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IT'S ALL IN THE CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY
1

Learning Objective

Students are inspired to discover the excitement and challenge of bowhunting.

Activity Time

90 minutes

Materials List

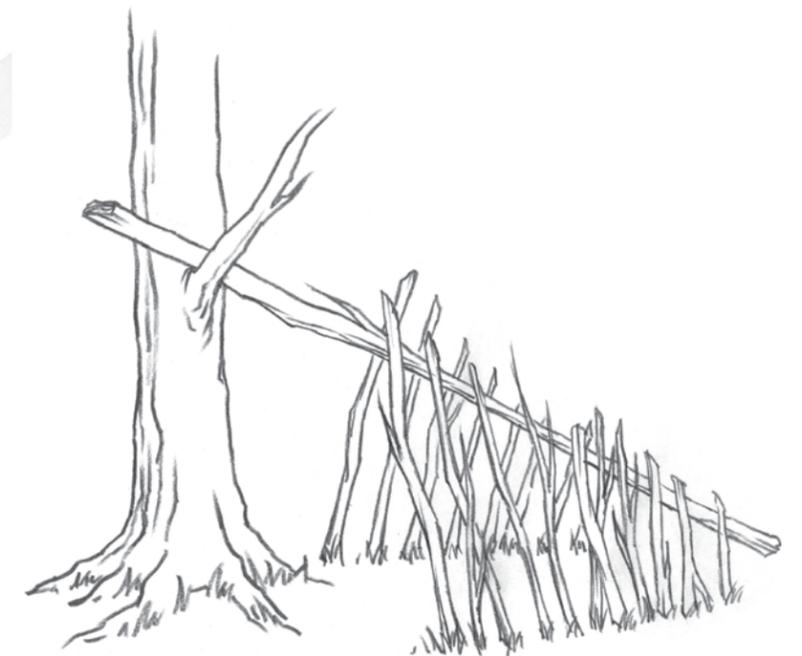
- * Spray bottles, 1 per team
- * Bandanas, different colors for each team, 3 per team

BACKGROUND

A blind is a structure that conceals people who are bowhunting or trying to photograph or observe wildlife. Many types of blinds are used for these activities, and can be placed on the ground or built in trees. Ground blinds can be made from natural materials found in the area, purchased as portable or “permanent” structures, constructed from building materials, or a combination of all three features.

In this activity, students will build a ground blind using natural materials found in the area. Allow the students to discover (on their own) how to build an effective blind. The instructions that follow describe how to build one type of ground blind so students have an example to follow:

- 1 Find a tree with forked branches about four to six feet above the ground.
- 2 Lean a fallen limb into the fork to serve as the anchor post. Make sure it's long enough to allow at least one person to sit under it comfortably.



BACKGROUND *Continued*

- 3 Lean as many short limbs as you can find against the anchor limb, angling the limbs to create a triangular lean-to. Make sure the limbs are placed close together and extend far enough to the sides to accommodate a seated or kneeling bowhunter. For bowhunting, ground and tree blinds must have space for the bowhunter to sit, kneel or stand comfortably, and also provide enough space for the bowhunter to hold, draw and shoot a bow and arrow.
- 4 Pile leaves, twigs and other debris atop and against the limb framework. Limbs with leaves attached or evergreen branches can be cut in 6- to 8-foot lengths and used to lean against the sides of the blind. This will hide the bowhunter inside.



- 5 Create “windows” in the blind to see and shoot from.

As students become comfortable with the concept of the blind, a discussion about the “shooting window” can teach lessons about camouflage and disguising the presence of the bowhunter. Making a blind with many small shooting windows can be more effective than a blind with one large shooting window that “frames” the bowhunter’s face. A smaller window breaks up the bowhunter’s image yet allows the bowhunter to shoot through any of several smaller windows.

