

Pond Dipping



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Activity Name: Pond Dipping

Ages: K - 12

Activity Energy: Medium

Length of time: 45 minutes

Number of Participants: 1 - 30

Indoor/Outdoor: Outdoor

Concept: Find out what lives in a pond by dipping a net in.

Materials Required: nets, buckets, bug id books, ice cube trays (or small clear containers), magnifying glasses

Introduction:

Wetlands are important habitat for many creatures such as birds, frogs, beavers and bugs. We often dismiss how much life exists underwater because we cannot see it. A simple net and bucket along with curiosity and wonder allow people to explore and learn all about water bugs. Their behaviours and adaptations are fascinating and this playful activity accentuates these aspects.

Methods:

1. Explore the pond area prior to bringing a group and identify and hazards that may be in the area. Choose a spot that has the safest access to the water. Avoid steep embankments or plants that may cause harm.
2. Once the group arrives at the pond, inform them of any hazards or dangers to avoid.
3. Set up 2 large buckets with some pond water in them away from the water's edge. This will become a gathering area so ensure that it is large enough for the entire group. At this same spot have identification guides and magnifying glasses.
4. Have students work in pairs and hand out nets.
5. Send participants to the pond to dip their nets in the water asking them to be sure to run their nets up against water plants. This will increase the chances of catching bugs.
6. Instruct them to bring their nets to the gathering area. Here an instructor will turn their nets upside down in the bucket water. Some bugs are not easily visible until they are in the bucket.

7. Once there are enough bugs in the bucket and the participants have had many turns at catching bugs, have them gather up.
8. Discuss the different types of bugs that are in the bucket. Point out different ways that they have adapted to gather oxygen from the water, or ways that they hunt. Also talk about life cycles of the bugs. Some bugs live the majority of their lives underwater and then metamorphose to become airborne such as the dragonfly.
9. Instruct or aid students in catching one bug in their small container. Have them sit down and observe their bug trying to answer set questions that have been predetermined by the teacher. Use magnifying glasses to have a closer look.
10. Have fun!

Tips for Teachers:

- This is better handled with smaller groups. If you have a large class, divide them in two and have another station running simultaneously.
- Pond dipping is always a success. All ages will enjoy it and find it fascinating.