



Grade 4: Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife

In-Class Lesson Plan

Introduction

Humane education examines the relationship between animals and humans, recognizing that we share many of the same physical and emotional needs. Concepts learned through humane education promote and encourage further development of important character and life-building skills including empathy, sensitivity, responsibility, respect, compassion and kindness to all living beings. Knowledge of humane education concepts also provide individuals with the capacity for responsible and humane decision making, ultimately making our communities more enjoyable for all.

Learning Objectives

The purpose of this three-part lesson plan is to help students understand how they can best co-exist and live harmoniously with urban wildlife in their community. By the end of the lesson:

- Students will be able to distinguish key differences between wild versus domestic animals.
- Students will be aware of the urban wildlife living in our community.
- Students will be encouraged to think critically about the way humans interact with wildlife (e.g. urbanization and habitat loss).
- Students will understand what to do when they find wildlife that is healthy, orphaned, injured or in distress.
- Students will understand the role of the OHS with regards to urban wildlife.

Curriculum Link

All OHS humane education topics are available by grade level and are linked directly with the Ontario Curriculum. The *Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife* lesson aligns with the **Science and Technology: Understanding Life Systems – Habitats and Communities** component of the Grade 4 curriculum. According to the overall expectations identified in the curriculum, by the end of Grade 4, students should be able to:

- Analyze the effects of human activities on habitats and communities;
- Investigate the interdependence of plants and animals within specific habitats and communities;
- Demonstrate an understanding of habitats and communities and the relationships among the plants and animals that live in them.

Lesson Plan Summary

Day One: *Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife* Lesson (Appendix 1)

- Begin teaching the lesson by facilitating the *Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife* presentation. Teachers can book an OHS humane educator to facilitate the presentation at <https://ottawahumane.ca/youth-programs/teacher-resources/classroom-presentations/>.
- The presentation and accompanying script are also available for distribution if teachers would like to facilitate the presentation independently. We update our content regularly to ensure that it is always up-to-date and accurate. To ensure teachers have access to the updated content, the PowerPoint presentation and script are available electronically, by emailing humaneeducation@ottawahumane.ca.
- Leave time for a question and answer period at the end of the lesson. Students love to share their own stories about pets and animals – if time permits, allow them to share stories and help them draw conclusions about these experiences that relate to the lesson.

Day Two: *Living in Harmony* Lesson (Appendix 2)

- Follow the instructions provided on the *Living in Harmony* instruction sheet. Students will be challenged to think about the impact of litter on urban wildlife as they collect and record each item they find. Students will have the opportunity to discuss what they find, why it might attract urban wildlife, and how it can negatively impact animals in our community.
- Once the students have looked at their schoolyard with a critical eye, review the findings as a class:
 - What types of littered garbage can be found around the school?
 - Why would urban wildlife be attracted to these items?
 - How does each item impact the lives of urban wildlife?
 - What can we do to keep urban wildlife safe and prevent injury/illness?

Day Three: *Best Nesting* Lesson (Appendix 3)

- Follow the instructions provided on the *Best Nesting* instruction sheet. This craft is designed to engage students creatively while encouraging them to think about the needs of wild urban birds.
- This activity empowers students to share their ideas with others. Students can take pride in helping wild birds in their community, while engaging in discussions with friends/family about co-existing with urban wildlife.

Appendix 1: *Co-Existing with Urban Wildlife* Script

Introduction

This presentation is one-hour in length and links directly to the Grade 4 curriculum within the subject of **Science and Technology: Understanding Life Systems – Habitats and Communities**. Throughout the lesson, students will learn about co-existing with urban wildlife. The presentation explores the following topics:

- *An introduction to the OHS;*
- *The distinction between domestic animals and wildlife;*
- *Habitats and communities;*
- *Interacting appropriately with wildlife;*
- *Wildlife-proofing our homes.*

REMINDER – Teachers can book an OHS humane educator to facilitate the presentation at <https://ottawahumane.ca/youth-programs/teacher-resources/classroom-presentations/>. Alternatively, the script and PowerPoint presentation are available electronically by emailing humaneeducation@ottawahumane.ca.

Overview

Through participating in a service-learning project, students will be introduced to the different urban wildlife living around their school. Students will work in teams to clean the school grounds, logging the type of litter that they collect. Students will be able to identify the reasons why wildlife might be attracted to living on school grounds and the impact that litter can have on urban wildlife habitats.

