

Does This Belong Here?



The students will discuss differences between native and non-native species and how an ecosystem can be harmed for benefit from them.

Explore

Supplemental Reading

Aliens From Earth: When Animals and Plants Invade Other Ecosystems

By Mary Batten

Attack of the Zebra Mussels (Animal Invaders: Destroying Native Habitats)

By Michael Rajczak

Grade Levels:

4, 5

Curriculum Correlation:

NCSCS—Science

4.L.1.1, 4.L.1.2

5.L.2.1, 5.L.2.3

Materials:

Popsicle sticks with printed images of

animals and plants taped or glued on (use a mix of the Common Backyard Animals images and the Non-Native Organisms images in the Appendix)

Duration:

20-30 minutes

Location:

Outdoor Study Area

Procedure:

Before class, place the photos of different types of plants and animals around the outdoor classroom and school grounds. Photos could be taped onto popsicle sticks and then stuck into the ground. Choose photos of animals and plants that are both native and nonnative to western NC. Have students define and discuss the difference between native and nonnative species.

1. *Turn and Talk:* What do you think of when you hear the word invade (or alien, or non-native)? This can be a drawing or writing exercise.
2. After the group share, ask the students: What do you notice about these drawings/descriptions? How are they similar or different? What do you think is the explanation for this?
3. Next, tell the group they will be going on an observation walk, looking for pictures of plants and animals “living” in the area. Ask them to tally the number of plant and animals species that they find as they walk.
 - For each species have students write a guess if that species is native or non-native to their North Carolina Ecosystem
 - Once they have found all of the pictures go over their answers for which is native or non-native. Ask for evidence for their claims (What makes you think that? Can you say more about that? What is your evidence?)
5. Ask the students: Why are some species able to live in this North Carolina ecosystem and some are unable? Can some of the animals or plants could be found in other parts of the US or world?
 - For those species that might be found elsewhere, ask students to think about why some animals or plants might be able to survive in different types of ecosystems.
6. How might you explain what you learned about native and non-native species to a family member?

Learning Targets:

1. Explain how different ecosystems support different types of plants and animals.