

## **Eat, Not Eaten** 6th-8th Grade Program

**Description:** This program is a perfect introduction to everything ecology. Come be challenged by the delicate balance of an ecological food web that must overcome disasters, natural and man-made alike.

### **Objectives:**

- Be able to explain how food chains and food webs are used to describe energy flow within an ecosystem.
- Know the relationship between producers, primary consumers, secondary consumers, and tertiary consumers and how that relates to herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, predators and prey.
- Recognize the importance of the interconnected relationships between all organisms within an ecosystem. They will know that an ecosystem is in a delicate balance that can easily be disturbed and changed by both natural and man-made disasters.

## Birdwatching Station:

1 pair of binoculars per student.

Mark the behavior of birds in the ethogram on worksheet. Use the field guides to identify at least one species – students may not get a close/clear enough look to ID all the birds, and that's ok!

At the end of time, ensure all binoculars are collected and returned to the box.

### Binocular Instructions:

Always keep string around your neck, so the binoculars don't get lost. Never walk while using binoculars! Look through the small holes so that birds look bigger. Have a staring contest with the bird, slowly raise your binoculars until they just touch your eyelashes, and use the focus to make the bird clear.

### Talking Points:

- What is that bird doing? (looking for food, flying, calling, etc.)
- Do you notice any unusual body parts on that bird? (ex. Long legs/neck/beak, bright colors) - How do you think that body part might help them survive?
- If we're having trouble seeing a bird, can we find any evidence that birds were here before? (ex. Feathers, footprints, scat, birdsong)

## Habitat Restoration Station:

Take the students out to the habitat restoration site near the tidal marker. Explain the difference between native and invasive species. Mention that the plants you walked past are all native species that were planted by students like them!

### If Planting:

Have students pair up (2 students to 1 plant ratio). Make sure each student finds a pair of gardening gloves, a shovel, and rake. Groups may have to share some of these materials. Students should use shovels to remove dirt from pre-dug holes, so the potted plant sits level within. Once deep enough, take the plant out of the pot and wake up roots by rubbing around the outside of the dirt, then place in the hole. Return dirt around plant and pat down, so the dirt is level with the ground. If available place orange cone around plant to protect from animals while it grows

### If Not Planting:

Help students identify invasive species like iceplant and horehound and remove them from the planting site using rakes and hula hoes. Also, have students use watering cans to water all the plants with a cone in the restoration site.

### Tool Safety:

Tools should be used in vertical position with handle side up. When finished, tools should be placed face down on the ground.