



### 1. Tree Tag

One person is it. They try to tag everyone else. The other players are safe when they are touching a tree. If a player is tagged, he or she shares the role of "it" with the first. The game continues until all players are tagged.

### 2. Stalking

Supplies: blindfolds and sticks

Explain that the quietest of animals will eat during the harsh winter. If the prey has heard you, you will not be eating this winter.

Have one person sit on the ground with a blindfold on. They are the "prey". They have sticks on the ground between their legs.

The rest of the group become "predators" who are stalking their "prey" (the sticks on the ground). At the start of the game, as the leader calls them out by quietly pointing, the predators start making their way to their prey as quietly as possible.

If the prey hears the predator, they point in the direction of the sound they heard. If they are pointing to a predator, that predator goes back and has to try again as the prey heard them and ran away (theoretically).

The prey can also wave around their arms and hands to try to touch a predator as they are trying to grab a stick and make it back to where they started.

A new prey may be chosen after a few rounds, or after a predator has been detected or tagged.

### 3. Nature Sounds

Supplies: note cards and pencils

The group is given five minutes to see who can make the longest list of things heard in the woods during that time. It may be a raindrop, crow, cow, rooster in distance, rustling leaves of oak or the swish of the pine, tapping of the woodpecker, or song of the brook.

## 4. Bat & Moth



Supplies needed: film canister, some coins, a blindfold

Directions: Have 10-20 kids form a circle to define the game boundary. The leader should go in the middle and ask questions like: does anyone know how bats use sonar? Does anyone know what echolocation is, etc. Then the leader explains the game and the point of it—to demonstrate how bats use echolocation to locate their prey. This game simulates how bats use sonar to detect their prey—by bouncing sound off the moth, the bat can locate the moth. From the bat’s point of view, the noise comes from the moth. Pick a student to be the bat and another to be the moth. The circled kids hold hands to create a boundary. The bat stands in the center of the circle. The moth moves around the circle between the bat and the boundary. Blindfold the bat so they can only use sound to “capture” the moth. The moth shakes the canister of coins at all times and the bat has to “detect” the moth from this sound. The bat has to keep the blindfold on and tries to tag the moth, as the moth runs around shaking the canister. Once the bat tags the moth, that round is over. The leader can then pick a new bat and a new moth. Play until everyone gets a turn (if you have time and if the kids are still interested)!

Lesson: This fast-paced interactive game introduces students to the concept of echolocation & predator-prey relationships.

## 5. Avoid the Predator!



Supplies Needed: Spray bottle & blindfold & a small object like a pinecone

Directions: Introduce students to the concept of quiet movement and practice “fox walking” where you put your toes or heels down first and slowly lower your foot. After practicing, have kids come back to the circle. Now put it into practice: have a predator (the fox) out in the open—and explain that the prey have to go near the predator to get their food, so the prey have to be super quiet. This is example of how close and quiet prey sometimes have to be! Have the predator hold the “food” (pine cone) in their open hand. The object of the game is for the prey to take the food out of the predator’s hand without being detected. Note to the leader: clearly in the natural world, the prey wouldn’t grab the food out of the predator’s hand...this just illustrates how prey have to take risks and sometimes get dangerously close to predators in order to survive. Pick a predator & blindfold them. They go in the middle of the circle and hold a spray bottle with water. Tell the predator when it starts. The leader then points to one kid in the circle and they quietly try to stalk up and grab item out of predator’s hand without being noticed. If they are noticed, the predator can spray, and if the prey is hit by the spray from the bottle, they are unsuccessful and have to stay where they are (they can’t make noise at all!). Rules for predator: Keep palm flat & keep hand out! Can’t just shoot water, have to do targeted water squirts. Possible modification: Limit number of squirts a predator gets. Once a prey gets the food, that person gets to be the next predator and the game resets. The leader picks students until one gets the food. Could also pick multiple prey at a time if it’s going really well! If time and interest are there, you could give everyone a turn; there is not a definitive end to this game.

Lesson: This teaches students the necessity of quiet movement for predators & prey as well as the close quarters that predators & prey share.

## 6. Wildlife Watching

Supplies Needed: None

Directions: Explain that in nature, when you're trying to see wild animals, they often move very quickly, which demands good observation and awareness skills. If you want to tell someone later what you saw, you need these skills! This game will help hone those skills. Split the group into 2 parts, or lines. Pair students so the lines are facing each other 6 feet apart. Give instructions one at a time. 1. Observe everything about the student in front of them. Then, everyone turns their backs and no one can peek! 2. Have each kid change 3 things about their appearance (e.g. roll up sleeves, untie shoe, tuck in shirt, etc.). 3. Have kids turn around and take turns seeing if they can figure out what the other person changed. The leader can do more or less directing of the game depending on the group. After the kids have figured out the changes, have everyone take 5 big steps back & rotate one side so kids have different partners. Repeat.

Lesson: This game teaches observation & awareness skills—it'll help kids become good wildlife watchers and will help them be able to see animals in the wild!

