

Post-Lesson: Beyond the Classroom Webinars: Biodiversity



Hello again!

Thank you for joining us in this webinar series and session about biodiversity and conservation in Utah. Here is a final art and science activity to make some observations of biodiversity in your local area.

Just like we learned about in the Webinar session, it's important to see and know what animals are there. It's equally important to know if animals aren't there, the ones that normally would call these areas their home. We can then figure out how to best protect them and the land.

Now let's go and make some observations with a Local Animal Observation Activity.

Supplies needed:

- **Pencil**
- **Notebook or paper and clipboard**

Step 1:

Get ready to go out and make some observations on local wildlife by writing down the below questions in your notebook or on your paper. Make sure to leave spaces for you to answer.

- **Date**
- **Time**
- **Temperature**
- **Weather Condition**
- **Location**
- **Coordinates**
- **Species Name (if known)**
- **Physical Description**
- **Number of Individuals Monitored (how many of this type of animal you see)**
- **Behavioral Notes (what is the animal doing)**
- **Sketch (leave yourself plenty of room to make your sketch)**

Step 2:

Go outside into a Utah environment. This can be done as a class or individually.

Step 3:

**What can you observe around you? What do you see?
Hear? Smell?**

Step 4:

Find at least one animal (a bird, squirrel, lizard, deer, etc.)

Step 5:

While looking closely at your chosen animal start to fill in your notebook. You can use this observation as an example.

Date: 1 January 2020

Time: 0800 – 0830 MST

Temperature: 25° Fahrenheit (-4° Celsius)

Weather Condition: Clear, with the sun still rising. Little to no wind.

Location: Liberty Park, Salt Lake City, Utah

Coordinates: 40.7465, -111.8744

Number of Individuals Monitored: 5

Species Name (if known): Eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*)

Physical Description: Large and agile, especially compared to other squirrels in the area. In certain cases, it's easy to see how they might outweigh their other squirrel counterparts by 50-75%. They have grey to blackish fur covering the entire dorsal portion of their body, from head to tail, although the tail is more speckled with this coloration than the body. The ventral portion of their body, however, is a brilliant orange color, which extends from the bottom of the chin to the rump. The tail is large and bushy, with a mix of speckled greyish, blackish, and orange color.

Behavioral Notes: Seem to be confined to areas with avid tree cover, as they spend much of their time in trees. They will venture along the ground in search of food, only to run back to their home tree once found. They seem to be quite active during this time of day, surprising given the cold. They seem to prefer eating nuts and acorns. Their tail serves a number of functions of which I've observed: 1) multiple individuals have wrapped themselves up in their tail, which I assume is meant to keep them warm; 2) their tail seems to aid in balance as they run across tree limbs, much like a mountain lion; 3) one individual seemed to use its tail for communication with another, twitching its tail in quick successions in what seemed like a territorial display.

Step 6:

Finish your observation with a sketch. Include as many details as possible.



Step 7:

As a class, gather together all of your observations and look at the biodiversity in your area! How many people saw similar animals? What are some differences between the observations? Did you notice anything that could be dangerous to the animals? What's something people can do to help make it safer?

Share your observations with others!

- **Help with the biodiversity sciences in your area! To do and submit more observations with a phone, download and use the iNaturalist app.**
- **Have your work featured on the UMFA website by submitting pictures to schoolprograms@umfa.utah.edu. Or, if possible, post on social media with #umfak12 and tag us on Instagram or Facebook with @utahmuseumoffinearts or on twitter with @umfa.**

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