



UNTAMED S2E11: Migration

Classroom Activity

This classroom activity is designed to be used as a resource that inspires conversation, critical thinking, and promotes a “big picture” understanding of topics covered in each episode. Questions may be answered individually, or out loud in a group setting. Key terms and vocabulary that will help educators and students engage in discussion include:

Migration; habitat; habitat fragmentation; human development

Group Size: Classroom

Materials needed: 15-20 pieces of paper, laminator, open space (indoors or outdoors)

Preparation: Create “migration tiles” by laminating each piece of paper. Use a dry-erase marker to write one migration resource on each -- food, water, or shelter.

Time: 15-25 minutes

Instructions:

This activity is designed to help students to understand the impact that human activity can have on wildlife migrations. The further an animal travels during a migratory event, the more important stopover sites with food, water, and shelter become. Human development, deforestation, and habitat fragmentation are serious threats to successful wildlife migration and survival.

Begin by clearing a wide space free of obstacles if indoors, or finding a flat open space if outdoors. Ask students to stand and group themselves on one side of the open space on a line.

In the open space, scatter the migration tiles across the ground. Tiles should be evenly arranged across the entire open space, and within one or two steps from one another. Explain to students that they will be playing the part of a migrating animal (a native species, if applicable), with a goal of reaching the other side of the open space by the end of the round within a set number of turns. Teachers may choose the number of turns per round based on space available, or time constraints.

Students must move on each turn, taking a maximum of two steps per turn, and must be touching a migration tile at the end of each turn. Students may move forward, sideways, or backward. Multiple students may be touching the same tile at any time. If a student is not touching a migration tile by the end of each turn, they have failed to migrate and are “out” for the remainder of the game.

After completing one or two rounds, describe a human-related event or activity that negatively impacts an animal’s ability to successfully complete migration. A new suburb being developed on previously forested land, an oil spill that covers a vast area of open water, or heavy pesticide use in an agricultural area, for example. Remove two or three related migration tiles from play, and begin the next round.

Introduce a new human-related event or activity between each successive round and remove related tiles until no students are able to complete their migration.

To conclude the activity, facilitate a group discussion on what made completing a migration easy or difficult. Ask students to brainstorm ideas on what hypothetical actions they could take to introduce more tiles into play -- planting trees, creating a garden for wildlife, participating in a watershed clean-up event, etc.