

Life in a Hole

provided by Pocono Environmental Education Center Staff

Objective: Learn what type of habitat amphibians prefer.

Materials:

1. Pothole that will stay wet throughout the spring-time
2. Flagging tape/rope
3. Branches, logs
4. Aquatic dip net
5. Paper and pencil or field notebook for each student or group

Time: 1.5 hours the first day and 30 minutes per observation period

Age Level: Suitable for all ages

Procedure: You must first find a pothole filled with water or a wet land area in early spring that is easily accessible to your students. The next step is to rope off the area with flagging tape. If flagging tape is not available you may also use a rope. Depending on your loca-

tion you may choose to place a sign indicating that an experiment is in progress. You will now want to bring your students to the site and discuss habitats. You may ask the students if they think that this area is a suitable habitat for amphibians. If the students do not think it is suitable, ask what they would add. At this point separate the study area in half. Leave one side unaltered so that it can be used as a control. On the other side you can add logs and leaves to form a better habitat. After one week you can take the students back to the study site. Have them look in the water for signs of life. You may use the aquatic dip net to capture anything that is present. Compare both sides of the area. If animals are found and captured, be sure you do not harm them. If students are using their hands to pick up amphibians, be sure they wet them first. If any insects are caught they should not be touched with bare skin. A good way to pick up insects is to use plastic spoons. When you are done, place all of the animals back into their habitat. Your class should revisit the study site once a week for the remaining spring months and record what is found.

Recording the Data: List organisms seen during observation periods

Observation Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Plain Habitat									
Modified Habitat									

Conclusion: You may find many different organisms living in your habitat. The goal is to attract as many different organisms as possible to your habitat. There are many different books that can help you identify what you have found. Some of our favorites are *Peterson's Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians* by Roger Conant and Joseph T. Collins, *A Golden Guide to Pond Life* by George K. Reid, and *Aquatic Entomology* by W. Patrick McCafferty and illustrations by Arwin V. Provonsha.