



School Program Name: Life Under A Log
Name of Sanctuary: Habitat Education Center
Grade Level: Grades 3-5
Location Options: picnic space available after walk
Time: 90 minutes, Sept-Nov, Apr-Jun
For more info: dmccullough@massaudubon.org or
617-489-5050 ext 206

Program Description

While there's a lot about New England woods that we can see - chipmunks, stone walls, pine needles - there is much more that we seldom see. On each fallen twig, under every log, and in each pile of leaves, there are animals and other living things. By exploring this important habitat, we will discover the decomposers that are constantly working out of sight.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

Framework: Science and Technology
Strand: Life Science
Topic: Soil

Learning Standards

- 3-5 Earth Science #4: Explain and give examples of the ways in which soil is formed (the weathering of rock by water and wind and from the decomposition of plant and animal remains).
- 3-5 Life Science #3: Recognize that plants and animals go through predictable life cycles that include birth, growth, development, reproduction, and death.
- 3-5 Life Science #7: Give examples of how changes in the environment (drought, cold) have caused some plants and animals to die or move to new locations (migration).

Lesson Objectives

- By exploring the forest floor, students will find and identify living organisms, many of which are responsible for decomposition.
- Through activities and up close observation, students will learn why decomposition is vital to the earth.



Vocabulary

Life cycle

Detritus

Bacteria

Decomposers

Invertebrate

Mycelium

Assessments

- Students will be encouraged to share their discoveries throughout the walk.

Summarizer

- Groups will return to the “log circle” where Habitat teachers spend a few minutes summarizing the discoveries that were made and any vocabulary that was discussed. Visiting teachers and chaperones are also encouraged to continue the summation with the students after they have left the sanctuary.





Mass Audubon School Programs

At Mass Audubon we strive to create learning experiences that are enriching, innovative, meaningful, and engaging. All our school programs are aligned with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Our network of wildlife sanctuaries and nature centers located in urban, suburban, and rural communities around the state enable us to have strong relationships with local schools.

Our Education Foundations

- Place-based education is an educational philosophy that connects learning to what is local for an individual. We help build conservation communities, working with students and teachers in cities and towns to develop place-based environmental education that is linked directly to their home community.
- Inquiry-based learning is focused on teamwork, being learner-centered, questioning ourselves and the world around us, providing a more focused, time-intensive exploration, promoting lifelong learning, communication, and learning as fun.
- We are fully committed to creating a positive and supportive environment for all learners.
- We strive to be culturally sensitive, recognizing and embracing cultural differences.

Differentiated Instruction

- We strive to create a positive learning environment that is inclusive, supportive to all learners, and sensitive to cultural diversity.
- Outdoor classroom experiences are structured to meet the needs of the particular learners.
- Students work in small groups using hands-on materials.
- A variety of educational media are used, including colorful illustrations.
- With advance notice, efforts will be made to accommodate all learning styles and physical needs.

Notes

- Nature exploration is dependent upon the weather and other conditions. A class might observe different wildlife than they expected to see. An outdoor lesson can sometimes provide unexpected, but enriching teachable moments on a natural history topic that was not planned.
- Mass Audubon nature centers each have a unique landscape and will customize programs to work best at their particular site.
- Our lessons can be adapted to incorporate a classroom teacher's needs.

