






## Fire in the Forest

 CORE ROUTINES	Animal Forms, Mind's Eye Imagining
 CHILD'S PASSIONS	Running, Chasing, Playing Tag, Imitating Animals
 BOOK OF NATURE	Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians
 NATURAL CYCLE	East: Inspire, Southeast: Activate, Southwest: Take a Break
 INDICATORS OF AWARENESS	Aliveness and Agility

### Primer

Do you hear that? It's the terrible sound of a crackling forest fire, coming straight towards us. There's a fire in the forest, and every animal is running away, trying to escape without being caught and burned by the fire.

There are all kinds of animals: mammals, like White-tailed Deer and Long-tailed Weasels and Deer Mice; birds, like Black-capped Chickadees, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Song Sparrows; reptiles, like Garter Snakes and Box-Turtles, and amphibians, like Bull-frogs and Rough-skinned Newts. But they all are running from the fire, trying not to get caught.

### How-To

**Create the Playing Field.** For this game, you will need to mark a large rectangle or square as a playing field, using bandanas or backpacks to mark the corners and some of the sides. Make it at least twenty or thirty yards long, and as wide as you want: for this game, a wider field will make it easier to not get tagged, and a narrow field can make it very challenging. So choose somewhere in between based on your experience working with this group of participants.

**Set-up.** Have everyone stand on the line at one end of your rectangle, equivalent to the end zone on a football field. Tell them you need the names of three animals that live in those woods, and ask them to raise their hands

if they want to be one of the chosen, explain the game during the game. They do remember it in their mind is "it" and stands out in the

**The Action.** The player w of the three animals. Wh the other end zone witho become a Tree on fire, and being a Tree, you cannot foot (you might need to "Fire in the Forest!" then zone without getting tagg on like this, with animals as they are called out. Th extremely fun, as the Im you with their flames.

**The End is the Beginning** chance to be the Fire fir select three new animals v storm and volunteer choi

### Inside the Mind of

Besides the obvious fun of about what animals live i the game often becomes a animals actually live in th and act. Your people enga this area without even rea

"You mean we actually

"Where do they live w

"What's a vole? Oh ...

"Isn't a garter snake po

During discussions th mals, you will see players

if they want to be one of the animals. After three local animals have been chosen, explain the game. Everyone chooses to be one of those three animals during the game. They don't tell anyone else what animal they are; they just remember it in their mind. Choose one person to be "The Fire"; this person is "it" and stands out in the middle of the playing field.

**The Action.** The player who is Fire then starts the game by calling out one of the three animals. When you hear your animal name, you run through to the other end zone without getting tagged by the Fire. If you get tagged, you become a Tree on fire, and you are able to tag people running through—but, being a Tree, you cannot move from your roots; you can only pivot on one foot (you might need to demonstrate a pivot). If the Fire person calls out, "Fire in the Forest!" then all the animals have to run across to the other end zone without getting tagged by the Fire or any of the Trees. The game goes on like this, with animals running back and forth from end zone to end zone as they are called out. The game will eventually get quite challenging and extremely fun, as the Trees present an obstacle course reaching out to lick you with their flames.

**The End is the Beginning.** The last animal to be tagged gets offered the chance to be the Fire for the next game. Every time you start a new game, select three new animals who live in your area, letting the participants brainstorm and volunteer choices.

### *Inside the Mind of the Mentor*

Besides the obvious fun of this tag-game, the magic is the way it slyly teaches about what animals live in your area. The process of choosing animals for the game often becomes a discussion through which participants learn what animals actually live in their area, what they look like, and how they move and act. Your people engage in the creation of a "Master List" of animals for this area without even realizing it.

"You mean we actually have fox in our area? I didn't know that?"

"Where do they live with all these houses around?"

"What's a vole? Oh ... I think I might have seen one of those before."

"Isn't a garter snake poisonous ... it's not? My mom told me they were."

During discussions that spontaneously emerge from choosing local animals, you will see players correct erroneous notions they had about animals





living around them, while everyone comes to understand the animals that actually live in the places we explore. Most become naturally curious about what lives close to them, asking questions and eager to offer answers when they can. You can set parameters on the animals they choose by specifying Master Lists: "Choose three types of amphibians," for example, or mammals, or song-birds, or insects.

In this Master Listing process, you build a foundation of search images that can be drawn upon when you explore the natural areas around you. For instance, if you find a track, you can say, "What kind of animals live here that could have made this?" And you might just be amazed as they begin to rattle off information about the local species: "Well, we have mule deer, coyote, black bear ... but black bear are too big to make this track." In this way, games and experiences in the woods build upon each other over time, gradually instilling a deep knowledge of place without the participants ever feeling their schooling.

### *Alternatives and Extensions*

**Play with the Names.** It can be fun to make the names of animals very specific to your area. For instance, if someone volunteers "wren" as an animal, I might say "Okay, how about winter wren ... that's the kind of wren that lives here." Another variation on this that can be fun for participants, if you make it wacky enough, introduces scientific, or Latin names. Have a field guide with you when you choose names and translate them into their Latin names. Be humorous in the pronunciation and get everyone to say out loud their animal's Latin name. This can be a fun way for them to learn "proper" names.

**Practice Forms.** Again, to the extent possible for humans trying to tag and avoid being tagged, you can get creative and imitate the actual movements and strategies of different animals. Infinite possibilities here for creative versions. Deer can bound, rabbits hop, raccoons amble, and ducks waddle. Birds could fly outside the boundaries. Could turtles burrow under mud? Could beaver be safe in their lodges? Research and find out.

## Predator-Prey



### *Primer*

Have you ever seen a *Canis*?  
What chance did the man  
to find out.

### *How-To*

**Set-up.** This game turns a circle. Each person pretends another person in the circle them. Next each participant some protection, or a Predator to arrange themselves so and the Predators.

**Chaos is the Point.** As in own mind are also Prey who and try to hide behind the running around in laughter.