

Animal Tales

Self-Guided Program

Please share this pre/post-visit kit with other teachers that are coming to the FWC with your group.

Thank you for booking the Animal Tales Self-Guided program at Fort Whyte Centre. This program is designed to provide a beginning understanding of the Canada Goose, the White-tailed Deer and the environment in which they live.

Attached are a series of pre- and post-visit activities. In order to make your time with us more effective, we have designed this package for use in your daycare before and after your visit to the Centre. The pre-visit activities are intended to provide some vocabulary and background before your visit, without affecting the novelty of the experience. Post visit activities are intended to reinforce ideas from the program and to extend the children's learning and experience. These are suggested activities only. Please feel free to use any or all of these activities with your children; and to add and stress your own material.

GOAL

To encourage pre-school children to explore nature using all of their senses; to deepen their understandings of the concept of the Canada Goose and the White-tailed Deer; and to deepen their appreciation of the natural world and the creatures who live within it.

VOCABULARY

Goose-related words

Clutch: A group of eggs.

Egg tooth: A pointed projection on the tip of a baby bird's bill, which it uses to help it break out of its shell.

Flock: A large group of birds.

Gander: sometimes used to describe the male geese.

Goose: sometimes used to describe the female geese.

Goslings: Young geese.

Migrate: To travel in search of food or breeding grounds on a regular basis

Preening: Cleaning and oiling the feathers.

Webbed feet: Feet in which the toes are joined together by flaps of skin.

Deer-related words

Buck: Male deer

Doe: Female deer

Fawn: Baby deer

Antlers: Hard bony growths on the head of the male deer

Hooves: Curved coverings of horn that protect an animal's feet

Rut: Mating season

Rub: A marking on a tree left from a male deer rubbing his antlers

Scrape: A marking left on the ground from a male deer digging with his hooves
Game Trail: Pathways made by deer for ease of travel

Other words

Camouflage: A colouring disguise that hides an object from view

Predators: Animals that eat other animals to survive

Habitat: The entire area in which an animal lives and moves

Territory: Area that an animal defends from other animals of the same kind

PRE/POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Bring in books (both story and information books) and pictures featuring White-tailed deer or Canada geese for the children to look at and have read to them. This will pique their curiosity about these animals.
2. A good preliminary question to ask children is: "Have you ever seen a goose? A deer? If so, where? If not where do you think you would be most likely to see one?". Try to get a good goose or deer conversation going!
3. Look at the parts of the deer and goose and compare these animals to other animals that the children know, such as dogs, cats, birds, frogs, etc...
4. Remind the children that humans are animals too and have them compare themselves to geese/deer.
5. Have the children role play what it would be like to be an animal living in the wild. What would they eat? where would they drink? where would they sleep? how would they hide? etc.
6. Have the children draw their impression of a deer or a goose before the program; see if their concept of these animals changes after the "Animal Tales" program and after your group's exploration.
7. Two poems will be included in your Discovery Kit (please see pages attached to this document). You may wish to print them on flip-chart paper and read them to the children before and/or after they come to Fort Whyte. Children may also like to bring a copy home to read with their parents.

DISCOVERY KIT

Upon your arrival to the Centre we will ask that you present yourself to the Front Desk. Our receptionist will hand you your Nature Discovery Kit. We've created a package jam-packed full of goodies for you and your group. Explanations will be included with many of the materials to facilitate use. Your Kit will contain the following:

- Deer leg
- Laminated track chart

- Antler
- White felt tail
- Goose foot
- Feathers
- Goose puppet head
- Goose call
- Photos
- Stories
- Poems
- Visitor Guide

INSIDE THE INTERPRETIVE CENTRE

"Today we're going to be learning all about White-tailed deer. Can anyone tell me what a deer is? Has anyone ever seen a deer? What do they look like? Where can we find them?"

"Right now we're going to listen to a special story and you'll get a chance to imagine what it feels like to live as a deer in the forest. Stand up, close your eyes and take a deep breath... and another. Now relax your body and use your imagination as you listen to me."

Read "Forest Fantasy". Through creative visualization, children will pretend to become white-tailed deer. Afterwards ask them questions like: "What was your favourite part?", "How did you have to change to become a deer?", "Would you like to be a White-tailed deer?"...

AND / OR

"Today we are going to be learning all about the Canada Goose. Can anyone tell me what a oose is? Has anyone ever seen a goose? What do they look/sound like? Where can we find them?"

"Right now we are going to listen to a special story and you'll get a chance to imagine what it is like to live as a deer in the forest. Stand up, close your eyes and take a deep breath... and another. Now relax your body and use your imagination as you listen to me.

Read "Flight of Fantasy". Through creative visualization children will pretend to become Canada Geese. Afterwards ask them questions like: "What was your favourite part of being a goose?", "How did you have to change to become a goose?", "Would you like to be a goose?"...

Introduce the Discovery Kit. Let children know that you'll be pulling things out of it along your walk. "This is our Discovery Kit and it is full of all sorts of neat things that I'll be taking out to show you as we walk along outside".

OUTSIDE

Before going outside it is important to explain the following safety rules. (Avoid explaining these at the doors as this blocks the entrance for other groups):

1. You are the leader and everyone must stay behind you. Explain the "Deer Walk" (see the next page) here: listen with cupped ears... and watch for the leader's white 'tail' flag, "You should never go behind it and always be watching for it so that you don't miss anything important". Practice this with the children 1 or 2 times.
2. Walk only on the trails.
3. Do not pick anything ("let's leave it there for others to see!"), and leave only your footprints behind!

Deer Walk

Adapted from Keepers of the Earth

Children love to play games en route to a site. You can use the "Deer Walk" to create suspense and interest. First have them cup their hands behind their ears to create "deer ears". Listen carefully and compare the intensity of sounds heard with and without the deer ears. Ask the children why deer can usually hear people coming before the people notice the deer.

"Because they listen quietly?"

"Right, and that's how we'll walk, with our deer ears alert and as quiet as can be," you reply. "Deer will signal danger by raising their tails and showing the white patch underneath. Whenever you see my white flag, quietly gather around and we'll look at whatever has been found or seems interesting to see." (And you'll probably want to add: "It's also very important to stay behind me because if you get out in front you won't be able to see my signal")

While outside, you can choose the path that is most comfortable to you. We recommend walking the Waterfowl Garden Trail or the Forest Song Trail. You may also wish to have the children fly like geese, hop like rabbits, and slink like fox to the next point of interest. Encourage the children to look for deer clues (droppings, footprints, scrapes) and goose clues (droppings, footprints, feathers).and reveal items from the Discovery Kit along the way.

WATERFOWL GARDEN TRAIL

There are plenty of things to explore here!

White-tailed deer

Deer are common along the Waterfowl Garden Trail. You and your group may be lucky enough to spot them! Discuss how bucks rub their antlers on trees in the fall; there are deer rubs on the willow trees at the far end of the Gardens.

- Show the picture of the deer rubbing his antlers on the tree. "Why do you think they do this?"
- Show the antlers here and demonstrate how young bucks rattle their antlers.
- Show the picture of rattling bucks.

Talk about how and why bucks have antlers and grow new ones every year. "Why do you think the bucks need antlers?"

- Show the picture of the porcupine. Ask the children "What do you think is happening here?", and talk about how antlers are important as food for small creatures as they are full of calcium).

Explore the area for signs of deer browse -- torn twigs. "Why do you think the twigs look torn"? Deer only have bottom teeth. "What would it be like to only have bottom teeth in the front of your mouth"? Have the children try it by bringing their bottom teeth together with their upper lip.

You can also see the trails that the deer like to follow, their 'beds' and their tracks in the mud. Let the children try to figure out what these are after you point them out to them.

Canada Geese

"What are geese like? How are their feet different from ours? Do they have claws? What do they remind you of? How would you describe their beaks? What is their body like? their head? their neck? What colours are they? Can you walk like a goose? Try it! How do geese swim? How do babies know how to swim, does their mom teach them?"

- Show the picture of the mother and goslings: "What do you think their nest is made of? Why do you think they're yellow? Can you see them eating - what do they eat?"
- Show the picture of the goose feeding "What is it eating here?"...

Some Goose Facts:

- The goslings will stay with their parents until next spring, at that time they will be old enough to survive on their own (Show picture of mother goose on the nest with goslings?)
- Geese love to eat grain in the fields, grasses and bugs (Show picture of goose feeding?)
- Geese and other waterfowl have an oil gland on their bodies near the tail, the oil is spread over their feathers to keep them dry when in the water.

