

Who am I?

This is an entertaining activity in which students get a crash course in both schmoozing and ecology! Students are introduced to a number of different classification schemes for animals and plants, given a picture of a common ecosystem element (e.g. grass, hare, coyote, etc.) and then have to mingle with other students to determine which plant or animal they are. (*Illustrations provided courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Nature*).

Time required: 30 minutes

Materials:

- *Who am I?* signs (these are best laminated before using, and could be mounted on 4 x 6" index cards)
- String to hang signs around students' necks

Instructions:

1. Introduce or review a number of different classification schemes with the students. As you review these words and their definitions, record them on the board so that students will be able to see them throughout the activity.

Producer: an organism that makes its own food (green plant)

Consumer: an organism that feeds on those below it on the food chain

Decomposer: an organism that derives its energy from decomposing matter

Predator: an animal that kills others for food

Prey: an animal that is hunted and killed by predators

Carnivore: an animal that eats meat (animals)

Omnivore: an animal that eats animals and plants

Herbivore: an animal that eats plants



2. Students should be given one of the common ecosystem elements included in the *Who am I* signs (e.g. grass, hare, coyote, etc.). Students are not to show this card to any one.
3. Ask students to hang their sign **on the back of** one of their fellow students so that their fellow students don't know what sign they have. Encourage students to distribute signs without talking. Tell the students:

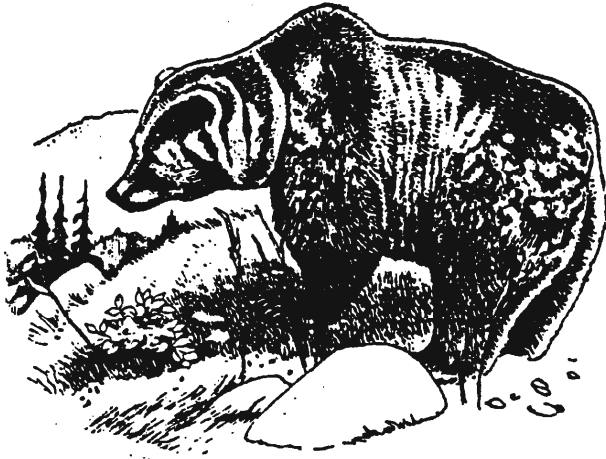
The object of this game is for you to determine what ecosystem element you are. You can do this by asking questions of the other students that use the key words on the board such as, "Am I a carnivore?" – All questions can only be answered by a yes or a no! You can guess what your ecosystem tag is, but you only get ONE guess, so keep asking yes or no questions until you're fairly sure what you are. Schmooze around and mingle with each other and think of as many yes/no questions as possible.

4. Answer any questions and let the games begin! Monitor all questions and answers. If students find they need more information, stop the game briefly, and tell students that they are allowed to ask more general yes/no questions ("Do I have fur"? "Am I bigger than a breadbox?") to find out more. When most students know what they are, allow them to move beyond yes/no answers and give hints to the remaining students.
5. Once students have discovered their identities, challenge them to do the following group work:

When I say 'go' I want everyone to get into a group of either...

- **producer, consumer and decomposer**
 - **first order, second, order, third order consumer**
 - **predator and prey**
 - **carnivore, omnivore, and herbivore.**
6. Another variation of the above activity is to divide the class into two groups and challenge each group to come up with a "Frozen Drama" in which each member of the ecosystem demonstrates their interactions with others (e.g.. the tree might be standing with its arms outstretched, the cougar is preparing to pounce on a browsing deer, etc.). One of the members of the group will be the only one who can talk; their job is to narrate the frozen drama to the 'audience.'

