

Survival: Sow Bug Behavior

A Carolina Essentials™ Investigation

Student Worksheet



Overview

Animals need food, water, air, and a place to live to survive. If an animal's habitat changes, what happens to the animal? Can a group of animals change their behavior or **adapt** to survive? An experiment with sow bugs can provide answers.

Sow bugs are common bugs that are not really bugs at all. Sow bugs are **crustaceans** that live on land. They use gills to breathe, just like crabs, shrimp, and lobsters. Sow bugs must live in damp areas since they breathe through gills. They are found under rocks, wood, or dead leaves, on the bottom of flower pots, or in damp corners.

What would happen to the sow bugs if their habitat dried out? Do sow bugs change their behavior when the environment changes? An experiment can answer these questions.

Essential Question

Do animals change their behavior to help the group survive?

Investigation Objective

Observe how sow bugs change their behavior when the level of dampness decreases.

Safety Precautions

Treat all animals with care and respect.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Treat all animals with care and respect.

MATERIALS

- 1 cup with lid
- 10 sow bugs
- 1 piece of paper towel
- 1 cup of water
- 1 dropper
- 1 plastic spoon

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Procedure

1. Put a clean paper towel sheet into the cup.
2. Use the dropper and water to **dampen** the paper towel. Make sure there are no puddles on the bottom of the cup.
3. Use a plastic spoon to put 10 sow bugs in the cup.
4. Watch the sow bugs for 5 minutes. Describe the sow bugs' motions and locations in the cup. Record your observations in the Data section.
5. Draw a picture of your observations in the Data section.
6. Remove the damp paper towel from the cup. Make sure all the sow bugs stay in the cup. Put the lid on the cup.
7. Let the cup dry for about 5 minutes.
8. Remove the lid. Watch the sow bugs for 5 to 10 minutes. Describe the sow bugs' motions and locations in the cup in the Data section.
9. Draw a picture of your observations in the Data section.

Disposal

1. Return the sow bugs to the place your teacher instructs.
2. Throw the paper towel in the trash.

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Data

Damp

Description of motions and locations

Drawing

Dry

Description of motions and locations

Drawing

continued on next page

Analysis and Discussion

1. Did the sow bugs change locations when the cup was dry? Where did the sow bugs go?
2. How did the motions of the sow bugs change in the dry cup?
3. Sow bugs must stay damp to breathe. How can the behavior of sow bugs in the dry container be explained?
4. Use your observations to explain this statement: Some animals form groups that help members survive.