



LEARNING LABS REEF RELATIONSHIPS

Examine life in a coral reef ecosystem to discover a complex food web. Students delve into predator-prey interactions to understand the specialized feeding adaptations and behaviors animals need to make a living on the reef.

GRADE LEVEL: 3-5 | **CAPACITY:** 35 students | **DURATION:** 50 minutes

KEY CONCEPTS

Adaptations, predator/prey relationships, ecosystems, food webs

SKILLS

Compare and contrast, collaboration, observation, experimentation

IL STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

- 11.A.2a, 11.A.2b, 11.A.2d, 11.A.2e
- 12.B.2a, 12.B.2b

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Students participate in activities
- Students work and collaborate in groups
- Teachers and chaperones may participate
- Multimedia resources encourage further exploration
- Students sit on mats in groups

OVER ►►



For more information contact
studentprograms@sheddaquarium.org



FURTHER EXPLORATION

Shedd Educational Adventures

Build a Fish

<http://sea.sheddaquarium.org/sea/>

Encyclopedia of Life

<http://www.eol.org/>

EcoKids

Chain Reaction

http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/eco_info/topics/frogs/chain_reaction/index.cfm

PBS

Coral Reef Connections

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/survival/coral/low_bandwidth.html



CONNECTIONS TO THE EXHIBITS

Among the animals in the aquarium, many have relationships on which their survival depends. Locate the three examples below and explore the connections between animals at Shedd.

Caribbean Reef

Coral reef animals depend on each other in many ways. Discover the relationships among these animals and brainstorm a way in which they might connect in a food web. What forms the base of the food web? Who are the top predators? Discuss that although this food web exists in nature, due to the aquarium's feeding practices, the animals in the Caribbean Reef do not prey on each other.

Wild Reef

Take your students to the shark exhibit. Have students observe the sharks and smaller fishes. Identify predator versus prey, and then compare and contrast their appearance, behavior, location and movement. Please mention that due to the aquarium's feeding practices, the animals in the Wild Reef do not prey on each other.

Amazon Rising

Lead students to the River Beach or River Channel sections of Amazon Rising. Have students compare the animals, paying special attention to each animal's mouth shape. What does mouth shape tell you about the types of food the animal eats? Which animals are predators? Which animals are prey?

CONNECTIONS TO THE CLASSROOM

- Have students think about what they eat and whether or not they are a predator or prey animal. Brainstorm a food web involving people. What relationships do we have with animals? What relationships do we have with plants?
- Other relationships exist between animals besides predator and prey. Have students explore symbiotic relationships such as mutualism, commensalism, and parasitism. Do any reef animals depend on each other in these ways?