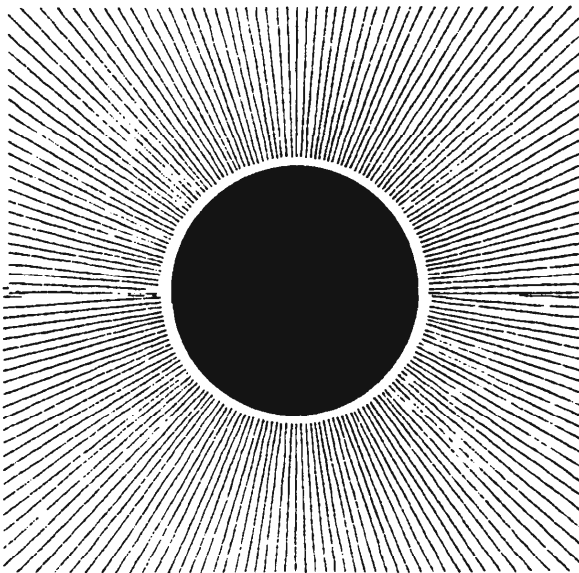
The next activity, *Weird Webs*, in which characters from this activity create a food web using string, is an excellent complement to *Who Am I?* and is best done immediately following it.



Grizzly bear



Wolf



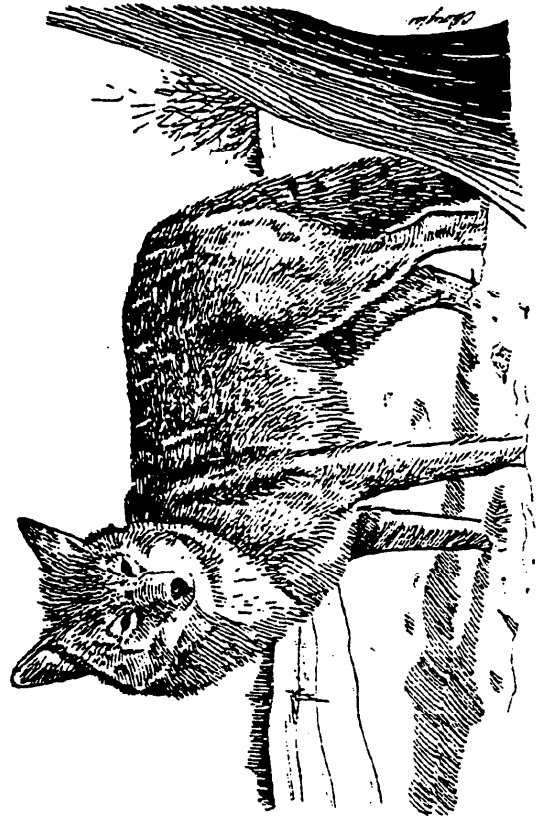
Sun



Squirrel



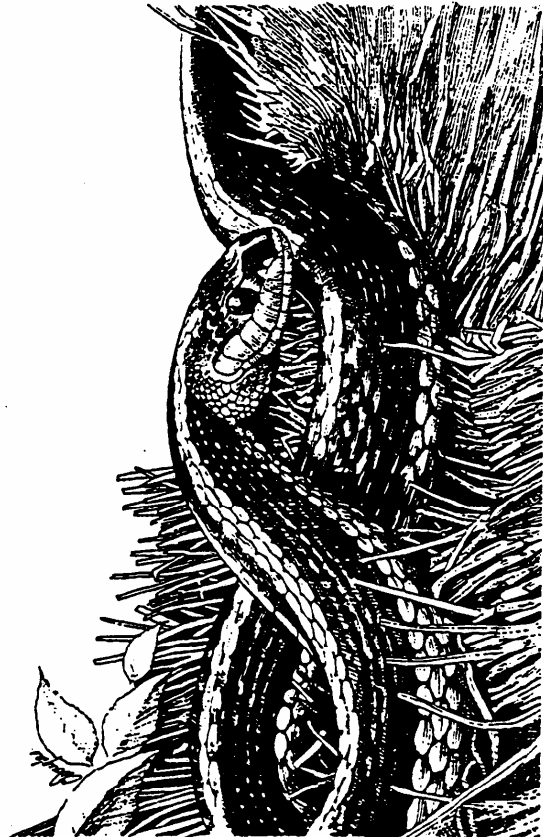
Flower



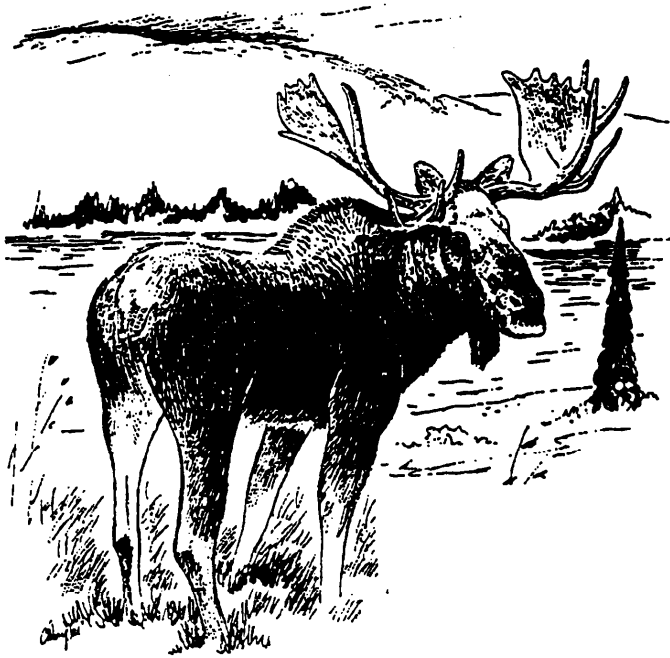
Coyote



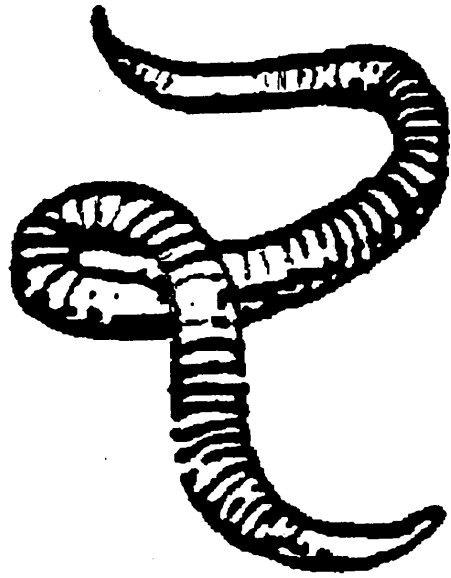
Bush



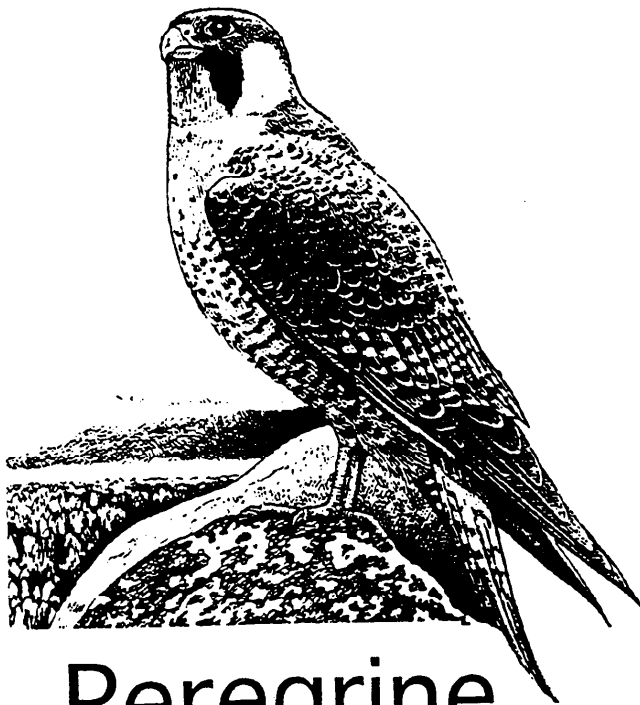
