
Hoptoad Habitats: Welcome Wildlife

Summary: This activity builds on a basic understanding of habitat by asking students' to develop a habitat design for their own yards. This knowledge will prepare students for the "Puddle Jumpers" field study visit.

Objective: Students will create a habitat enhancement plan for their yard, school yard, or park for an amphibian species such as the American toad.

Grades: 3-5

Subject: Science, language, art

Skills: communication, creative thinking, habitat design, art

Materials: Graph paper, pencils, frog/toad stickers, colored pencils or crayons

Activity

1. Now that students have an understanding of what comprises a habitat, and specifically what makes a toad's habitat, they will be asked to problem solve and apply the principals to their own yards, the school grounds, or a nearby park. If most of the students live in an urban area without yards, the teacher can focus on the school ground or a nearby park.
2. On graph paper, sketch a diagram of your yard (or other location) as if you were in an airplane looking down. Draw your house, driveway, trees, shrubs, everything that is in your yard right now.
3. Look at your yard design. Do you have shelter for wildlife as it is now? What about food sources? Water? Remember that different animals eat different foods, so the lawn may be food for rabbits, but not for butterflies. If you do have food for the rabbit, do you have shelter? If not, how can you provide that? Draw in ways to meet the habitat needs for various wildlife, or a particular or favorite species. The toad house, mini-pools, and natural areas that aren't mowed are projects students should remember and possibly include in their plans.
4. Share the habitats, have students explain what was in their yard/area, and why they added things, what they hope to attract. Have other students offer suggestions to further improve the chances. Give each student who shares their design a wildlife sticker on their work, preferably a frog or toad.