Objective	For students to become aware of the negative impact humans can have on urban wildlife.
Time Needed	60 to 90 minutes.
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protective gloves• Large trash and recycling bags• Printed copies of the activity worksheet• Clip boards• Pens

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic by sharing facts about waste from the City of Ottawa:
 - Residents of Ottawa are responsible for about 300,000 tonnes of solid waste each year.
 - Plastic exists as tiny particles in most large bodies of water. Micro plastics (like those found in hand soap) have been found along 550km of the Ottawa River.
 - Every year, Canadian smokers toss away nearly 8,000 tonnes of cigarette butts, which can be found in the stomachs of birds, dogs and squirrels.
 - Canadians throw away approximately 183kg of solid food waste each year, per person. That's about 6,000,000 tonnes of food that wild animals can come in contact with.
2. Share the *Skunk Story* published by the Ottawa Citizen.
 - <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/sandy-hill-on-alert-to-find-bottled-skunk>
3. Give the class time to brainstorm.
 - What impact can open garbage have on the diets and lives of wildlife?
 - Are there other things in the school yard can pose a risk to wildlife, besides garbage?
 - What can we do to prevent illness and injury to wildlife?
4. Start the clean-up activity – students will be tidying up the school yard to help ensure that urban wildlife in the community stay safe and healthy.
 - Go through the activity worksheet prior to heading outside.
 - Divide the class into small teams (3-4 students) and give each team a worksheet, recycling bag and garbage bag.
 - **SAFETY FIRST!** Make sure students are each wearing a pair of protective gloves and inform them not pick up sharp or dangerous objects.
5. Throw away the trash/recycling and head back to the classroom.
6. Take time to debrief as a class – allow teams to share what they found and explore the impact those items could have on wildlife in the community.

Living in Harmony – Activity Worksheet

Team Member Names: _____

Date: _____ Teacher Name: _____

1. Make a list of the littered items you find. Think about why urban wildlife would be attracted to these items and how they could be harmful to their health and well-being.
 - For Example – *Littered plastic bags are attractive to wildlife because they smell like human food. However, animals can get tangled in the bag, which causes them injury.*

Littered Item Found	This Might Attract Wildlife Because...	This Could be Harmful to Wildlife Because...

2. Urban wildlife will often find places in and around our homes/school to make nests or hide. Can you spot any areas which might look appealing for wildlife to build a habitat, yet could be dangerous for them?
 - For Example – *Sometimes birds will make nests inside air vents on a house. This is dangerous because they can get stuck inside the vent or the home owner might have to destroy the nest.*

Potential Habitat	This Might Attract Wildlife Because...	This Could be Harmful to Wildlife Because...

Appendix 3: *Best Nesting* Craft

Overview

Students will help wild birds in the community build nests out of bird-safe materials.

Objective	For students to become aware of the positive impact humans can have on urban wildlife.
Time Needed	60 to 90 minutes.
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Popsicle sticks• Hot glue gun• Sticks or grass clippings collected from the schoolyard• Cloth strips made with natural fibers (e.g. cotton, linen)• Yarn or twine

Procedure

1. Collect the materials required.
 - Ask students to bring-in a piece of old clothing that their parents would like to donate – it must be a natural fiber like cotton.
 - Have students collect grass clippings, twigs and/or straw from the schoolyard.
2. Give each student 10-20 popsicle sticks and guide them in creatively arranging the popsicle sticks into shapes where nesting materials can either be woven through or inserted into the center.
3. Use hot glue to secure the popsicle sticks in place.
4. Introduce the bird-safe nesting materials and encourage students to weave them through their popsicle stick figures or bundle them in the center. They can make nesting bundles out of any combination of the bird-safe materials.
 - At this time, you can ask them to provide examples of unsuitable materials (e.g. garbage) that would be harmful for birds and should not be used in the craft.
5. Tie a piece of yarn or twine to the top of their nesting bundle so that it can be hung from a tree at home.



Credits and References

Some materials in this in-class lesson plan have been derived in-part or in-whole from www.greatstems.com and Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers' (HEART) *Humane Education Resource Guide*.

For more information, please visit:

- <http://www.greatstems.com/2013/05/wildlife-projects-for-kids-nesting-materials.html>
- www.teachheart.org