snake



Moose



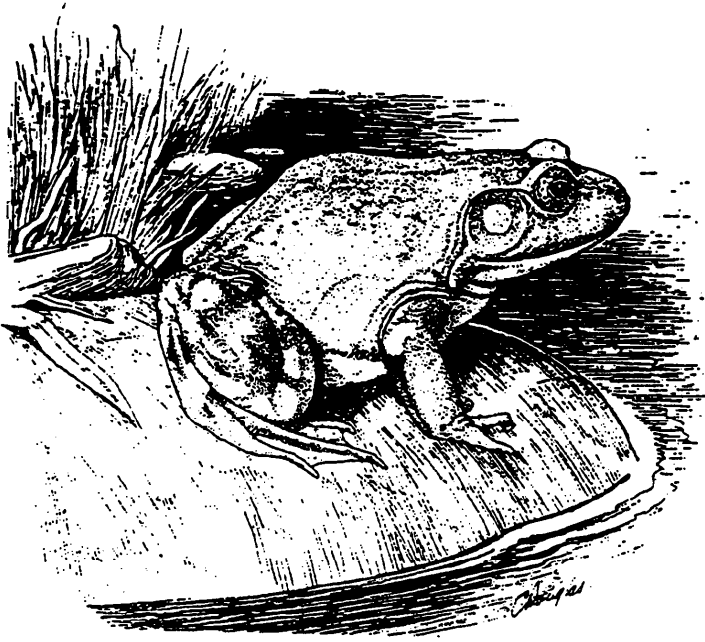
Worm



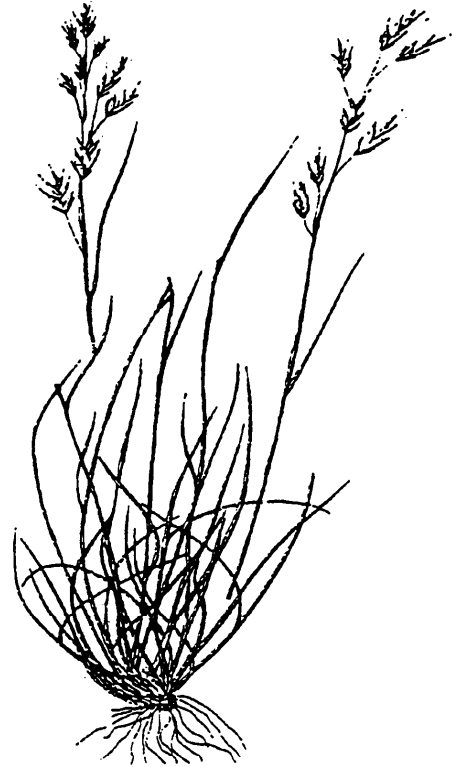
Peregrine
falcon



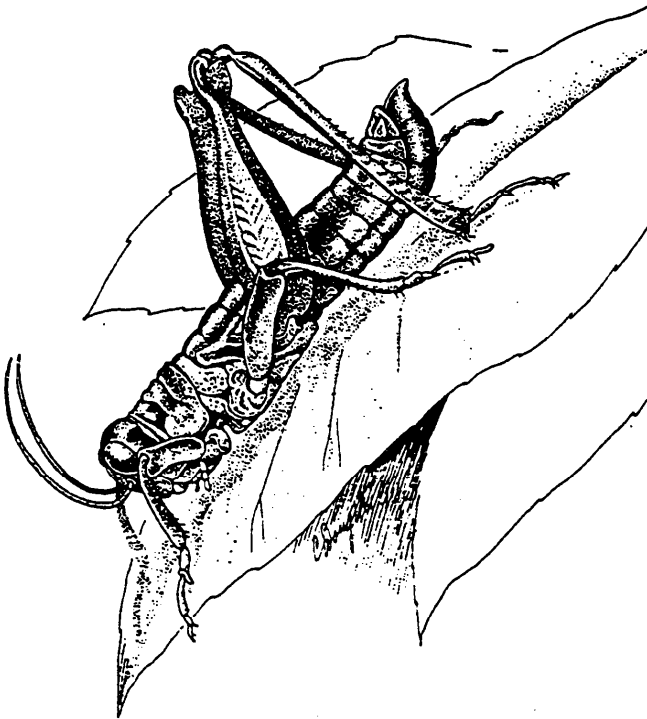
Beaver



Frog



Grass



Grasshopper



Ground squirrel



