

handout

Fly It and Spy It



Exploring your world,
one mission at a time
pbskids.org/plumlanding



What Is This Activity?

Is your neighborhood teeming with **wildlife**? Surprisingly, yes—but you'll have to look very closely to see it. Toss a ball and then discover what's living below and above the spot where it lands!

Activity Time

10–20 minutes

Materials

- Ball or another object to throw, such as a paper airplane or a Frisbee
- Pen or pencil

Big Science Idea: Animals live in lots of places where they find food, water, shelter, and space to survive.

Go Outside

- 1. Point out that all animals (even people!) need food, water, and a safe shelter (like an ant nest).** *Where does your family find those things?*
- 2. Think about those survival needs as you look for animals together.** Have your child toss the ball at random into the area. **Wonder aloud:** *What lives underneath that ball? Right around it? And above it?*
- 3. Pick up the ball** and keep track of the type and number of each animal found. **Some tips:**
 - Turn over a rock or stick and look for worms, ants, roly-poly bugs, etc.
 - Look for signs of animals: Tracks, fur, feathers, poop, chewed leaves, broken acorns, spider webs, holes that might be shelters, etc.
 - Look up! Are any birds, bats, or bugs flying above? Are any animals in a tree or on a building ledge?
 - Have kids toss the ball again.

For older or more mature children: Challenge them to think about places or things that are likely to attract lots of tiny animals and then explore those places to see if their predictions are right. For example, sun or shade. Grass, bare soil, or other ground. Ground that's wet, moist, or dry. Near trees or away from them. Near where people gather or not. What about sources of food (around garbage cans, for example)? And water (ponds, fountains, puddles)?

- 4. What's the most interesting thing you found?** Encourage your child to write about it or draw it on the back of this paper. **Ask:** *How many animals did you find? Did you expect to find that many? Why?*

Explore Some More

Adopt a Local Tree



Adopt a favorite tree on your block by visiting it regularly and noting the animals that live in the trunk and branches and in the ground beneath it. Your child might want to write a poem, a thank-you note, or a song about how this tree helps the animals that live there and draw a picture. See what other kids wrote and drew on the Plum Landing “Backyard Mission” page.

Find these and more fun resources on pbskids.org/plum.

Outdoor Family Fun with Plum App

This app gets families outdoors exploring the world. Every day, the app offers five outdoor missions to get everyone thinking and talking about nature and the science that’s all around us.

Plum’s Creaturizer App

If you have a smartphone, download Plum’s Creaturizer app. You can build imaginary creatures, and then take photos of the creatures outdoors, photobombing them into the scene! Use the app to help your child photograph the creature finding food, water, and shelter in the places you visit.



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