



# Wildlife Habitat Checklist

## Outdoor Classroom Field Journal Activity Lesson Plans & Resources

**Online Lesson Plans & Resources:** <https://www.alabamawildlife.org/oc-activity-habitat-checklist/>

Students will research an animal native to Alabama that they would like to attract to the school's outdoor classroom and the habitat resources that animal needs to survive. Then, they will explore the outdoor classroom to determine whether or not the resources needed are available in the school's wildlife habitat.

### **Background Information** (online as a PDF)

The background information and vocabulary review below can be used to help introduce the topic, engage the students, and build a foundation to discuss the topic:

**Habitat** is the natural home or **ecosystem** where an animal lives. Different habitats have different characteristics such as their geographical location, **climate** (weather patterns), and geology and soil structure. The plants and animals in a habitat are adapted physically and behaviorally to survive in that specific environment.

Habitat must provide the resources that the various species (types) of plants and animals need to survive including sources of food, water, shelter/cover, and places to raise their young to survive in their habitat. Therefore, all animals cannot live in all types of habitats. Some habitats provide a species the resources it needs to survive, while others do not. Some animals can find all of the resources they need in a small area (like a frog in a pond), while others may have to travel over a larger geographical area to find all of the resources they need (such as birds searching for food).

When a resource disappears, such as the loss of nesting sites due to new construction or the loss of water sources due to a drought, the animals may become displaced or may not be able to find new habitat. If they have to travel through dangerous areas (near predators or across roads) to find the resources they need, this can lead to a decline in that species' **population**. Therefore, resource availability can have an effect on a population's rate of reproduction and survival.

Humans can help though. We can research what resources are needed by specific wildlife species, and we can try to provide those resources in a schoolyard or backyard habitat. For example, bird baths can provide water, berry-producing bushes and bird feeders can provide food sources, and trees and nesting boxes can provide shelter and places to raise their young for Eastern bluebirds.

### **Vocabulary Review**

- **Climate** – prevailing weather patterns in a specific geographical location.
- **Ecosystem** – a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.
- **Habitat** – the natural home or ecosystem where a plant or animal lives.
- **Population** – the number of a specific species living in a defined area.
- **Species** – a group of organisms (living things) that have the same traits and characteristics, and they can exchange genetic material and reproduce.