Getting Ready

Find an area suitable to build the blinds, preferably a wooded area with fallen branches, leaves and other natural materials students can use freely. An area with thick undergrowth of shrubs and/or dead or dying autumn weeds can be used to make a ground blind. Blinds can also be made in cornfields or alongside haystacks.

PROCEDURES

- 1 Divide students into teams of at least three, but no more than five. Give each team three bandanas.
- 2 Explain to students that each team will build a blind that’s hidden from the other teams to use in a game.
- 3 Each team finds a spot away from the other teams to build their blinds.
- 4 Each team decides where to make a window or several windows in the side of the blind to “shoot” from. Remind each team they will be shooting a spray bottle from the window(s).
- 5 Give the teams 30 minutes to build their blinds.
- 6 Once the teams have finished, gather all students together away from the blinds.
- 7 Explain the rules of the game:
 - ★ One student from each team is a Captain. The Captain’s goal is to protect the team’s bandanas. The goal of the other students is to retrieve the bandanas from opposing teams. The Captain places the bandanas within 6 to 10 feet of the blind in visible locations. The bandanas cannot be hidden. They must be in plain sight.
 - ★ All other students are deer. Each deer’s goal is to retrieve the bandanas of an opposing team. (They cannot retrieve their own team’s bandanas).
 - ★ Students can walk or crawl but not run.
 - ★ Captains must remain in the blind at all times.
 - ★ Captains can squirt students anywhere except the face with water when they get close to the team’s bandana.
 - ★ When students get hit with water, they are out of the game. Determine an area that will be designated as the “Dead Zone” where all students go to after being hit.
 - ★ Anyone who damages a blind is automatically out of the game.
 - ★ Anyone who squirts another student in the face is out of the game.
- 8 Allow Captains 5 minutes to get back to their blinds.
- 9 Give students 10 minutes to play. Whichever team retrieves the most bandanas wins.
- 10 When the game ends, students should dismantle their blinds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Were the blinds hard to see?
- 2 What materials did you use to build your blind?
- 3 Would you have liked to use other building materials? What type of material and why?
- 4 Did you sit, kneel or stand in the blind? Was it comfortable?
- 5 Were you able to maneuver inside your blind? Could you turn in all directions and position yourself to take a shot?
- 6 Could anyone anticipate your shot? Were they able to duck out of the way before you shot?
- 7 If you shot, was anything in your way? If so, what was it?
- 8 If you moved, did the others hear you?
- 9 What would have made you more successful? Could you have created more shooting opportunities?
- 10 Did the bandana's location affect whether you got a clear shot?
- 11 If you could play the game again, what would you do differently?
- 12 Is it enough to build a blind to be a successful bowhunter?
- 13 If you were actually bowhunting, do you think you would have enough room to pull back your bow? Would you have room for all of your equipment?

Educator's note: *This introductory activity is designed so students learn that to be successful hunters, they need to be camouflaged, quiet, have room to take a safe and accurate shot, and have a clear shooting lane. Refer to this activity often throughout your classes. Students will be better able to piece together the importance of each skill if they have this reference point as they move forward. In the Discussion Questions, guide students on the importance of camouflage, noise control, clear shooting lanes, and providing room for safe and comfortable shooting if they are not realizing this on their own.*

What students should know after the discussion:

- 1 Animals can see hunters who are not properly camouflaged, especially if they move.
- 2 The animal's sense of hearing is much greater than ours. Even the slightest noise can alert them of nearby danger, and cause them to flee that area.
- 3 Animals can see images like a face that is not disguised or is "framed" in the window of a blind.
- 4 Room to maneuver in a blind is critical. It's essential that bowhunters be comfortable and able to move into position to take clear, safe shots.
- 5 Importance of shooting lanes:
 - ★ Be sure your shooting lane is set up facing the direction animals will most likely approach from, or have several options available.
 - ★ Be sure to clear all obstacles (twigs, branches, leaves and plant material) to ensure a clear shot.
 - ★ Consider using many smaller shooting windows instead of one or a few larger windows.

