

Migration Headache

Purpose of this activity?

At this activity centre, participants imagine themselves as Canadian Geese. The game illustrates challenges of migration and living in sensitive wetland ecosystems. Participants learn how ecosystems are damaged and improved through natural and human induced events. Participants use brainstorming skills and improve knowledge of how to conserve wetlands for species.

Ensure that students understand the key terms **highlighted** in the activity by using them in several different contexts throughout the presentation.

Key messages:

- Groundwater does not run in underground rivers; it percolates through sand and gravel
- Groundwater is a source of drinking water through wells
- Pollutants on the ground or in lakes will enter groundwater and percolate through it, contaminating drinking water.

Materials

- Hula Hoops
- Goose Story

What will I be doing?

Activity Set Up:

Put the hula hoops in parallel rows about 15 metres apart with about 5 on each side. Space hula hoops to avoid crowding.

Read Goose Story and explain how geese work together to improve their **quality of life**. Make kids act like geese (stretch neck, stick out rear end, cock head back, make arms like wings, honking) and make them do a "practice flight" around the area. Talk about what geese do in the winter (migrate).

Explain **migration**.

* Numbers can be adjusted based on group size. This example is for 26-30 students

- Identify a playing area and place 6 hula hoops at one end and 5 at the other.
- Tell students that they are geese who migrate during the spring and fall. They live in **wetlands**. For this game, each hula hoop represents one wetland and can sustain up to 5 geese living in it.
- Have students all "fly" to their home (in city X) and stand in one of the wetlands. Remind them of the maximum number of geese in each wetland before having them "migrate" to the other city. When they migrate they will realize that not all geese can fit into

one of the wetlands. Explain to students that if they do not find a home when they migrate they need to sit in the goose graveyard (but emphasize that they will be able to rejoin the game soon).

- Tell students that it is now time to migrate back home BUT there has been a problem. For reason X one of their wetlands has been destroyed (take one hula hoop away from the other end of the playing area). Continue to "destroy" one wetland at a time (with explanation) until there is only one remaining.

Examples of Reasons:

- A new housing develop was built. The developers drained the wetland to build on top of it.
- Bulldozers came in and filled in the wetland to make a parking lot.
- There is a large oil spill that damages a marsh.
- There have been several years with not enough rain, so one wetland has dried up.
- A nearby neighbourhood uses a large amount of pesticides and damages the plant growth in the wetland, resulting in not enough food to support the geese.
- A golf course and hotel are built.
- Each one of you left your tap running while you were brushing your teeth and wasted enough water to dry up an entire wetland!
- Climate change caused a massive hurricane which destroyed a wetland.

Ask students if there is anything they can do to save or **regenerate** a wetland. If they give a great idea, add one hula hoop back and ask them to migrate. Note that they have extra space in their wetlands and invite four "dead geese" to return to their home. Continue this pattern until the students have provided many water conservation ideas and all the geese are living happily. **Encourage students to provide suggestions that **THEY** can do at home (as opposed to more large scale tasks such as "tear down the building on the wetland")

Clean Up Procedures:

At the end of the day, please put the hoops, goose story and any other materials in a safe place to return to the next day. Clean up any litter or mess and place all activity materials in the crate.