



Session 4.3: Sharing Level 3-5

In today's activity, you and your child will learn about a keystone species that shares its home with many local animals. A short story with pictures will be provided for you and your child to learn about gopher tortoises together. Your child will then either craft a home for an animal and/or follow a habitat scavenger hunt outdoors. If you do not have the materials for the craft, the scavenger hunt is an alternative.

Suggested Materials:

- Technology to print story or read story online
- Optional: Scavenger Hunt
 - Print out of scavenger hunt, pencil/crayon, something to write on
- Optional: Craft
 - Empty plastic bottle, hole punch or scissors, string, cardboard, twigs, leaves and other natural materials from outside

Lesson:

Have your child read a short story about gopher tortoises. If you are able to, print the pictures or have them open on technology to view. The lesson is included at the end of this packet.

Craft:

Burrows provide a home for animals. Together, create a home that provides burrows for beneficial insects in your backyard or community. Note: if you do not have a backyard, the home can be placed in a nearby outdoor area. Tie the craft back to sharing by asking your child if they think one bug will move in or if several will share the home with one another.

1. Begin to gather materials. Find cardboard and an empty bottle from home. Cardboard will need to be cut into strips. Parents should cut the tops and bottom off the bottle beforehand to make an open-ended tube, as well as punch holes in the sides of the bottle and tie string through so that your child can hang it.
2. Together with your child, collect natural materials from outdoors.
3. Begin building your insect home by filling your bottle with natural materials.
4. Have your child hang the filled bottle in a horizontal position.
5. Check on your bottle in a few weeks to see if any bugs have started living inside.

Resources: <https://www.redtedart.com/simple-bug-hotel-for-kids/>

Scavenger Hunt:

There are many places outdoors that provide homes for animals.

1. Find a safe place outdoors to search for the items on the scavenger hunt.
2. Your child will try to find rocks, leaves, grass, a bug, a bird, and a tree. If you struggle to find a bug, try looking under a rock!
3. Ask your child what rocks, leaves, trees and grass provide for animals, such as birds and bugs. Do they give the animals a safe place to hide? Do they provide a food source? Do you think any animals share the habitat?

Habitat Scavenger Hunt

Rocks



Tree



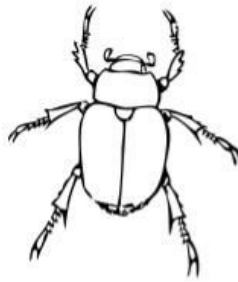
Grass



Leaves



Bug

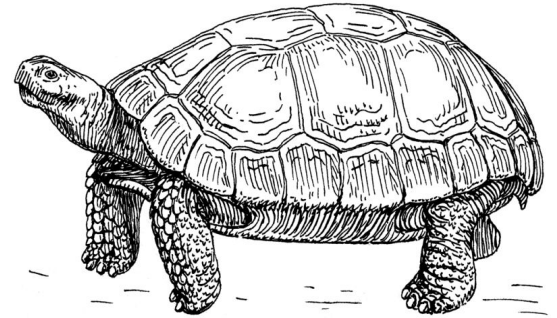


Bird



Burrow Buddies

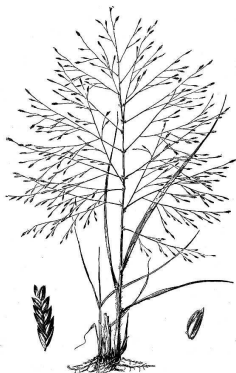
At Pine Jog, there lives a **gopher tortoise** named PJ. Visitors can come see PJ's burrow. A burrow is a tunnel that gopher tortoises dig. They live in their burrows.



There are animal footprints in the sand around the burrow. Some are big. Some are small. Some have claw marks! Who makes the footprints? Is it a tortoise?

Workers put a camera outside the burrow. The special camera took pictures when something moved. The pictures showed lots of animals going in and out of the burrow! There were snakes, lizards, mice, owls and frogs.

Gopher tortoises are a **keystone species**. A keystone species is important to other plants and animals. The tortoise shares its burrow with animals. The animals are safe in the burrow. It is not too hot or too cold inside.



Workers want to help PJ. They invite schools to visit. The schools plant grasses for PJ to eat. One of the grasses is called Love Grass.