



California Wildlife Treasure Hunt

Developing an appreciation for wildlife through observation, identification, attention to adaptations, and teamwork.



California is home to a great variety of fascinating native animals. Their well-being is key to maintaining the health of our ecosystem. California's forests, deserts, water bodies, beaches, grasslands, parks, and agricultural lands depend on the animals that live harmoniously within them.

The activities required to earn this patch will build skills in animal identification, develop an appreciation for animal adaptations, and generate an interest in wildlife conservation.

During a hike, a visit to a natural history museum, or a simple walk in the neighborhood, girls will turn their attention to animals and the evidence they leave behind.

Girl Scouts will learn to treasure California wildlife as they discover animal classification, adaptations, and have fun sharing the experience with others.

DISCOVER:

For all ages:

Wildlife Treasure Hunt

Complete the attached Wildlife Treasure Hunt which is included at the bottom of this document. This activity is best done while on a hike with an adult chaperone. However, the requirement can be satisfied by exploring a collection of native wildlife specimen.

Daisies and Brownies may complete the Wildlife Treasure hunt as a group.

Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors individually complete the Wildlife Treasure Hunt.

Additional requirement for Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors:

Use Field Guides to Identify Species

Identify animal species using wildlife field guides. You can borrow them from your local library. If your school library does not have them, ask your librarian to add them to her book wish list.

Pack some binoculars, biology field guides, a notebook, and water. Put on your sneakers and go outside for a bit. Listen. Look.

What can you hear? Can you find whatever is making that sound?

What can you see? Is anything flying overhead? Look under rocks – especially after the rain. Did anything scurry away? Peer into the water. What is swimming by?

Use a field guide to identify 3 species from different classes of animals (e.g., fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects, mollusks, or worms). In your notebook, identify when and where you found the animal. Document what it was doing when you spotted it. Compare your notes to descriptions of the animal and the behavior described in the field guide.

CONNECT:

For Daisies and Brownies:

Play animal Twenty Questions (a group activity).

One at a time, assign each Girl Scout with a native animal. Allow others to take turns asking her a question that can be answered with a simple yes or no. After 10 questions, if no one has correctly guessed the animal, allow the girl who is answering to give one hint. If a girl who is asking questions prefers to guess, that counts as her turn. If a girl correctly guesses, she gets to go next as the person giving answers.

Each Daisy and Brownie should get a chance to answer questions.

For Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors (choose one):

1. Illustrate a specimen, with attention to detail

Most famous biologists in history spent time patiently observing and drawing living things. Perhaps one of the most renowned illustrators and scientific thinkers in history was Leonardo da Vinci. Most of us do not have that incredible talent. However, if we pay close attention, are careful and patient, we can create a recognizable image.

To connect to California Wildlife, attentively observe a preserved or living native animal. Take time to draw detailed illustrations of the animal. Draw the whole animal. Draw parts of the animal. Taking time to do this allows deeper appreciation of the unique features that different animals have.

2. Explore careers in wildlife

Invite a professional who works with California wildlife to meet with your Girl Scouts. This may be an employee with animal control, outdoor education, animal rescue, wildlife conservancy, National Parks, State Parks, the Department of Forestry, or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

As a troop, plan what questions you are going to ask in advance. Take turns asking questions of the wildlife expert to get an idea of what they do, how they got there, what they love about their work, what has surprised them about their work, etc.

TAKE ACTION:

For Daisies and Brownies:

Talk to your friends, family, and classmates about the California wildlife that you observed

Tell them your answers to the following questions:

- What was your favorite animal? Why that animal?
- What surprised you the most?
- What animal did you like the least? Why?

For Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors:

Complete the following three steps

1. Identify a species of wildlife that is at risk in your area. This link can help you find one that is in your location: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation>
2. Read about the species you have chosen and think of a way that your community might be able to protect that animal.
3. Using the guidelines in the letter writing instructions below, write a letter to your city management, county, state, and/or federal representatives encouraging them to support the reasonable protective measures you recommend for the wildlife species you have studied.

Letter Writing Guidelines:

Purpose-

Improve the situation for an at risk or endangered wildlife species that concerns you.

Directions-

Write a personal letter to a mayor, city manager, city council member, board of supervisors member, planning commission members, or local state/federal representatives. You can find names and addresses on the city or county websites.

Your letter should inform the member or representative about the animal, why you are concerned, and why they should take action to protect this animal.

Provide a reasonable recommendation to address the problem.

Share a copy of your letter with your troop.

Mail a signed copy of your letter to the addressee.

Recommended Format

1. Your letter should be less than 1 page (2-3 paragraphs). Any longer and it may not get read. This means that you will have to be clear, concise, and get to the point!
2. Be sure to use the proper letter formatting. This means your name/address in upper right corner and the recipients address on the left side of the page.

WILDLIFE TREASURE HUNT

FIND AND DESCRIBE as many of the following as you can in the space below. You may not use the same item for another category (e.g., a crow cannot be used for both your 'bird' and 'vertebrate'). Use a separate sheet of paper if needed.

An animal that is a scavenger
A reptile or amphibian
A bird
A mammal
3 different animal sounds
Something that is alive
Something that has never been alive (abiotic)
Something that used to be alive, but now is dead
Something that is decomposing
A vertebrate animal

An invertebrate animal
A microscopic animal
Animal scat, what did it come from?
A vertebrate animal
Something that has been eaten or chewed
An animal track
A feather
A fungus, algae, lichen, or moss
A seed
A piece of human litter

- What was your reaction to the Treasure Hunt exercise? Did you enjoy it? What did you like about it? Not like about it?
- Describe something about the Treasure Hunt that surprised you.