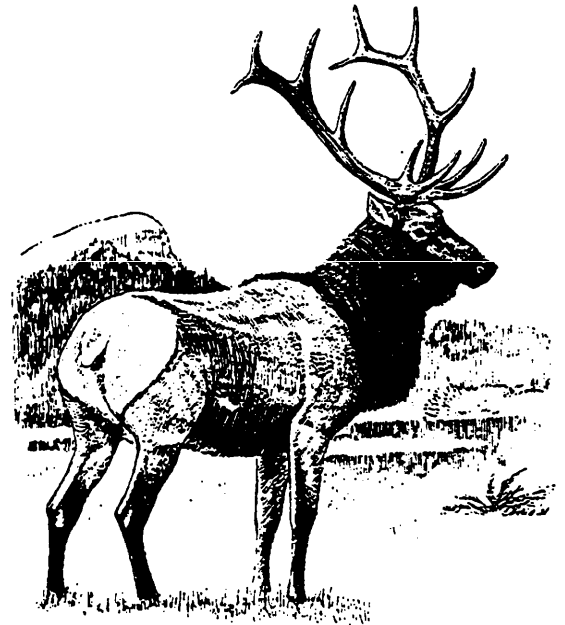
Human



Crow



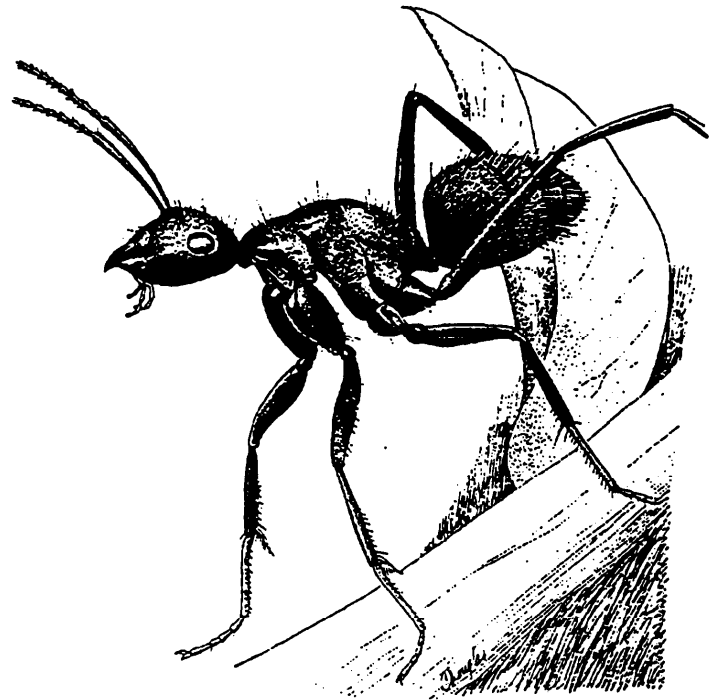
Poplar tree



Elk



Cougar



Ant



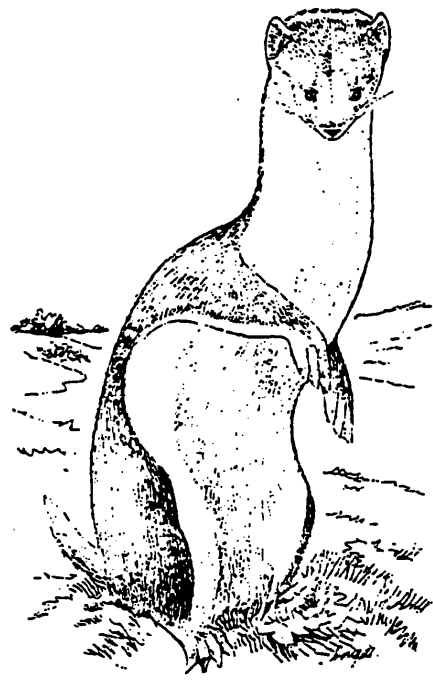
Pine tree



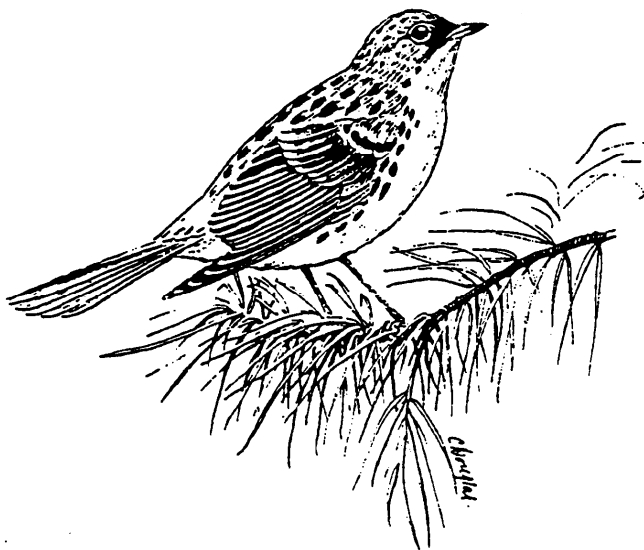
Bee



