

Toys for Turtles and Other Animal Enrichment

Ethogram Activity Sheet

Grade Level:

Grades 3 -8

Ocean Literacy Standards:

#5: The ocean supports a great diversity of life and ecosystems.

Description of Activity:

This observational activity gives students the opportunity to learn about animal behavior and apply it in their own backyard. Students will learn what an ethogram is, why it's important, and how scientists use ethograms to collect and analyze animal behavior.

Concepts and Skills:

- ❖ Animal behavior
- ❖ Importance of ethograms
- ❖ Recording observations
- ❖ Graphing data

Materials Needed:

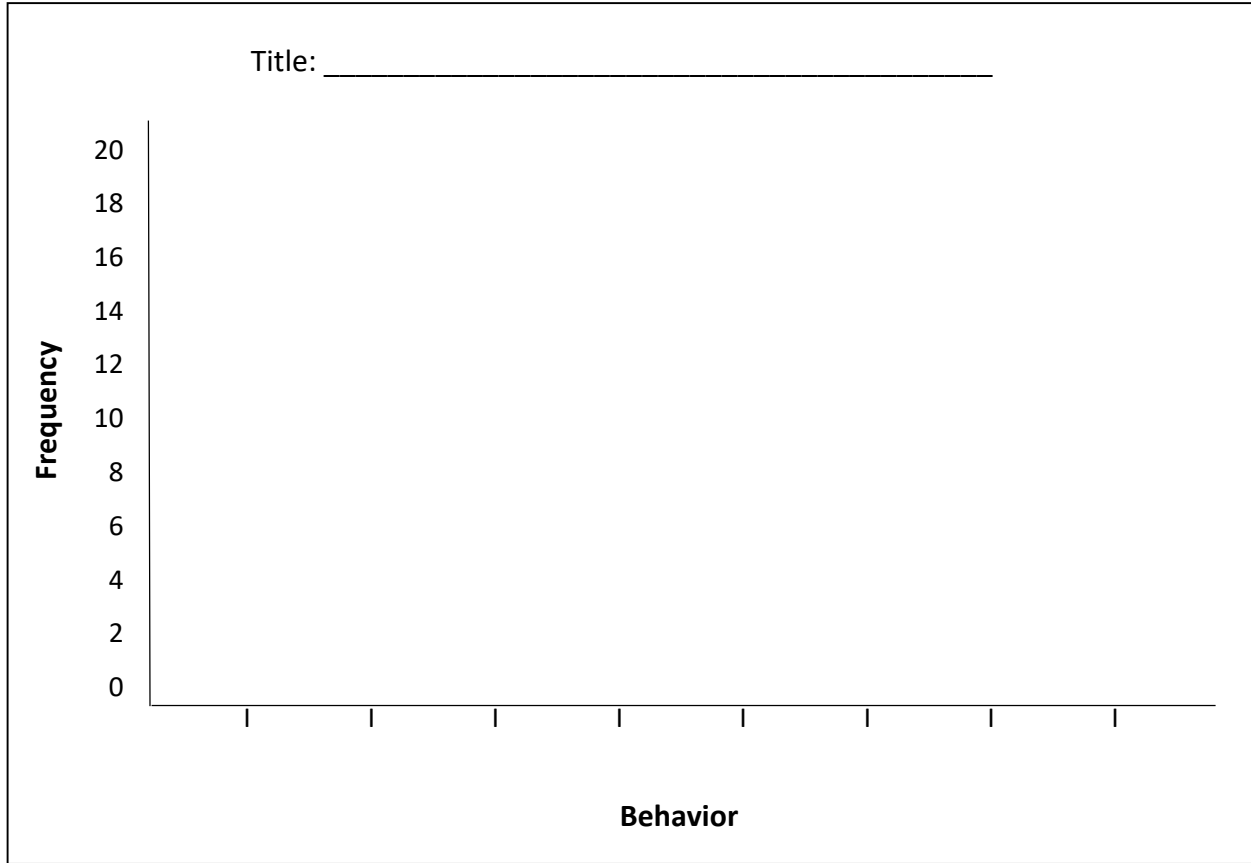
- ❖ Animal to observe
- ❖ Pencil/pen
- ❖ Part 1 – Part 3 Worksheets
- ❖ Timer

Introduction:

Animals naturally engage in certain behaviors in order to find their basic needs (food, water, shelter), avoid predation, and find a mate for reproduction. **Ethology** is the study of animal behavior, and scientists that study ethology use ethograms as a way to record animal behavior observations. An **ethogram** is a chart or table that lists all of the behaviors observed in an animal. A definition is also listed for each behavior so scientists know exactly what behavior they should be expecting to see. Ethograms are important for scientists to use so they can gain more knowledge about an animal and potentially explain why an animal acts a certain way.

Part 3: Graphing Your Ethogram Data

- ❖ Use the chart below to create a bar graph of your data.
- ❖ List all of the behaviors you observed on the x-axis.
- ❖ Chart the number of times you observed each behavior.



Ethogram Discussion Questions:

- ❖ Which behavior was the most frequent?
- ❖ Which behavior was the least frequent?
- ❖ Did you notice any patterns in behavior while you were observing?
- ❖ What would you expect to see if you did this study for 10 minutes instead of 5 minutes?

Activity sheet developed by Maggie Shiffert, Marine Education Fellow, June 2020



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