ENRICHMENT

- 1 Either build two blinds or set up a manufactured blind before class. Use one blind as a decoy and have someone sit in the other with bandanas set up. Is it easier to get deer when their attention is focused on the other blind? Explain to students that you can do something similar while bowhunting, drawing your bow when deer are distracted by a decoy or while browsing for food.

ADAPTATIONS

- 1 If you have access to and would prefer, you can use manufactured blinds. Manufactured blinds are best for use in the winter, spring and summer when conditions are not similar to normal bowhunting conditions.

RESOURCES

- 1 Wigginton, Eliot and Margie Bennett. *Foxfire Series*. Anchor Books, 1984.

Reading Connections

- 1 "Brian's Hunt," by Gary Paulson (2003).

DON'T CALL BLIND

ACTIVITY
7

Learning Objective

Students develop an understanding of how birds and animals—in this case, the wild turkey—use calls and sounds to communicate, and how to apply that knowledge to increase their chances of success while hunting.

Activity Time

45 minutes

Materials List

- ★ CD Player
- ★ Turkey Call CD
- ★ Small stickers or pieces of paper

BACKGROUND

Communication is transferring information from one animal to another. Animals communicate within and between species through sound, sight, smell, taste and even electrical signals. Dragonflies use visual cues, mammals rely heavily on their sense of smell, and turkeys—whose sense of smell is limited—rely more on their senses of hearing and sight.

Birds have some of the greatest sound-producing capabilities of all vertebrates. Vocalizing has many advantages over sight, smell and taste because sound can travel long distances, in the dark, and through visual barriers. Birds communicate information to each other, including their species' identities and their individual identities within their species. These sounds also communicate their territories, pair bonds, and family relationships.

Wild turkeys make more than two dozen unique calls in order to communicate. For example, the gobble call is made only by the male to attract a female, but both male and female turkeys make a range of other calls. Listed below are some of the calls and their meaning:

- 1 **Cluck** The cluck consists of one or more short, staccato notes. The plain cluck includes two or three single note clucks. It's generally used by one bird to get the attention of another. It's a good call to reassure an approaching gobbler that a hen is waiting for him.
- 2 **Cluck and Purr** The cluck and purr call is often associated with flock talk or the feeling of being content. It is a cluck followed by a rolling, almost staccato call.
- 3 **Kee-Kee Run** The kee-kee run is the call of lost young turkeys (poults) and variations made by adult birds. It's often associated with fall hunting. It means "I need you."

BACKGROUND *Continued*

- 4 **Purr** Purring is a soft, rolling call turkeys make when content. It can usually be heard by feeding birds. This is not a loud call, but is good for reassuring turkeys as they get close to your position. It means "Everything's OK."
- 5 **Gobble** The gobble is one of the principal vocalizations of the male wild turkey and is used primarily in the spring to let hens know he is in the area.
- 6 **Putt** The putt is a single note alarm call. It can also be several sharp notes in rapid fashion, which usually means they have seen or heard something that means "Danger!"
- 7 **Yelp** The adult hen yelp is a series of loud calls that orders her flock or young poults to assemble. It means "Come here."

Educator's Note: Please inform your students that using a Gobble call for luring male or female turkeys is not advised. Other hunters may mistake your gobble call for a real turkey.

Many turkey sounds are seasonal. The responses to the calls will differ as a result. For instance, young turkeys are only present during autumn hunting seasons, so calls relating to poults, like the kee-kee run, would only be considered during fall hunts. A keen understanding of the turkey's natural history is important in understanding when some calls would be most attractive and effective. It is important to understand how to use vocalizations while bowhunting. Effective use of vocalizations can bring game closer to you; therefore, increasing your chances of success.

Getting Ready

Locate a large space that has electricity for a CD player.

