

Wetlands Activity One “Critter Clippers”

Academic Question: How do we identify wetland creatures’ adaptations?

Objective(s):

- To learn the characteristics and ecology of common wetland animals
- To recognize basic identification characteristics of common wetland animals

Materials:

[Critter Clippers Cards](#) (printed out)
Paper clips or clothespins

Process (Activities): This activity is a fun, informative, “out of the seat” lesson. It will allow students to sharpen their questioning and answering skills while learning about organisms and their adaptations. The activity will work with any level and with any number of students providing there are enough cards. More can be easily added from one of the two dichotomous key links on the Cyberways and Waterways web site:

<http://www.4empowerment.com/en/fieldreferences/biodiversity/dichkey.jhtml>

1. With a paperclip or clothespin, clip one Critter Clippers play card to the back of each student with the picture showing.
2. Have the students walk around and ask others questions about their critter.
3. Each student may only ask one question at a time, and each question must pertain to a characteristic of an organism until the animal is guessed.
4. The answers given must be in **yes** or **no** form.
5. Once the critter is guessed, **do not allow students to remove critter**.
6. Have students write down or discuss a few facts about the animal on their back (place detail on adaptations).
7. After everyone has completed this step, allow students to look at the organism and read the back of the card.
8. Have students add to their discussion/list several new facts about the organism.

This activity can be conducted at many different levels. Depending on the level of the students, determine how detailed the answers must be.

Extension(s): Students can also use other resources to get information on the organisms. See above dichotomous key URL.

Teacher Tips: This activity can be done at the beginning, middle and wrap-up of a wetland module in the classroom. It teaches students how to look for certain characteristics in identification of animals from general to specific. It also brings in information on the ecology and life history of wetland animals.

Assessment/Evaluation: Have students develop their own version of “Critter Clippers” for the class. Have the student create a wetland animal checklist of those found at the field site. You can also ask the student to create a dichotomous key using the characteristics of the animals used in the activity, moving from the general to specific.

Time frame: 1-2 class periods

Grade level: 6-12

TEKS Correlation:

Science

Grade 6: 6.3, 6.4

Grade 7: 7.3, 7.4

Grade 8: 8.3, 8.4

Biology: C8A, C8B, C8C

Environmental Systems: C4A

Aquatic Science: C7B