



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Games, Nature, & Experiments

### What is Leave No Trace?

**Estimated Time:** 20 - 60 minutes (per principle)

**Age range:** All grades (with guidance)

**What you need:** paper, writing utensil, printer (optional), additional materials are specified for each principle

#### Background Information:

“The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace provide an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. Although Leave No Trace has its roots in backcountry settings, the Principles have been adapted so that they can be applied anywhere – from remote wilderness areas, to local parks and even in your own backyard. They also apply to almost every recreational activity. Each Principle covers a specific topic and provides detailed information for minimizing impacts.

“The Seven Principles are well established and widely known, but they are not static. The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics continually examines, evaluates and reshapes the Principles. The Center’s Education Department conducts research – including publishing scholarly articles in independent journals – to ensure that the Principles are up to date with the latest insights from biologists, land managers and other leaders in outdoor education.”

The 7 Principles - Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics

<https://lnt.org/why/7-principles/>

#### Instructions:

Please see each of the seven Leave No Trace principles for ways to learn more about how to minimize your impact on the environment. The seven principles include:

- 1) Plan Ahead & Prepare: Know before you go
- 2) Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces: Choose the right path
- 3) Dispose of Waste Properly: Trash your trash
- 4) Leave What You Find: Take photos, leave footprints
- 5) Minimize Campfire Impacts: Be careful with fire
- 6) Respect Wildlife: Be kind to animals
- 7) Be Considerate to Others: You are not the only visitors

## Games, Nature, & Experiments

### 6) Respect Wildlife: Be Kind to Animals

**Estimated Time:** 20 – 60 minutes

**Age range:** All grades (with guidance)

**What you need:** writing utensil and/or coloring materials, paper



#### New Words

A **habitat** is an organism's (living thing's) home.

An **environment** represents the natural world.

**Littering** refers to leaving garbage on the ground, rather than in an appropriate trash receptacle.

An **ecosystem** is a place where living and non-living things come together and interact.

A **natural resource** is a material or substance that can be found in nature. Natural resources are often depended upon by organisms (living things) for their survival.

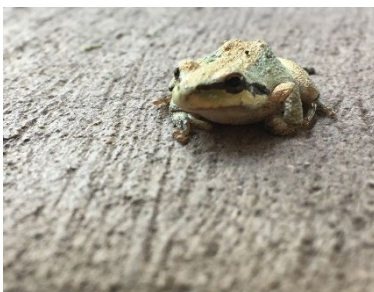
**Observations** are things that you notice using one or more of your senses.

#### Introduction:

The Respect Wildlife principle of Leave No Trace provides all-encompassing guidelines for how to considerately and safely observe animals in their natural **habitat** (home). Wildlife is almost always present in outdoor settings, yet often invisible to humans. When we enter a natural space we should show wildlife the same amount of respect that we would want in our own homes or spaces.

#### Noise Guidelines:

- This means keeping noise levels down, avoiding contaminating any resources wildlife may use, and giving all animals plenty of space.
- One exception to noise level is in bear country, where a moderate amount of noise is recommended in order to avoid startling bears.
- Because we don't always know when wildlife is present, it's important to keep these guidelines in mind when recreating in *any* natural space.



### Group Size Guidelines:

- Smaller group sizes help to minimize human impact on the **environment** and wildlife.
- Loud noises, **littering**, and disturbances to habitat all negatively affect animals.
- With more people around you, it can be easier to overlook LNT guidelines. For example, a group may be observing (watching) animals from a respectful distance, but if one group member begins to approach the animals, it becomes “okay” for others to do the same.
- Try having a group discussion (before your outdoor excursion/adventure) on how you will keep each other accountable when it comes to respecting wildlife.
- If you have a larger group planning an outdoor excursion, consider splitting into smaller groups when appropriate.



### Guidelines for Giving Animals Space:

- Maintaining an appropriate distance from animals is an important aspect of respecting them. There are a couple tricks you can use to gauge whether you are giving enough space.
- One “rule of thumb” involves using your thumb as a proximity (closeness) measuring tool. When observing an animal, hold your arm out straight in front of you, and try to use your thumb to block out the animal with one eye closed.
- If the animal is completely blocked, you are likely at a far enough distance. If your thumb does not completely block the animal, move away until it does.
- Although this method mostly applies to larger mammals, you can show smaller wildlife the same amount of respect, and observe their natural behaviors by keeping your distance!



