

FOOD WEB GAME

Background

This is an interactive activity to show people the importance of a stable food web. It uses string tied around pins; when pins get taken out, the string loosens until it eventually falls apart. This represents the destruction of the food web and the individual species in it.

Supplies

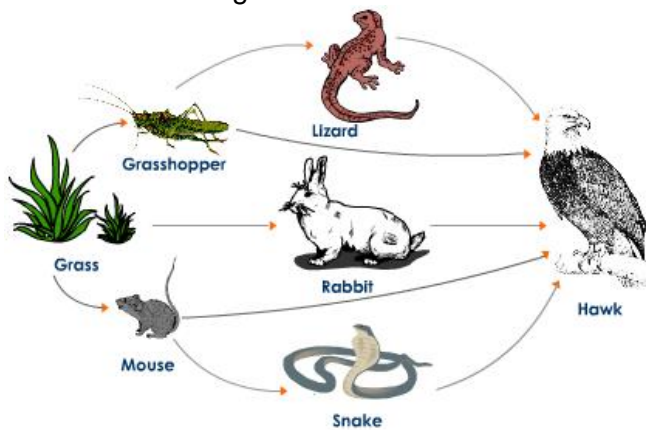
- 1 Foam board poster
- 28 pins
- String or rope
- Scissors
- Glue

*Tip: It is best to have string and foam board that are different colors.

Instructions

Step 1: Print out and cut the sample game cards. Feel free to create your own.

Step 2: Print out pictures of the 7 species depicted in the web below. Paste on cardboard poster in the same arrangement as shown below.



A Food Web in a Grassland Ecosystem With Five Possible Food Chains

Step 3: Place pins at each link of the food chain to represent members of that population: 5 pins for Grass; 4 pins each for Mouse, Grasshopper, Snake, Rabbit, and Lizard; 3 pins for Hawk.

Step 4: Intertwine rope in relation of the food web. ([Video](#))

Step 5: Add a title to the cardboard poster: Ex. “The Food Web Connection”

Step 6: Bring the game to your cleanup site to demonstrate how each link in a food web is indispensable. Show volunteers how strong the rope initially is when everything is fully intact. As they play, make note of how weak the web becomes or how there is a disproportional number of certain populations compared to others. ([Video](#))

Bob the farmer treated his grass well with clean water and safe fertilizer use.

+1 Grass

A smoker threw his cigarette butt on the ground instead of in the trash. The butt made its way to a river and contaminated water that a rabbit drank from.

-1 Rabbit

The Lizard ate a green piece of plastic that it thought was a Grasshopper. This can make a lizard sick.

-1 Lizard

A Mouse ate some poison set out by humans. This mouse was then eaten by a snake, so it became poisoned also.

-1 Mouse, -1 Snake

Jake did not dispose of his chemicals properly. The chemicals contaminated the groundwater, which a Rabbit drank from and got sick. A Hawk that ate the rabbit got sick, too.

-1 Rabbit, -1 Hawk

Hawks are near the top of the food chain for their environment. They eat Lizards, Rabbits, Snakes, Mice, Grasshoppers, and more.

-1 of your choice from the prey

Humans went out hunting and shot down many hawks.

-1 Hawk

Fertilizer runoff can kill Grass and make it dangerous for other species to eat like Grasshoppers.

-1 Grass, -1 Grasshopper

A new housing development is built on the snake den and now he has no shelter.

-1 Snake

A school group hosted a cleanup in a nearby canyon. Now the rabbits have a safe habitat.

+1 rabbit

A highway was built in the middle of the lizard habitat, separating them from their water source.

-1 lizard

A rabbit got tangled in a six-pack ring that was littered in its home.

-1 rabbit

The hawk tried to eat a balloon that it mistook for a lizard. The balloon and its string got wrapped around his beak.

-1 hawk

Billy released his pet rabbit into the wild. The rabbit population grew quickly and grass becomes scarce.

-2 grass, -1 mouse, -1 grasshopper, +2 rabbits

Matt went off-roading in his ATV and trespassed into a nature reserve. His vehicle hit a snake.

-1 snake

Mice find cigarette butts and use them for their nests. This poisons the mice.

-1 mice

The River Park Foundation restored a section of the river. Now the grasshopper has a home and can hide from its predators.

+1 grasshopper

The San Diego Zoo rehabilitated a family of hawks that it released into the wild.

+2 hawks