FOREST SONG TRAIL

Bird Feeding Station

Look for what a deer might eat (weeds, shrubs, twigs, mushrooms, nuts and lichens). Pluck some dogwood twigs (red-stemmed bushes near the path entrance to the station) and let the children try some if they want to!?

Keep looking for signs of deer. You may wish to talk about how deer sometimes eat the seeds, grains and nuts out of the feeders!

- Stop here and have the children listen to the poem. Get them to try it with you 1 or 2 times if you have time.

- You can also show the photograph of the fawn here. "Why does the fawn have white spots on its back?" (so that it can be well hidden or camouflaged in the forest -- but these spots gradually fade in the fall as the deer get older...)

If you'd like, take the less trodden path right after the bird-feeding station back to the Centre by letting the children run through the forest like real deer! This is also a good way to give them that last spurt of energy they may need to keep going!

Canada Geese

· This is a good opportunity to try comparing the birds you see to the geese: how are they alike? their size? feet? beaks? wings? where they stand/perch?

· What do these birds eat? Are some things the same? different?

· Would you expect to see a goose at your bird feeder? or walking in the forest?

- Read the children the goose poem. Have them try it with you a few times.

- Show the picture of geese flying in V-formation? "Why do you think geese fly like this? Talk about the different theories: to fly more easily (diminished wind resistance); so they can constantly see and maintain contact with each other...) "Perhaps one day you'll be the person to solve the mystery!" "Why is one line longer than the other?" (There are more geese in it!) "Where do you think the geese are going?", "Why??"...

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Deer, Deer, Moose!

(A slight variation of "Duck, Duck, Goose"). The children sit in a circle. The child who is it walks around the circle, touching everyone & saying "deer" each time. The child then picks someone by saying "Moose" instead of deer. These two children then run around the circle in opposite directions. The one that doesn't make it back to the empty spot becomes it. While the children are running, they must hold their thumbs on their heads with their fingers out to look like deer antlers.

Another "Active Activity"

Have the children act like protective mother deer. If a predator tries to attack a fawn, a doe will run in a zigzag formation in front of her fawn to lead predators away. By taking long leaps, she also leaves very little scent to follow. Let the children role play being the fox, doe and fawn.

Goose Talk!

Get the whole group role-playing all together the head/neck behaviours of the Canada goose - using the goose puppet as a model (see attached article).

- Show the picture of the male goose protecting the female and nest.

Try a group vocalization of an almost simultaneous "Honk" (male goose: get boys to do this) and "Hink" (female goose: get girls to do this). Try it a few times.

HELPFUL BOOKS

Deer

Carrick, Donald: **Harald and the Great Stag**

Dingwall, Laima: **Nature's Children: Deer**

Mastin, Colleayn O.: **Canadian Wild Animals**

Pruski, Jeffrey: **Bring Back the Deer**

Wolpert, Tom: **Whitetails for Kids**

Geese

Cochrane, Orin: **A Legend of the Goose and the Owl**

Dingwall, Laima: **Nature's Children: Canada Geese**

Mastin, Colleayn O.: **Canadian Birds**

Oppenheim, Joanne: **Have You Seen Birds?**

Ryder, Joanne: **Catching the Wind**

DEER FACTS

White-tailed deer eat: buds and twigs; ferns; fruit; fungi; grasses; herbs; leaves; nuts and seeds.

White-tailed deer are preyed upon by: bears, wolves and foxes; and deer that live in the city (like those that live in the Assiniboine forest) are often preyed upon by domestic dogs!!

The habitats of the white-tailed deer are: in forests, meadows and near marshes.

GOOSE FACTS

Canada Geese eat: water plants, grasses, grain, insects.

Canada Geese are preyed upon by: raptors, foxes and raccoons (eggs); and geese that live in the city are sometimes preyed upon by domestic dogs!!

Distinctive physical characteristics: Broad white band across throat and cheeks; black head, neck, legs and feet.

Habits: Pairs for life; group migration in V formation to the south for winter; well developed communication signals.

The habitat of Canada geese: wetlands; swamps, marshes, prairie potholes... as well as ponds, streams, lake shallows and cultivated fields (farmlands).