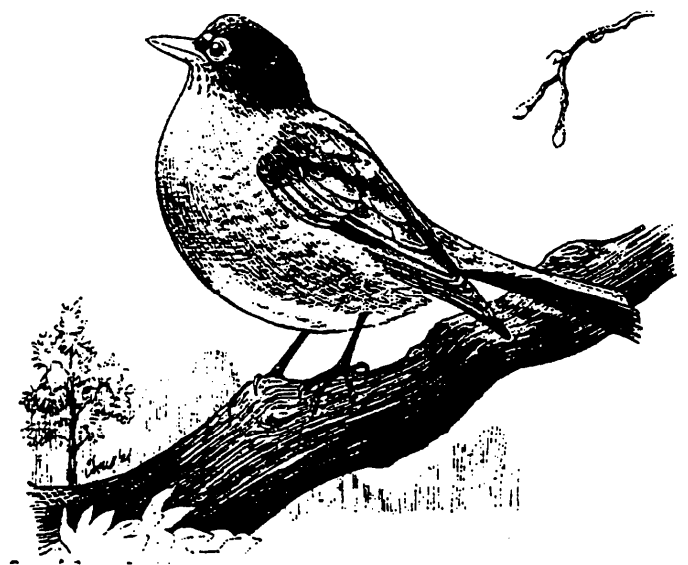
Porcupine



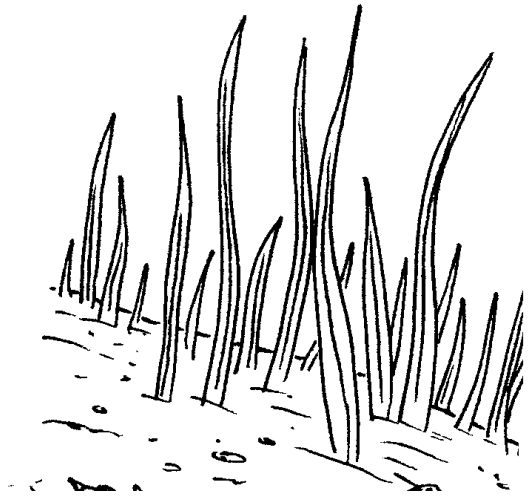
Weasel



Warbler



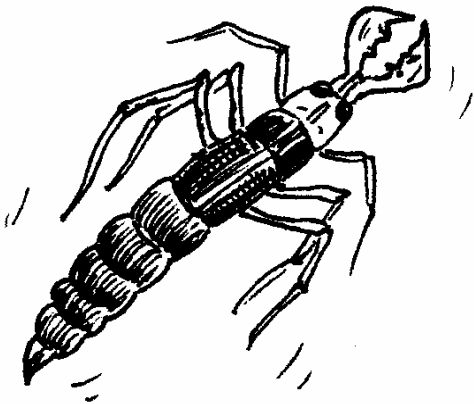
Robin



Aquatic Plants



Water Boatman



**Dragonfly
Larvae**



**Caddisfly
Larvae**



Snail