ENGAGE AND ASSESS

Teachers will receive a pre-visit video that outlines why people study animal behavior and some of the tools they use. The video includes an interactive session for participants to practice observing and recording animal behavior, preparing them to make observations during their Zoo visit.

SKILLS

• Observing
• Recording data
• Communicating information
• Analyzing data
• Teamwork

SCIENCE CONCEPTS / STANDARDS

• Science and Engineering Practices:
• Asking Questions and Defining Problems
  • A practice of science is to ask and refine questions that lead to descriptions and explanations of how the natural and designed world works and which can be empirically tested.

• Analyzing and Interpreting Data
  • Scientific investigations produce data that must be analyzed in order to derive meaning. Because data patterns and trends are not always obvious, scientists use a range of tools - including tabulation, graphical interpretation, visualization and statistical analysis - to identify the significant features and patterns in the data. Scientists identify sources of error in the investigations and calculate the degree of certainty in the results. Modern technology makes the collection of large data sets much easier, providing secondary sources for analysis.
EXPERIENCE

- 35-minute lesson in the classroom prior to Zoo visit.
- Animal observations at Zoo (or other location)
- 35-minute virtual post-visit with Zoo staff.

Participants will learn to use tools and data collection processes that researchers use in the field to document animal behavior with the support of Detroit Zoological Society (DZS) staff. The group will apply their new skills and collect data on their own in the Zoo or a location of their choosing. DZS staff will assist in analyzing and comparing the data after the visit to the Zoo, and guide a reflection on the challenges and benefits that this type of data can provide animal care experts. Participants will finish by generating questions that they could answer by making additional observations.

CELEBRATING AND SAVING WILDLIFE

The Center for Zoo Animal Welfare and Ethics staff uses ethograms to study and document the behavior of exotic captive animals. This information allows animal care staff to make informed decisions and provide an opportunity for animals to thrive not just survive while in the care of humans.

TAKE ACTION

Help scientists identify animals with Snapshot Serengeti, a citizen science project that publishes trail camera photos online for people to help identify the animals from Serengeti National Park in Tanzania.

Put out a bird feeder and observe the species and their behaviors as they visit the feeder. What could you do to change which that visit the feeder?