PROCEDURES

- 1 Ask your students if anyone speaks a different language or, better yet, ask them a question in a different language. Explain that birds and animals have their own "language" for communicating.
- 2 Ask your students how birds communicate. Tell them that when a male bird sings, he is saying, "Come here girls," but birds also make other sounds like chirps and warnings. Different calls and sounds have different meanings.
- 3 Play the turkey calls on the CD and define each call for the class. Use Section 1 of the CD, which gives a description followed by the call.
- 4 Test the students' memories by quizzing them on the different vocalizations and their meaning. Use Section 2 of the CD, which gives a call and then the description. Once they are proficient at recognizing the calls move on to the next step.
- 5 You are now ready to play the game. This game is a modification of the game "Coke and Pepsi," but uses turkey calls as commands that players are required to perform.
- 6 Divide your class into two groups.

PROCEDURES *Continued*

- 7 One group is going to be the Toms (male turkeys) and the other group is going to be the Jens (female turkeys). Girls do not need to be Jens and boys do not need to be Toms. Mix and match depending on your class.
- 8 Line up the Toms on one side and Jens on the other. Both sides should face each other.
- 9 Begin by demonstrating the responses. When they hear different calls they have to make the following moves:
 - ★ Purring: The Jens go to the Toms' side.
 - ★ Kee-Kee Run: Everyone yells "Here!"
 - ★ Cluck: The Toms go to the Jens' side.
 - ★ Assembly Call: Everyone goes to the middle.
 - ★ Gobble: Everyone goes to the middle and finds a partner.
 - ★ Putt: Everyone scatters.
- 10 Review the calls one more time, making sure everyone understands what to do.
- 11 If someone misses the proper response to the call, that person is out.
- 12 Using Section 3 of the CD that only plays the calls, play several rounds of the game, until at least two students are out. Play the calls in whatever order you want. Stop the CD after each call to give students time to respond.
- 13 When everyone seems to be responding correctly and understanding the various calls, it is time to add a new dimension to the game.
- 14 Secretly tell the students who are out that they will now become hunters. Mark the hunters by putting a sticker on the inside of each hunter's hand. Don't make the mark obvious.
- 15 Now, without revealing that "hunters" are in their midst, announce that everyone is back in the game.
- 16 Play the game again. When students hear the gobble call, they need to pair up. Those who pair with a hunter are considered bagged and out of the game. (The hidden hand sticker identifies which players are hunters and who is out.)
- 17 Continue the game and watch what happens. The remaining "turkeys" suddenly become wary. That is normal because this is what happens in nature. It becomes increasingly difficult to get students to pair up because they don't want to be removed from the game.

Educator's Note: *Students should become wary of pairing up with each other when they realize another student could be a hunter trying to trick them. This is a natural response. Wild turkeys also become wary of calls they hear and do not always respond to imitated calls.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 As a hunter, what call, if any, would you use to keep turkeys near you?
- 2 As a hunter, what call, if any, would you never use?
- 3 How would you get a turkey close to you?
- 4 How could using calls make you a more successful hunter?
- 5 Do you think the time of year could affect which call you use? If yes, which calls would you use in the spring? Fall?

ENRICHMENTS

- 1 Secretly change which students become the hunters.
- 2 Secretly add and remove hunters from the game.

Reading Connections

- 1 "Gorillas in the Mist," by Dian Fossey (2001).

RESOURCES

- 1 Kaufman, Kenn. *Lives of North American Birds*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.
- 2 National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) provided the calls, descriptions and background information. Learn more about Wild Turkeys and NWTf at www.nwtf.org.
- 3 Pyle, Peter. *Identification Guide to North American Birds*. Slate Creek Press, 1997.
- 4 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has a full description of the different wild turkey calls at <http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eek/nature/trkyhunt.htm#call>

National Science Education Standards Met

Life Science 5–8:

- ★ Regulation and Behavior
- ★ Populations and Ecosystems

Life Science 9–12:

- ★ The Interdependence of Organisms
- ★ The Behavior of Organisms