



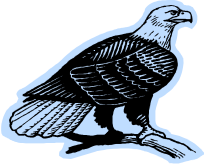
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SUMMER ECOLOGY PROGRAM NEWSLETTER
BY RITA CALANDRESA, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

JULY 13 - JULY 17, 2009
JULY 20 - JULY 24, 2009

Hello again! It must be true that time flies when you're having fun, because I haven't sent out newsletter #2 yet and #3 is due! So I will be covering 2 weeks in this newsletter...

The votes are in and our groups have been named. Our younger group is called THE GOLDFISH. Frank is the Head Counselor and Stephanie is the Co-Counselor for the Goldfish. Our older group is called THE EAGLES. Veronica is the Head Counselor and Andrea is the Co-Counselor for the Eagles. Part of the day we are all together, but on our daily trail treks each group sets off on their own adventure.



Since we see different things, we talk about what each group saw while we enjoy our favorite flavors of ice pops!

Well, enjoy the newsletter and some photos of our activities taken by Stephanie!

Week #2

ASK ME ABOUT...

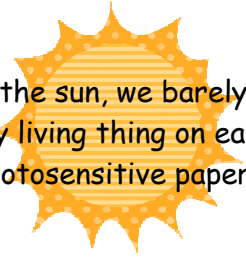
Food Chains We talked about food chains and played the Food Chain Game. The Sun gives energy to plants, which are able to make their own food. Animals who eat plants are herbivores. Animals who eat other animals are carnivores. The last link in the chain includes the decomposers who return nutrients to the soil.

Water On Tuesday we talked about water. All living things need water. The counselors put on a puppet show about the water cycle. We made a bracelet with beads that represent the water cycle: white for clouds (condensation), light blue for rain (precipitation), green for the water that is on earth (collection) and yellow for when the sun causes vapor to rise up into the clouds (evaporation)... and the cycle starts again!

Ponding On Wednesday we spent most of the day ponding. This is a great activity to do with your child that requires very little equipment or specific skill. We used nets and strainers to scoop decaying leaves and mud from the pond and, then, set this into a basin of clear pond water and let it settle for a few minutes. You could see little critters swimming around! Using a small paintbrush, we scooped them up and put them into a small container of clear pond water. You can even fill an old ice cube tray. If you have a magnifying glass, so much the better! Many insects start their lives in water. We saw many dragonfly larvae along with some scuds, flatworms and leeches (they didn't hurt us!). On the same day we saw something strange in the pond: A UFO! Unidentified FLOATING Object!! It was a jiggly mass surrounding a fallen branch in the water. After guessing that it may have been frog eggs, it turned out that it was a particular kind of algae!

Fish We observed tiny fish and then put them back in the pond. Fish can be found in both fresh water (like our pond) and salty water (like in the Long Island Sound and the ocean). Fish can breathe in water. Their scales help protect them from injuries and the slime all over their bodies protects them from bacteria in the water!

Sun Ironically, on the day we talked about the sun, we barely saw it because of the clouds and rain! We reviewed how the sun gives energy to every living thing on earth. It truly is the STAR of our solar system! We will try an experiment with photosensitive paper on a bright sunny day before camp is over.



Week #3

ASK ME ABOUT...

Insects and Spiders A true insect has 3 body parts: head, thorax and abdomen. Spiders are not insects as they have 2 body parts and more than 6 legs. Spiders make many different shapes of webs and we get to see them frequently on our walks.



Worms and Decomposers Do you know how much is going on under a log? Worms, sowbugs, millipedes, centipedes as well as fungi all act as decomposers to break down matter and create soil. So, the next time you're tempted to say "YUCK" when you think of these critters, remember that they are filling an important niche.



I thought for sure that one of our groups would be named "The Centipedes", as a lot of campers find them endlessly fascinating! Just look at Daisy in the picture to the right! Yes, she has centipedes crawling on her hand!

Sheldrake Mammals What makes an animal a mammal? We talked about chipmunks, squirrels, groundhogs (aka woodchucks), rabbits, and deer that live at Sheldrake. Here's a fun game you can play anytime with your kids--animal charades. You pick an animal to imitate and whoever guesses correctly gets to go next.



Sheldrake Birds Happily, we managed to get in our daily trail walk before the rain came down (yet again!). We got to see the ducklings with their mother and the barn swallows by the reservoir. We visited the Potting Shed so we could watch for birds coming to the bird feeders. Mostly we saw house finches, but also a cardinal, and an opportunistic chipmunk or two! We examined various bird nests, and even a bird skull.



Frogs How lucky we are to have a frog pond at Sheldrake! We're getting better at approaching quietly and slowly so that we don't scare the frogs. When startled they make a sound that sounds like "JEEP!" and they leap into the pond going "PLUNK"! We have mostly green frogs, and there is a larger Bull Frog. We learned that frogs are amphibians, and are different from mammals in a lot of ways.



Topics for week #4: turtles, the shore, camouflage & defense, dragonflies and ponding II.

ALSO...Armelle Gloaguen, a local Children's Entertainer, Educator and French Teacher will be visiting us on August 10th. She will bring her guitar and sing some animal and nature-themed music. If you'd like a sneak preview of her new CD, visit www.myspace.com/armelleforkids.

