

Kindergarten-2nd Grade Discovery Hunt: Farish Hall of Texas Wildlife and Hamman Hall of Coastal Ecology

This guide is designed to help young scientists explore animal homes, body parts, and how creatures work together in nature through easy-to-understand words, fun activities, and lots of observation. Chaperones are encouraged to use this knowledge hunt as a tool to lead their students actively through the exhibit, engaging them with questions and activities that deepen their understanding of the animals and habitats they encounter.

Before We Start: Let's Wonder!

Ask your group:

- What kinds of animals do you think live in Texas? Are they animals with wings, fur, or something else?(Look for answers like "birds with wings" or "animals with fur.")
- What do animals need to stay alive? (Food, water, safe places.)
- *How are ocean animals different from forest animals?* (Example: "Fish have fins to swim, but squirrels have claws to climb.")

Farish Hall of Texas Wildlife

Animal Neighborhoods (Biomes)

Look for: Forests (lots of trees), grasslands (wide open spaces), and deserts (places with few plants)

Talk About:

- Which "neighborhood" has the most trees?
- *Find an animal with feathers. Why might it need them?* (To fly or for protection)

• *Pretend to be a forest animal. How would you move?* (Hop like a rabbit, slither like a snake.)

Activity – "Home Match":

Tell the students the name of an animal. Ask them to find its home in the exhibit (e.g., a duck in the water).

Special Body Parts (Adaptations)

Look for:

- Bird beaks (some pointy for pecking, others flat for scooping).
- Animal feet (webbed for swimming, claws for gripping or digging).

Talk About:

- Why do ducks have webbed feet? (To paddle in water, like flippers!)
- *How do sharp teeth help a wolf?* (To eat meat.)

Activity – "Body Part Charades":

Act out how animals use their special parts (e.g., flap arms like wings, "chomp" with hands as teeth).

Daytime vs. Nighttime Animals

Look for:

- Nocturnal animals (big eyes for seeing in the dark, like owls).
- Daytime animals (bright colors, like butterflies).

Talk About:

- Why do some animals hide during the day? (To stay safe from predators.)
- What sounds do you hear at night? (Owls hooting, crickets chirping.)

Activity – "Sun & Moon Freeze":

When you say "sun," students move like daytime animals; say "moon," they freeze as nighttime creatures.

HOUSTON MUSEUM of NATURAL SCIENCE

Hamman Hall of Texas Coastal Ecology

Coastal Waters and Beach Homes

Look for:

- Marsh grasses (tall plants with roots in water).
- Shells (hard covers that protect animals, such as crabs or oysters).

Talk About:

- *Why do marsh grasses have long roots?* (To hold tight in wet mud.)
- *How do shells help animals?* (Like a portable house!)

Activity – "Beach Detective":

Count the number of animals that have shells versus those that have fur.

Who Eats Who? (Food Chains)

Look for:

- Plants (food for some animals).
- Big animals that eat smaller ones.

Talk About:

• What happens if there are no plants? (Some animals have no food.)

Activity – "Food Chain Line-Up":

Students hold hands in a line: plant \rightarrow snail \rightarrow bird \rightarrow alligator. Discuss how each needs the other.

Wrap-Up: Share What You Learned!

Ask:

- Which animal's body parts surprised you?
- Back in class, draw your favorite animal and its home. Label one special body part!

TEKS Alignment

Kindergarten Science

- SCIENCE.K.8.A: Investigate how external structures of animals help them survive in their environment (e.g., duck webbed feet for swimming).
- SCIENCE.K.8.B: Describe how organisms depend on living and nonliving components of habitats (e.g., food, water, shelter).
- SCIENCE.K.9.A: Observe and describe weather patterns using tools like windsocks and thermometers.

1st Grade Science

- SCIENCE.1.13.A: Compare external structures of animals (e.g., bird beaks, mammal claws) using models.
- SCIENCE.1.13.B: Analyze interactions between living/nonliving components in ecosystems (e.g., terrariums).
- SCIENCE.1.13.C: Explain how offspring resemble parents but are not identical.

2nd Grade Science

- SCIENCE.2.13.A: Identify plant structures (e.g., marsh grass roots) and their role in coastal habitats.
- SCIENCE.2.13.B: Design models to demonstrate animal dependence on food chains.
- SCIENCE.2.13.C: Measure and analyze group survival strategies (e.g., schooling fish reducing predation risk).