



Wildlife and Habitat Management

A typical 18-hole golf course is situated on 150 acres of land. These open green spaces provide significant opportunities to enhance and protect wildlife and native habitats, provide corridors that link to other natural areas, filter pollutants, produce oxygen, stabilize soils. Golf courses also provide recreational and educational opportunities, and increase the aesthetic value of the developed open space.

Student Learning Objectives

- 1. Evaluate habitat to determine the presence of required elements for a healthy wildlife habitat.**
Food, water, shelter and open space.
- 2. Apply knowledge of wildlife habitats to identify their components and locations on a golf course.**
Habitats – meadow, stream bank (riparian), forest and wetland. Plant components – Trees, grasses, nectar plants, fruit, berry, nut, and grain plants.
Structural components – Nest boxes, dead tree snags, brush, cut banks, bird feeders, water sources.
- 3. Identify and document safeguards which golf courses use to protect and manage wildlife habitat.**
Installing buffer zones around lakes and ponds, maintaining tall grass in out-of-play areas, creating brush piles, using Best Management Practices (BMP's) to manage the turf areas with the least amount of fertilizer and pesticides.
- 4. Identify and describe at least three different bird or animal species seen on the golf course.**



Field Trip Requirements

- Safe location on the golf course to take a class of students, preferably near a lake, pond or similar habitat.
- Binoculars to look at birds.
- Bird identification field guides.
- Copy of the golf course's Best Management Practices (BMP's).

Field Trip Outline

The golf course superintendent or golf course representative will host a walking tour of the golf course with an emphasis on identifying and observing wildlife habitats. The field trip host will begin with a discussion of the importance of open space for wildlife that the golf course provides. The field trip will tour areas of the golf course where students will see the four requirements of a healthy wildlife habitat. As the tour is progressing, take a count of all the wildlife species that are seen. This list may include large animals such as deer and coyote, birds, fish species, and small animals, such as mammals, frogs, turtles and snakes. Even if the species cannot be identified, count the animal and include it in the total count of wildlife seen on the golf course. Allow the students to experience using binoculars to look at different species.

Additional Resources

- Textbook titled: Managing Wildlife Habitat on Golf Courses by Ronald G. Dodson
- Textbook titled: Turfgrass Management for Golf Courses by James B. Beard
- Booklet titled: A Guide to Environmental Stewardship on the Golf Course 2nd edition, by Audubon International
- Booklet titled: Landscaping With Native Plants in the Inland Northwest by Tonie Fitzgerald, WSU/Spokane County Cooperative Extension

