



Chicago Zoological Society
Inspiring Conservation Leadership



“I Scienced” At-Home Activities

Recommended Grades: PreK-2



This week, Brookfield Zoo Animal Care staff are presenting animals that live in all parts of the world. They have unique body markings and different ways to move around. People who look closely at animals for similarities or differences are good observers and often record what they see.



Be a Nature Observer

Create your own binoculars

Materials:

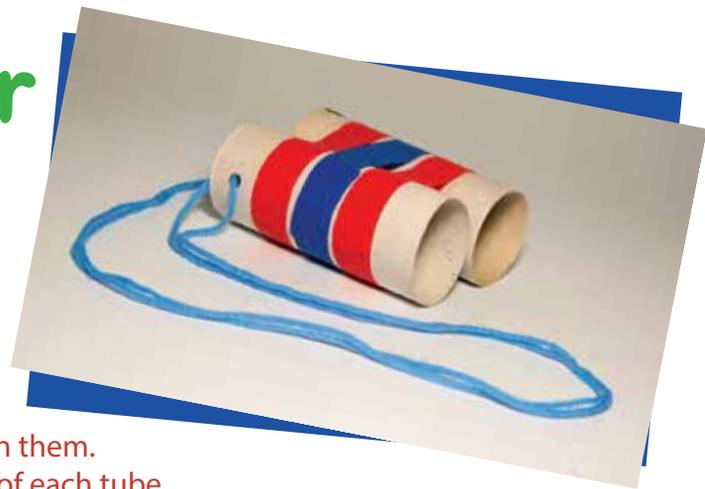
Two toilet paper tubes, tape, yarn/string or an old shoe lace, a hole punch

Instructions:

1. Tape the two tubes side by side so you can look through them.
2. Use a hole punch to make one hole near the same end of each tube.
3. Loop the string through the holes and tie it to the tubes.
4. Decorate them as you wish!

Play!

With an adult, take your homemade binoculars outside to explore your yard or neighborhood and observe the many wonderful natural items in it. Below are some things you can look for with your binoculars. Circle the things you find (you may not be able to find everything on the list or may find more!).



Animals

- That can fly
- That hop
- That jump or bounce
- That walk on four legs

Plants

- With white flowers
- With yellow flowers
- With skinny leaves
- New ones growing through the ground

Trees

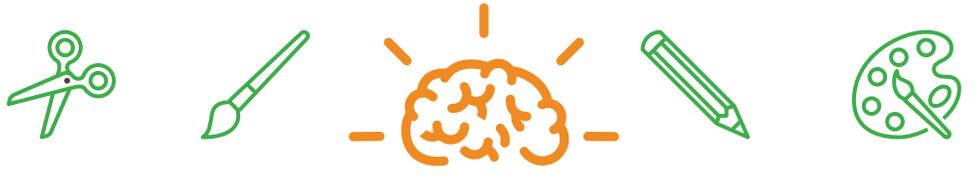
- With prickly needles (evergreen)
- That have buds at the tips of branches
- That have smooth bark
- That have rough or bumpy bark

Non-living

- Rocks with sharp edges
- Rocks with smooth edges
- Twigs or branches
- Pieces of bark or mulch



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Recommended Grades: 3-5



One of the many reasons Brookfield Zoo cares for animals so well is because our animal care staff and scientists have spent many hours observing animals closely to understand their physical and social needs. Scientists do this for a variety of species—animals that are solitary for most of their adults lives, such as servals, and animals that live in a social structure, such as zebras.



Learn to Observe

The study of the behavior and relationships among animals is called “ethology.” Scientists use charts and tables and definitions of behaviors to observe animals. This is called an “ethogram.” Observing can help us learn more about individual animals or entire species, which can help zoos and aquariums make better decisions about their care. What we learn from observing animals in zoos can also be used in the conservation of that species in the wild. Sharpen your observation skills by using the ethogram below on an animal in your home or outside your window.



Observation Sheet

Choose an animal to observe. Read the list of activities below. Spend a few moments defining how the species of animal you chose behaves when performing each activity. For instance, if you are observing a squirrel, “Rest” may mean sitting on a tree branch and being still; “Move” may mean running, leaping, or climbing; “Eat” may mean gathering food or eating food. It is important to have consistency in how you record behaviors you see. Begin by filling in the definitions for the species you choose.

Species Chosen: _____

Rest: _____

Move: _____

Play: _____

Eat: _____

Other (anything that isn't already listed above): _____

Observe an animal for 3 minutes noting its behavior every 15 seconds. Is it resting, moving, eating, playing, or doing something else? It's helpful to have a partner call out "time" when 15 seconds has passed so you can observe the behavior and check the appropriate box.

Date: _____ **Observer Name(s):** _____

Time of Day: _____ **Temperature/Weather:** _____

Time in Minute: Seconds	Rest	Move	Play	Eat	Other	Totals
00:15						
00:30						
00:45						
1:00						
1:15						
1:30						
1:45						
2:00						
2:15						
2:30						
2:45						
3:00						

Summarize your data.

- Tally how many times you observed each behavior.
- What does your data tell you about that animal?
- Why was it important to record the time of day? The weather?
- Do you think observing one animal for 3 minutes is enough to tell you about its natural behaviors? Why or why not?
- How would you collect more information on this animal or species?