

EXPLORING ECOSYSTEMS

This workshop targets learning outcomes for Essential Standards 5.L.2: Understand the interdependence of plants and animals with their ecosystem.

SUMMARY:

Exploring Ecosystems brings children into the amazing animal kingdom and beyond! Children learn about diverse, astounding creatures on earth as they experiment with camouflage and get hands-on with real tooth and claw replicas. They will delve into different types of ecosystems where animals, plants, and other life forms coexist. Children will also look at the different purposes organisms serve as producers, consumers and decomposers. They will finish up class by dissecting the circle of life in action: an owl pellet!

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

This program teaches children about the incredible, diverse life across many ecosystems. They learn how animals are adapted to their different habitats and are interconnected to the different organisms that live there. Real tooth and claw replicas provide hands-on experience with the science of zoology. This workshop will also allow students to gain an understanding of the concept of decomposition. They will learn its vital role in the food chain and in our environment. In addition, students are introduced to a variety of different decomposers both plant and animal. They will also learn how pollution affects all environments, and how each organism affects the others in its ecosystem.

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE:

- 1 There are many ecosystems with interdependent plants and animals
- 2 Organisms in an ecosystem serve different functions: produces, consumers, and decomposers
- 3 Pollution and other factors that impact one population will also impact other populations in an ecosystem.

TAKE-HOME PRODUCT:

Owl Pellet remains

NORTH CAROLINA ESSENTIAL STANDARDS:

- **5.L.2: Understand the interdependence of plants and animals with their ecosystem. (see [Unpacking Essential Standards](#))**
- *5.L.2.1 Compare the characteristics of several common ecosystems, including estuaries and salt marshes, oceans, lakes and ponds, forests, and grasslands.*
- *5.L.2.2 Classify the organisms within an ecosystem according to the function they serve: producers, consumers, or decomposers (biotic factors).*
- *5.L.2.3 Infer the effects that may result from the interconnected relationship of plants and animals in their ecosystems.*

