



BECOME A NATURALIST

This lesson plan developed by:



Overview:

Have you heard about the new species of whale recently discovered by a team of scientists off the coast of Mexico, near the San Benito Islands? Have you ever wanted to discover a new species?



Well, let's give it a try! Time for you to be a naturalist – an expert in or student of natural history. You will be tasked with taking a walk, taking notes, and later identifying species.

Materials:

- Notebook
- Colored pencils
- Computer or phone

Duration:

15-30 minutes (however long you want to walk)

Become a Naturalist (cont.)

Physical Activity:

Moderate

Activity:

Grab a notebook and take a walk! On your walk, be on the lookout for different animals you don't know – a bird, maybe a fish, or even an insect. Once you find the species, take a couple of notes. How big? What color? Observe it. Any interesting behaviors? Where did you find it – general surroundings? Try your hand at drawing the animal. This will help you identify it. Once you are home, use a computer or phone and try looking up your species! General species type, maybe location, and color are a good place to start. Were you able to identify your species and learn more about it?

Discussion:

This is a great way to learn about the local flora and fauna (plants and animals) in your region. If you have access to identification books, these are a great way to learn more! You may want to use the iNaturalist app to help identify your species. The more observant you are, the sooner you will begin to notice subtle changes in nature with the seasons. Being a naturalist is easy. Anyone can do it! Soon, you will be an “expert” – able to identify and share knowledge about the flora and fauna in your region.

This activity was contributed by Sailors for the Sea Skipper, D'amy Steward.

Ocean Literacy Principles:

Ocean literacy is an understanding of the ocean's influence on us, and our impact on the ocean. There are seven [Ocean Literacy Essential Principles](#) that all people of our blue planet should have an opportunity to learn and understand. This activity touches upon the following Essential Principles:

4. The ocean made Earth habitable
5. The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems
7. The ocean is largely unexplored

Further Your Impact with Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana:

As sailors and water-lovers, you are among the first to notice changes to our seas such as fewer marine animals, more pollution and damaged marine habitat. Through our Green Boating initiative, Sailors for the Sea Powered by Oceana provides opportunities for you and your community to address pressing ocean health issues. As a Green Boater, you will be provided with the information, resources and access to combat marine plastic pollution, prevent habitat destruction, source responsible seafood and protect marine animals. From demanding plastic-free alternatives to choosing sustainable seafood, your voice and actions are an important part of restoring the abundance of our oceans and protecting marine habitats. [Join our growing Green Boating Community today.](#)