

WHO NEEDS HABITAT?...WE ALL DO!



Habitat is defined as the entire environment in which an animal lives. All animals, including human beings, share the same basic survival needs: food,

water, shelter, and space.

All over the planet, wildlife habitat is being lost. Whenever an area of land is paved or plowed, small animals lose their homes. As these small animals disappear, so too do the large animals who depend upon the smaller species as a food source, thus affecting the natural food web.

As human beings continue to push deeper into wilderness areas and exploit resources to feed, house, and water towns and cities, animals continue to be forced from their natural habitats. Disturbed wilderness areas, by such industries as logging, mining, and milling, take more than several human lifetimes to recover.

Wolves need a lot of land to roam to fulfill their habitat needs. It has been estimated that on average, one wolf needs the equivalent of 10 square miles, thus a pack of 6 wolves needs at least 60 square miles. The number of wolves in a pack is dependent on the amount of prey within a certain amount of space.

Wolves also need large expanses of wilderness in which to disperse. Individual pack members that have reached two to four years of age will often strike out to build their own pack. These individuals are called dispersers. Wolf packs also need enough space to increase or decrease the size of their territories, depending upon the year's prey base and water resources.

Wolves have lost major areas of viable habitat to human activities which have disturbed natural cycles. Some of the worst land pollution problems are caused by the incorrect disposal of industrial waste products. Garbage and toxic runoff also contribute to major pollution problems in streams, river, and oceans.

Each of us can make constructive contributions to improving the environment, for ourselves and for the animals who share the earth with us. Sometimes our effectiveness can be improved if we work with other people, sharing ideas, information and skills.

If the wolf and all other species, including our own, are to survive, we must reconnect to nature. We need to understand the importance of old growth forest, unpolluted rivers and streams, and clean, fresh air.

Who needs habitat? We all do!



HABITAT HOLES

(Adapted from Project Wild Activity Guide)

Objectives:


The students will be able to identify basic components of habitat, i.e. food, water, shelter, and space, and apply this knowledge to the different species that contribute to a wolf's ecosystem.

Exercise:

The Habitat Identification Sheet on the next page can be used in one of two ways:

- 1: It may be filled out as a worksheet by each individual child as a research and reference exercise for the library.
- 2: A second method would be to break the class into groups of three or four students and have each group research one of the animals such that they can complete the blocks for that animal as a group. You may then have the individual groups put together a presentation on that animal.

Habitat Identification Sheet

	FOOD	WATER	SHELTER	SPACE	ECO-SYSTEM
WOLF					
DEER					
RABBIT					
BEAR					
HUMAN					