## 7. Coyotes & Rabbits OR Hawks, Mice & Owls

Supplies Needed: Cones or lines on a field

Directions: Coyotes & Rabbits is the daytime version, Hawks, Mice & Owls is the daytime & night version.

Often, predators are in the world hunting prey and prey have to go from safe places like a rabbit warren to another place like a feeding area—and to get there they have to cross an area where there's more risk of being hunted. If you're prey, and a predator shows up, what are you going to do? Run like crazy! What do rabbits do when they see you? Run! Prey are always assessing danger but sometimes have to face danger to get to their homes or food. At the sign of danger, they often run.

**Coyotes & Rabbits Variation:** Pretend you're a rabbit and you're hungry. There's a coyote in the middle of a field, and you have to go through the field to get to a safe feeding area from your safe warren. Behind the near line, you're safe. Behind the far line, you're safe. (Need boundaries on 2 other sides too.) Pick 1 student to be the coyote—they stand in the middle of the field. The rest of the kids are rabbits & they all line up on one line. When the coyote howls, the rabbits run across the field. The coyote tries to tag the rabbits. If they get tagged, they become a coyote for the next round. So it gets harder each time for the rabbits. The last rabbit to get tagged becomes the new coyote.

**Hawks, Mice & Owls Variation:** This time, there are 2 predators: a hawk & an owl. During the day, the owl sleeps. During the night, the hawk sleeps. The mice have to go 1 way during the day (& avoid the hawk) and then come back at night (and avoid the owl).

Lesson: Kids learn about predator-prey relations including the fact that some animals hunt during the day, and others hunt at night.

## 8. Camera



Supplies Needed: None

Directions: Pair students up. One student is the photographer; one is the camera. The camera closes their eyes and keeps them closed until the photographer pulls their left earlobe. The photographer picks a scene they want to capture. This could be a close up of a flower, a landscape or some other nature scene. The photographer gently maneuvers the camera's frame of vision to capture that image. When the camera is in place, the photographer gently pulls the left earlobe of the camera and the shutter snaps open—AKA the camera opens their eyes to view the nature scene. Then the camera and photographer discuss the scene. Then they switch!

Lesson: Facilitates close observation skills & provides a structure for students to be in a closer view of the surrounding world. It also utilizes suspense & cultivates an appreciation of the beauty of the world around us!

## 9. Predator/Prey Red Rover



Step 1: Divide a group of people into two teams. Each team should have the same number of people. One team is predators and the other team is prey. Children can choose to be specific animals or birds if they wish.

Step 2: Form two lines. The two teams should face each other, and the members of each team should join hands.

Step 3: Decide which team must go first. That team looks at the members of the opposing team and picks the person that they want to come over. They then chant, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send \_\_\_(can name predator or prey animal that a child is) \_\_\_ right over!" The child whose name was called runs as fast as he can toward the opposing side. If he breaks through the arms of any two team members, he can choose one team member to bring back with him as he returns, victorious, to his own side. If he does not succeed in breaking through the arms of any two team members, he becomes a member of the opposing team.

Step 4: Repeat step three with the opposing team. They now get to call a member over from the first team.

Step 5: Play Predator/Prey Red Rover until one side has all the team members. (With this method of ending Red Rover, note that all the children are winners, because they all end up on the same side.) If time is short, the team with the most people wins. You can talk about the food chain and that in real nature, everyone couldn't be just a predator or prey because natural cycles would become unbalanced.

## 10. Nature Wax Figure Tag

1. Designate one child as being “it”
2. Establish boundaries so that children don’t run too far when being chased. (i.e. children have to stay in the forest)
3. When the person that is “it” tags another person. The tagged person has to freeze.
4. The “it” person gives the frozen person a nature item to pretend to be. ( Tree, bird, plant, animal, insect, fish, etc.)
5. Another child who is free can unfreeze a frozen child.
6. To be unfrozen, the child who is frozen has to act out a forest bird, animal, insect or tree. The free child has to guess what the frozen child is acting out. If he can guess without being tagged, both children are free and the frozen child can resume play in the game.

The game can be played until everyone is frozen or until everyone is tired.

## 11. Pick-up Sticks

Supplies: sticks

Begin by collecting about twenty sticks from the forest floor. Find a nice, clear spot on the ground to sit and set up the game. With all the sticks held about a foot from the ground, drop them! Each player tries to sneak, or pick up, a stick from the tangled pile without disturbing, or moving, any of the other sticks. The player with the largest pile of picked-up sticks wins the game!

## 12. Salamander Survival

Supplies: life chips (any material, trinkets)

A salamander will defend itself by bending its head down, or laying its head flat against the ground and head butting when attacked. When attacked, the “salamanders” must defend themselves using one of the above strategies. Predators can be shrews, birds, snakes, other salamanders, beetles, centipedes, and spiders. If unable to defend themselves in time before tagged by a predator, tagged prey must give one life chip to predator. The predator with the most life chips at the end of the game wins!

