about 1 liter in their bodies! That's nearly 5 cups of water!

- "Where might the tortoise go to stay cool or safe?"

**Answer:** These tortoises dig burrows to escape the heat and stay safe.

- "How does its shell help it survive?"

**Answer:** Their shell acts as armor! It keeps them safe from predators (like ravens) from eating them!

# 📍 AFRICAN SAFARI

## CHEETAHS

4

**Animals in Habitat:** Cheetah

**Habitat:** This area is like the African grasslands, where cheetahs live. It's flat, sunny, and open, with short grass that makes it easier for cheetahs to run fast and see other animals from far away. Cheetahs are the fastest land animals, but they still need to rest in the shade and stay hidden from danger.

**Ask the Students:**

- "What do you think cheetahs eat?"

**Answer:** They are carnivores- they eat meat!

- "Why do you think they need open space?"

**Answer:** They need space to run, roam, and hide.

- "Do you see any places they could rest or hide?"

**Answer:** They can hide in the grasses (they are good at camouflaging) or in the trees (they can climb).

## AFRICAN PAINTED DOG

5

**Animals in Habitat:** African painted dogs

**Habitat:** This area looks like where African painted dogs live in the wild—open grasslands with some trees or bushes for shade and hiding. These animals live in packs (big families) and work together to find food and stay safe. Painted dogs are excellent runners and need lots of space to move.

**Ask the Students:**

- "What do you think painted dogs eat?"

**Answer:** They eat meat! They are really good hunters- their hunting success is 80-90%!

- "Where do they get water?"

**Answer:** They have a large pool of water for both drinking and cooling off.

- "Why do you think they live in a group?"

**Answer:** They are social animals that form a pack- they protect each other and hunt together!

- "How does their body help them survive?"

**Answer:** They have great camouflage- they use their fur to blend into their environment- to help them hide!

**Fun fact:** Every African painted dog has a different fur pattern!

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**Chaperone instructions:** Invite each student to share their answer to the question. After everyone has had a chance to respond, gently guide the group toward the correct answer together.

**1. What do all animals need to survive?**

*Answer: Food, water, space, and shelter!*

**2. Did you see different ways animals get their food?**

*Answer: Yes! Giraffes eat leaves from trees, rhinos eat grass, and some animals like African painted dogs or cheetahs hunt animals.*

**3. Why do some animals need big open spaces?**

*Answer: So, they can run, find food, or see other animals – like cheetahs and painted dogs!*

**4. What did you notice about where animals rest or hide?**

*Answer: Some hide in bushes or shade, some stay near trees, and some dig or lie in the grass.*

**5. Do people need the same things as animals to survive?**

*Answer: Yes! People also need food, water, air, and a safe place to live (shelter).*

# ACTIVITY #2: ZOO PROTECTORS

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

**Goal/Objective:** Use observations to recognize and describe ways people help animals and the environment.

**Topic Overview:** During this zoo adventure, students will become “Zoo Protectors” and use their eyes and ears to observe how animals get what they need in their habitats, and how people help take care of animals and the Earth. Through fun missions and guided conversations, students will begin to notice important patterns in how living things survive and how humans can make a positive difference.

**Activity Time:** Activity is done throughout self-guided tour.

**Location:** Wild Americas

**Chaperone Materials:**

- School Curriculum Packet
- Bingo Sheet

## INSTRUCTIONS

Lead your group of students on a special mission during your zoo visit today!

**Before You Begin:**

1. Gather your group together and let them know they are now part of a special team – Zoo Protectors!
2. Read this short script out loud to kick things off:

*“Hi Zoo Protectors! Today, we’re going on a mission to look around the zoo and look for ways people help animals and the Earth. Let’s use our super eyes and super ears to find clues. Are you ready? Let’s go!”*

**While Exploring the Zoo:**

- As you visit each animal habitat, ask the students questions:
  - “What do you see that helps the animals stay safe or healthy?”
  - “What do you see that helps keep the zoo or Earth clean?”
  - “What in this space helps the animal feel at home?”
  - “What can YOU do to help animals or nature at home?”

Encourage students to answer out loud and share what they notice! Use the bingo card sheet to encourage students to check off everything on that list.

