

# OKLAHOMA'S RAINFOREST CONNECTION

Presented by the Oklahoma City Zoo

## Lesson 1

### What is Biodiversity?



Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth.

Think about today's lunch. Is it exactly the same as yesterday? Will it be different tomorrow? If you want variety, or to eat something different, how could you diversify your lunch?

To add a little diversity, you might change the type of cheese on your sandwich. However, if you want the most diversity, you might eat at a large lunch buffet.

Life on Earth is like a lunch buffet. It is full of diversity! There are differences everywhere. You can find small differences within species, like the differences between you and a classmate, or you can find large differences among populations, such as the differences among animals, plants, fungi, and bacteria.

### Why study Biodiversity?

Scientists can measure biodiversity to determine the health of a species, population, biome and even the planet!

### Activity

1. Divide the class into teams.
2. Randomly toss hula hoops or square frames on the school's lawn.
3. Count and record the number of different plant species in each plot.
4. Combine class data so students can graph the results.
5. Compare these results to another section of lawn or nearby field.
6. If time permits, record and graph the number of insects, spiders and other invertebrates in your plots.

### Discussion

- How would your results vary with each season?
- How do we benefit from biodiversity?
- How do our actions affect biodiversity?
- Which biomes have the highest biodiversity?

Newspapers for this educational program provided by:

