

Elk Country

WPSU Virtual Field Trip Teacher Guide



For Grades: 1st – 6th

Duration: 3 class sessions

Objectives:

- Describe physical and behavioral animal adaptations unique to Pennsylvania wildlife.
- Explain the importance of conserving natural resources.

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Discover the wilds of Pennsylvania by visiting the Keystone Elk Country Alliance, a conservation education center located in Benezette, Pennsylvania.

Explore the Elk Country Visitor Center and learn about Pennsylvania wildlife – all without leaving the classroom.

Plan Your Trip!

KWL Chart [Assessment]: Use the included KWL chart to help students assess what they “Already Know” and “What they Wonder” about Pennsylvania wildlife and conservation practices. Use their answers to help guide a discussion prior to the field trip and identify areas of interest to explore and research together.

Guiding Questions:

- Name some animals native to Pennsylvania.
- What do you know about Elk?

Hiding in Plain Sight activity: Use this [PBS LearningMedia](#) Plum Landing video to learn how plants and animals are interdependent. Follow up with some standards based fun science activities!

1. Discuss the observations and inferences made in the *Brick Eating Ivy* Plum Landing video.
2. Use the [Hiding in Plain Sight Lesson Plan](#) to play predator-versus-prey games.
3. Use the *Pasta Prey* activity from the lesson plan to help your students understand how camouflage helps prey escape predators.

As a class, discuss what your students learned about ecosystem dynamics.

It’s Field Trip Day! Start your trip by going over the different animals and plants found in Pennsylvania with your students and having them predict what they will learn. Then as a class, or in small groups, travel through the locations to see images, read descriptions, and watch videos. Have your students take notes and draw observations based on the questions below:

- Where did Rocky Mountain Elk originate?
- Why is it important that we preserve this species?
- What are some of the unique physical characteristics of elk?
- How do elk survive the winter? What do they eat?

Once you have explored the Elk Country educational materials, discuss as a class how you can do your part to keep Pennsylvania wild.

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Plan Your Trip!

A F T E R

KWL Chart [Assessment]: Complete the KWL chart you began before the trip by directing students to fill-in the “What I Learned” column.

- Discuss as a class what new things they learned.
- Discuss if there was anything that they thought they knew before the field trip that was not quite correct and how the field trip helped to clear up the misconceptions.
- Discuss any questions that students may still have.

Classroom Extensions

Exploration: Identify a Pennsylvania State Park in your community by visiting the [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#) website to see what is near you.

Expert: Contact the Keystone Elk Country Alliance to schedule a Distance Learning Experience or an in-person field trip:

Ben Porkolab, Conservation Education Coordinator

ConEd@KECAUS.com

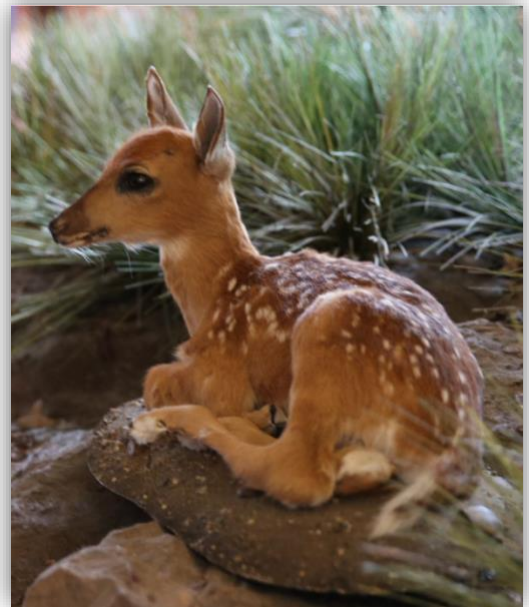
814-787-5173

<https://experienceelkcountry.com>

Experience: Request your WPSU [Elk Country Classroom Activity Kit](#) from your local Intermediate Unit (IU) Lending Library to extend the Field Trip experience.

Camouflage [Activity]: Turn your classroom into a fawn nursery and have your students hide ‘fawns’ around the room. Fawns have spots to hide them from predators. Have your students create unique camouflage patterns on their fawns to hide among your classroom decorations.

- Provide each student with a [cut out fawn](#).
- Have students color their fawns to hide around the room. Invite another class in to see if they can find the cards.
- Tip: Encourage students to use at least 3 colors when decorating their cards.



At-Home Extension

Watch & Create [Activity]: Learn about the [oviparous animals](#), and then create a birdfeeder for your backyard.

- Gather your materials: cardboard tube, any nut butter or lard, string, and bird seed.
- Cut a hole in the top of your cardboard tube and thread string through it to hang.
- Smear your peanut butter or lard on the cardboard roll.
- Roll your cardboard in bird seed.
- Hang it up near a window where you can watch the birds feast! (An example of the activity begins at [16:00 on the video](#).)



Additional Resources

Grades K-5

- [Wild Kratts: Cats & Dogs \[Game\]](#): Encourage students to learn about domesticated animal behaviors with this engaging interactive from PBS Kids.
- [Animal Mistaken Identity Guessing Game \[Activity\]](#): Practice scientific observation with this activity challenging students to identify animals that have similar characteristics.

Grades 6-8

- [Careers in Wildlife \[Video & Reading\]](#): Explore the many careers available conserving wildlife. Learn about training and volunteer opportunities in this worthwhile field.
- [Bird Beak Adaptations \[Media Collection\]](#): Use these detailed photographs to explore how eight species of birds use their unique beak structures to thrive in the wild.

Grades 9-12

- [Human Impact on Wildlife \[Lesson Plan\]](#): Discover the different ways humans impact habitat and wildlife through a media-rich lesson plan from *NATURE*.
- [Conservation and Public Policy \[Video and discussion questions\]](#): Learn how conservation legislation shapes our environment and how you can get involved in the decision making.

Standards Alignment

PA STEELS Standards:

- *3.1 Life Science* – Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
- *3.1 Life Science* – Ecosystem Dynamics, Functioning, & Resilience
- *3.1 Life Science* – Social Interactions and Group Behavior
- *3.1 Life Science* – Variation of Traits
- *3.1 Life Science* – Adaptation
- *3.4 Environmental Literacy & Sustainability* – Investigating Environmental Issues
- *3.4 Environmental Literacy & Sustainability* – Evaluating Solutions
- *3.4 Environmental Literacy & Sustainability* – Environmental Sustainability

Career Education and Work:

- *13.1. Career Awareness and Preparation (A, C, E, & H)*
- *13.3. Career Retention and Advancement (B, C)*

