



Eye-opening activity that will help your participants gain a deeper understanding - from a unique perspective - of the effects humans have on the environment, especially wild fauna.



Topic

Fauna

Time in min

1 hour



Participants

- know more about the long-term effects of their actions on the natural environment they are visiting or exercising their sport at
- understand the consequences of their actions on wild fauna and realise they are not alone in making both positive and negative decisions
- are able to feel more empathy for all living creatures and therefore plan their actions more responsibly



Suitable for
outdoor sport instructors
(and course participants)



Practical sessions
Theoretical lessons



Outdoor F2F
Indoor F2F
Digital



Materials needed



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- some sort of treats (dry fruits, crackers, or something else that might be suitable for your participants *note: be careful with food allergies)
 - Bowls for food (1 per group)
 - assigned facilitators (1 per group)



Preparation

During the Disturbance game, participants are split into 2 groups (with equal amount of participants). They are made into teams that are basically competing against each other—the goal is to eat more treats than the other team in a certain amount of time. Without them knowing, however, one group is going to have more difficulty completing this task than the other because it will constantly get “distracted”. Each group will have a person assigned to them, and they will have the power to decide who has to skip the round of eating. Keep in mind that one group needs to be significantly more disturbed during the eating period than the other (there should only be an illusion that they are playing in “fair” conditions).

The game finishes as soon as the 1st group has eaten all the treats. After that, participants move on to the next stage of the exercise, which is more a storytelling part and shows an example from real life but, instead from telling it from the human perspective, it is presented from the perspective of the animal—to amplify the impact. By the end of the exercise, participants have lived through the experience and hopefully realised what their impacts on the environment and especially fauna can be.

Preparation

DISTURBANCE GAME



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Prepare the treats, the space and inform the game facilitators/assistants of their roles.

Activity instruction

- Start with one big group of participants. Shout different names of sports and ask participants to mimic them (climbing, surfing, kayaking, skiing etc.) - this is to define what movement will be assigned to what sport so that everyone know what they need to be doing.
- Create 2 groups (more if necessary) and predefine (without telling to the groups) which one of them will be the more frequently disturbed one
- Put the bowls filled with treats in the middle of the groups standing around them.
- Assign game facilitators (1 per group)
- When everyone is ready, begin the game. By shouting the name of the sport all participants are doing the action all the way until you say "Outdoor sports" (or ring a bell or use another noise) signifying it is now time to eat the treats for the next 10 seconds
- Before shouting "Outdoor sports", make sure that your assistants have tapped the selected people on their shoulder to let them know they are not allowed to eat in this round - here you have 2 options:
 - the regular tap on the shoulder meaning they are just not allowed to eat
 - or the "magic hand" - meaning they have to run to the specific point close by and come back - in order to make them even slower
- After 10 seconds have passed you continue shouting different sports names and participants are doing that until the new 10 second window is created for eating the treats (it is almost like musical chairs game in that sense)
- These actions should be repeated and last as long as the 1st group doesn't finish the bowl of treats.
- When you are done with eating, sit all together in a circle. It is now a time for the story.
- Chamois, National Park of Abruzzo story told from the animal's perspective (or another original example).



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Reflection and discussion

After participants have heard the story, it is time to reflect on the entire exercise and its true meaning. It is now obvious that it was more than a simple competition with obstacles. It is a reflection of a real life situation and circumstances animals in some Protected Areas are living in. Participants should realise their actions have big impacts on the environment, even when they are seemingly harmless. It is important to keep in mind that we are just one of the many visitors of a certain area, and that - whether we realise it or not - all of our actions have consequences.

Summary (in one sentence) - The disturbance game is an eye-opening activity that will help your participants gain a deeper understanding - from a unique perspective - of the effects humans have on the environment, especially wild fauna.



Potential Variations

You can prepare as many different stories (preferably led by real life experiences) as you like.

You can also leave away the storytelling, explain the game and have the participant reflect. However, having some real examples of the consequences of disturbance will be necessary.

For an online variation, you can read the story and have a group reflection after it.



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Background knowledge

The aim of this game is for participants to feel the consequences of their actions in terms of their effects on nature, especially as they accumulate. What may seem like an insignificant act done for your own convenience (like for example taking a shortcut through a non-marked path in the Protected Area you are visiting) can lead to devastating results because of the disturbance it is causing to its flora and fauna. By feeling these effects on their own skin, participants will hopefully become more aware of long-term problems arising from a series of seemingly unconnected actions.

You need to research some specific cases in Protected Areas to base your story around.



Key words

#disturbance
#impactonnature
#effectsonnature
#fauna



Source

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Presented by

EUROPARC



Materials

Example story to read

The story is told from the animal's perspective (in this case, the focus is on the Disturbance of Chamois in Abruzzo National Park, Italy). The aim of this exercise is to raise awareness about the problem of human disturbance and awaken empathy for animals.

According to this example, chamois that encounter hikers, mountain bikers, or any other Outdoor Sports practitioners stop feeding each time they notice someone (and even if it is for just a few seconds, that accumulates significantly over time) and eventually they move away, resulting in a reduction in feeding time and space. In addition, they might not be able to find suitable food in the new area they migrate to).

Keep in mind that the story can be adapted to any problem you are facing in your area.

One day, I was going to have a meal with my family. We headed to our usual spot, but I could feel something wasn't right. My aunt seemed very worried and she kept turning around. She didn't eat much. I soon noticed that people were approaching us. They kept getting closer. I didn't feel comfortable and I could feel my aunt's heart pounding faster and faster. "We have to leave"- she said, so I quickly swallowed the last piece of food and followed her. Tomorrow was the same, and the next couple of weeks as well. We always kept going to different places, hoping strangers wouldn't find us there. Unfortunately, without success. My aunt was exhausted. She kept telling us we needed to move. Our meals kept getting shorter and shorter. We were constantly interrupted by these people...One morning I woke up and went to talk to my aunt. When I got to her, she wasn't responding to my calls. I kept trying to wake her up but she wouldn't move...