#### Guidelines for Movement Around Animals:

- Move slowly, as quick or startling movements can frighten or aggravate wildlife.
- Yellowstone National Park recommends keeping at least 100 yards away from animals like bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards from other large mammals.
- If an animal changes its behavior because it notices you, it means that you are too close.
- These recommendations are for the safety of both ourselves and of animals.
- Finding a sick or injured animal may cause us to forget this principle. It can be hard to ignore the desire to help the animal, but it's important to leave the animal where it is and notify an expert, like a game warden.
- Do not touch the animal under *any* circumstances. Approaching wildlife yourself may cause an injury to you or the animal if you are not a trained professional.

#### Guidelines for Keeping Resources Clean:

- A final consideration for respecting wildlife is keeping their resources clean and undisturbed.
- All animals need water, and we may often find ourselves close to lakes, rivers, creeks, and other sources of water that they use.
- Leave No Trace emphasizes that camps should be established at least 200 feet from water sources in order to allow wildlife to use them freely, especially at night.
- Along with setting up camp a safe distance from water sources, you should be careful when you wash dishes so that the soap does not pollute the **ecosystem**.
- Besides protecting water sources, it's important to preserve wildlife feeding habits. Providing outside food sources to animals can cause them to become dependent on humans for food.
- Providing outside food sources can also be harmful to animals because their digestive systems are not equipped to eat the same foods that humans eat.
- Always think before acting, and do your absolute best to preserve all **natural resources**.



Consider the following questions:

If wild animals rely on humans for food, what will they do when there are no humans around?

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Can you think of any other steps that can be taken to respect wildlife? What are they?

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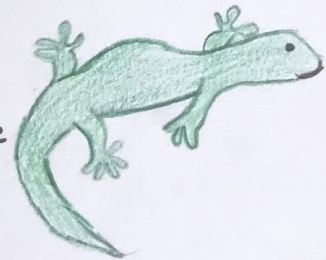
Now that we've learned about Respecting Wildlife, it's time for a wildlife scavenger hunt!

### Wildlife Scavenger Hunt Activity

# Wildlife Scavenger Hunt

Animal Name & Category	Observations	Draw the Animal!
example Rabbit ↓ Small Mammal	- Brown/White mixed fur - Large eyes on sides of head - Ears large, point straight up - Has whiskers - Small nose, twitches frequently	

- Wildlife Example Categories:
- Birds - Robin, Crow, Woodpecker
  - Insects - Butterfly, Beetle, Ant, Moth, Bee
  - Reptiles - Lizard, Frog, Snake, Salamander, Turtle
  - Amphibians
  - Small Mammals - Rabbit, Squirrel, Raccoon, Fox
  - \*Large Mammals - Deer, Bison, Coyote, Bear



\*Other evidence of animal life may include:

- tracks
- scat
- feathers
- bones

\*Large mammals may be harder to find in urban areas. Don't be discouraged if you can't find any! If you are in an area where they may appear, please keep a safe distance.

**Instructions:**

1. Create a chart to make **observations!** Yours should be similar to the example shown above.
2. Make a plan for how you will observe wildlife safely! If you have access to binoculars or a camera, bring those along. They are great tools that will allow you to make observations from a respectful and safe distance.
3. Get outside! Even if you aren't heading out for a full outdoor excursion, you can practice responsible observation skills in your neighborhood.
4. Record the wildlife you see in your chart. Draw a picture and make as many detailed observations as possible.
5. Try looking for signs that an animal is present, even if the animal is not *physically* present. What kind of evidence can you find that proves an animal was in the area at an earlier time? Record these observations and try to guess what type of animal the evidence may have come from.

**Sources:**

<https://Int.org/why/7-principles/>

<https://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wild-animal-safety>

<https://Int.org/why/7-principles/respect-wildlife/>

<https://evlt.org/trust-our-land-waiting-for-wildlife-and-hiking-with-friends/>