Feedback

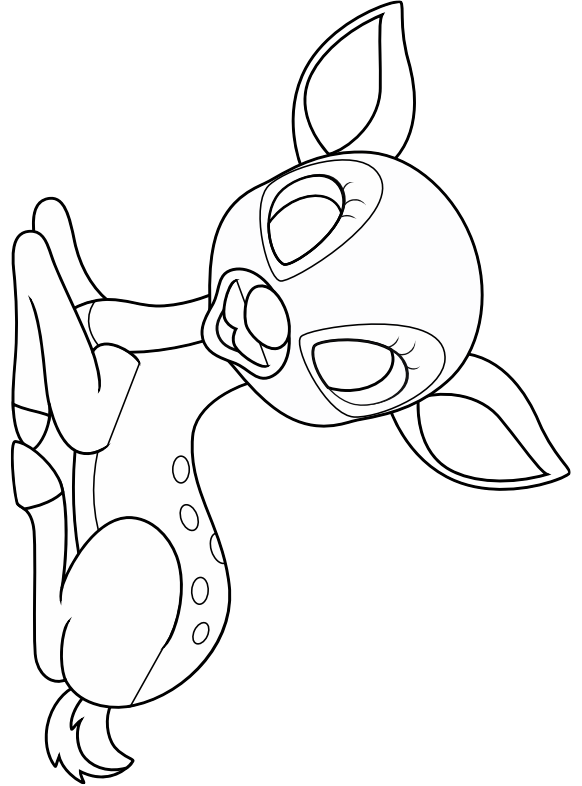
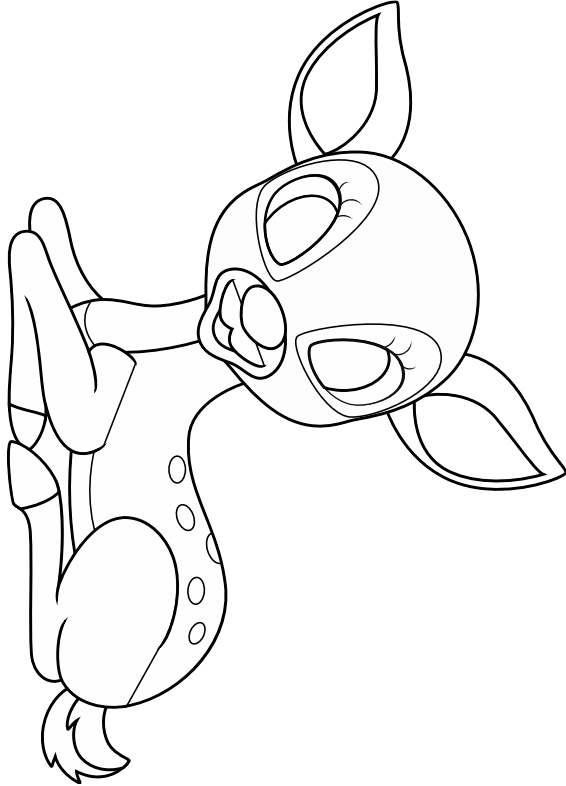
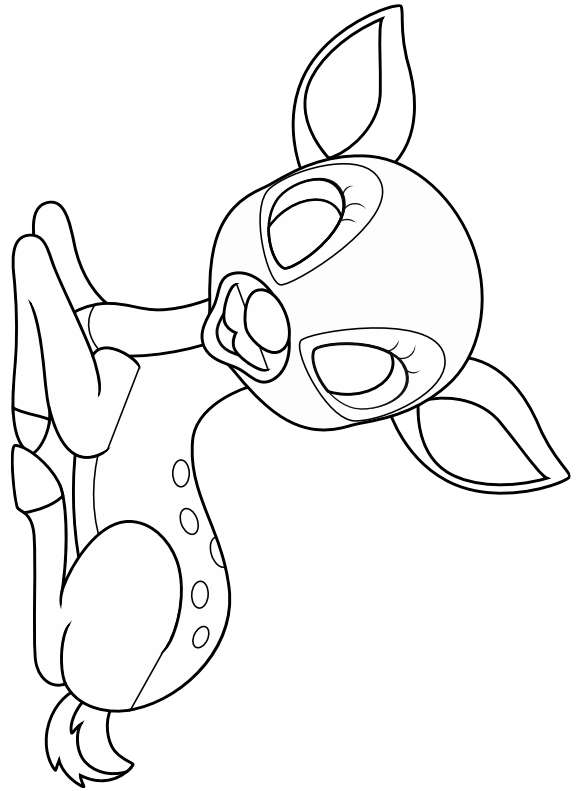
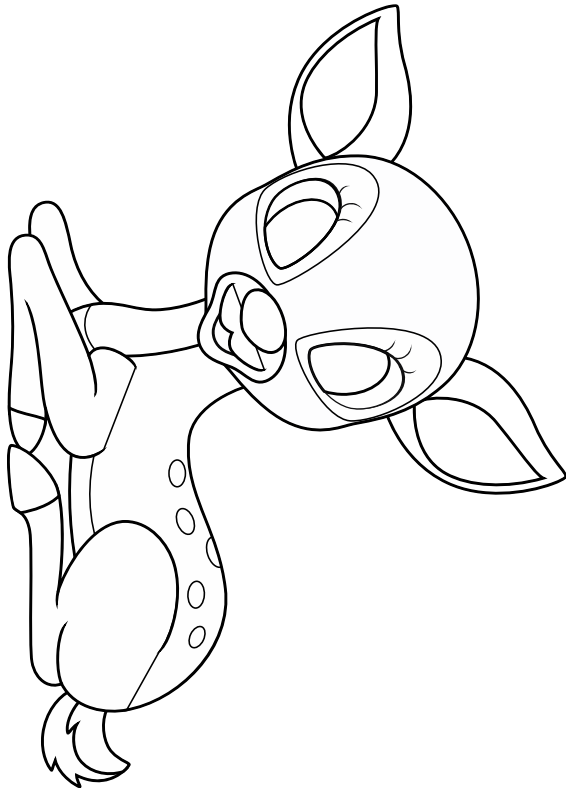
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We would greatly appreciate your feedback as we continue to develop and improve upon this program. Please consider taking this short survey.
Thank you!



Camouflage Activity: Fawn Cutouts



*Image adapted from [Nature Vectors By Vecteezy](#)