# ACTIVITY #2: ZOO PROTECTORS

## INFORMATION FOR CHAPERONES

As Zoo Protectors explore the zoo, your job is to help them observe and talk about how people help animals and the environment.

### Look for things like:

- Clean water bowls or ponds - water is provided for the animals.
- Food trays, trees/grass, or meat - food is provided for the animals.
- Trees, climbing rocks - enrichment (exercise, fun) is provided for the animals.
- Cave, shade, or den - shelter (a safe space) is provided for the animals.
- Fences, signs, or glass barriers - keep animals safe from people and vice versa.

### Encourage students to spot:

- Trash and recycling bins - reduces pollution.
- Natural-looking habitats - helps animals feel at home.
- Educational signs or zookeeper chats- helps people learn about animals and how we can protect them.

## BIG IDEA

People have a responsibility to help the Earth and animals. One way they can help is by being a zoo protector! Zoo protectors are people who care for animals and the environments they live in. Some ways they can help is by caring for the animal's welfare! This means caring for an animal's health and safety, mental well-being, environment, and even their behavioral interactions with the world around us!

# ZOO PROTECTORS: BINGO

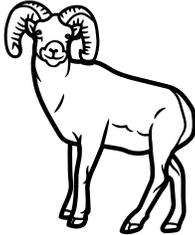
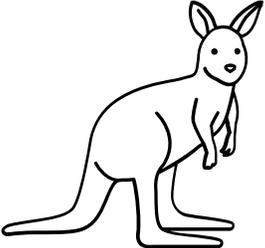
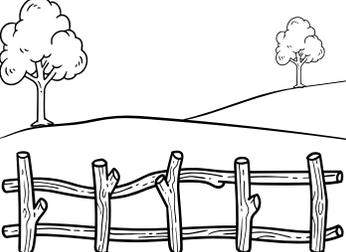
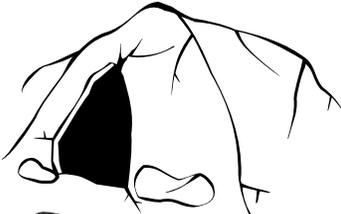
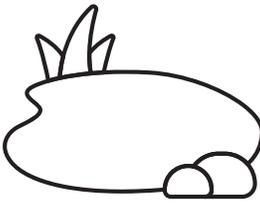
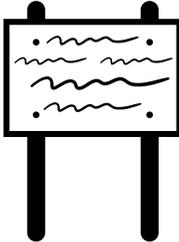
## BINGO INSTRUCTIONS

6

During this exciting zoo adventure, students will take on the role of “Zoo Protectors” – using their eyes, ears, and curiosity to discover how animals meet their needs in their habitats and how humans help care for animals and the Earth!

Your role is to guide your group through this adventure using the Bingo sheet – students won’t have their own, so you’ll be the leader of the game! Check off each box as a student calls it out.

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 <p>Recycle Bins</p>	 <p>Big Horn Sheep</p>	 <p>Zookeeper</p>
 <p>Bennett Wallaby</p>	 <p>Habitat Barrier</p>	 <p>Gardens</p>
 <p>Shelter in Habitat</p>	 <p>Water in Habitat</p>	 <p>Animal Signage</p>

# 📍 TRIBUTE GARDEN

## POLLINATORS

8

**Flowers in Garden:** Desert marigold, autumn/tropical sage, lantana, and more!

**Garden:** Tribute garden is the home to many of our pollinator friends! Pollinators are essential creatures that help plants reproduce by transferring pollen from one flower to another!

### Ask the Students:

- "How do plants help animals out in the wild?"

**Answer:** Plants are essential out in the wild for many reasons! The most important being they provide animals a food source and shelter.

- "Can you name some pollinator friends?"

**Answer:** Butterflies, Bees, Bats, Hummingbirds, and even animals with fur can be pollinators! For example, a porcupine can help disperse seeds with their coat!

- "How do pollinator's help plants?"

**Answer:** Pollinators help plants produce fruit or seeds!

## FLOWERS

**Flowers in Garden:** Here are some flowers you might see in season!



**Desert Marigold**



**Tropical Sage**



**Lantana**



**Autumn Sage**



**Chuparosa**



**Perry's Penstemon**

# ZOO PROTECTORS

## MOVEMENT BREAK

Find an open space so students can become Zoo Protectors to help protect animals and their habitats through fun, simple movements!

### Chaperone Introduction (say to the students):

*"Let's become Zoo Protectors and go on a mission to help the Earth and all the animals that live here. We'll travel through different places and help in different ways—using our bodies and imaginations!"*

### Adventure Movements:

1. "Climb the Rainforest Tree" (30 sec)
  - Reach arms up, one at a time like climbing a ladder.
  - *"Let's climb high to plant a new tree where animals can live!"*
2. "Pick Up the Plastic" (30 sec)
  - Squat down, pretend to pick up trash and toss it in a bin.
  - *"We're helping clean the ocean and beaches for turtles and fish!"*
3. "Make the Wind Blow" (30 sec)
  - Swing arms side to side like big gusts of wind.
  - *"We're using wind power instead of pollution!"*
4. "Be the Rain" (30 sec)
  - Start with finger tapping (light rain), then pat legs (bigger rain), then arms wide (a rainstorm!).
  - *"Rain helps the forests and the animals grow!"*
5. "Shield the Sun" (30 sec)
  - Hold one hand over your eyes and slowly turn like you're scanning the horizon.
  - *"We're protecting the Earth from getting too hot!"*
6. "Build a Safe Home" (30 sec)
  - Stack pretend blocks or logs (squat and reach).
  - *"We're building safe spaces for animals to live in peace!"*

Cool Down: "Grow a Garden" (1 min)

- Squat like a seed, then slowly rise up and stretch arms into a blooming flower.
- Take 3 deep breaths.
- *"Every little thing we do can help nature grow and be strong!"*

### Chaperone Tips:

- Use call-and-response:
- *"What are we?"* → Students: *"Zoo Protectors!"* or *"Desert Defenders!"*
- Keep it light, energetic, and focused on action.
- Remind them: *"Even small kids can do big things for the planet!"*

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**Chaperone instructions:** Invite each student to share their answer to the question. After everyone has had a chance to respond, gently guide the group toward the correct answer together.

**1. Did you see people helping animals at the zoo?**

*Answer: Yes! Zookeepers feed the animals, clean their spaces, and make sure they're healthy.*

**2. What are some things people do to keep animal homes (habitats) clean and safe?**

*Answer: They give enrichment and give animals a clean and safe space to live.*

**3. How do zoo workers make sure animals have what they need to survive?**

*Answer: They give animals food, water, enrichment activities, and a safe space to sleep and hide.*

**4. Why do you think it's important for people to help animals?**

*Answer: Because animals need help to stay safe, healthy, and happy - just like us!*

**5. Can kids help animals and the Earth too? How?**

*Answer: Yes! We can pick up trash, recycle, use less water, and learn about animals to protect them!*

# GLOSSARY

## GLOSSARY

- **African savanna:** Tropical grassland, has big open spaces, lots of grass, and just a few trees.
- **Armor:** The protective layer or shell of an animal.
- **Burrow:** A hole or tunnel in the ground that animals dig to stay safe or cool.
- **Camouflage:** Colors or patterns that help animals blend in with their surroundings to hide from predators.
- **Carnivore:** An animal that eats meat.
- **Enrichment:** Providing animals mental and physical exercise.
- **Food:** Something living things eat to get energy and grow.
- **Herbivore:** An animal that eats plants.
- **Pack:** A group of animals that live or travel together, like painted dogs or springbok.
- **Pollinator:** Animals that help plants reproduce by transferring pollen from one flower to another.
- **Pollution:** When harmful things are added to our environment, making it dirty and unsafe for animals.
- **Predator:** An animal that preys on other animals.
- **Prey:** An animal that is caught by another animal.
- **Shelter:** A safe space where animals or people can rest or hide.
- **Social animal:** Animals who need companionship and therefore live in a group.
- **Space:** A large continuous area for animals to roam.
- **Water:** A liquid that all plants and animals need to stay alive and healthy.