

Animal Census Collection

This lesson plan for school years 7 to adult, aims to demonstrate how to conduct an animal census. It highlights the benefits of regular veterinary desexing programs, keeping animal populations at a healthy level. The download includes teacher's instructions and Animal Census Recording sheet.

NOTE: This activity was presented by the International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM) at the Asia for Animals Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal 2017. AMRRIC's APR-I Intern Brooke Kennedy has modified the presentation of "How to conduct a street survey" to suit our Indigenous communities and to assist in explaining the purpose of the Veterinary visit and why they are important to maintaining healthy, stable animal populations. For more information on the presentation of "How to conduct a street survey" visit http://ec2-54-188-184-131.us-west-2.compute.amazonaws.com/pdfs/Impact3_i13i14i15i17i18i19i20i21_m1m2m3.pdf

Resource Categories	Dog; Animal Reproduction; Activity
Suitable Age Level	Year Eight to Adults
Desired Understandings	Individuals understand the implications of un-desexed animal populations and how these can be maintained and monitored with regular veterinary programs. They identify the benefits of having animals desexed to prevent unwanted litters and improve welfare and nuisance issues.
Resources Required	Animal Census Recording Sheet (supplied) Single sheet Fabric Paint Meter ruler Pencil 2 x packet skittles Whiteboard marker Sponge Scissors 3 x Plastic containers, labelled, Start, Population and Vet Visit
Additional AMRRIC resources to support lesson content	Dog Breeding Book Dog Breeding Mat

Lesson Plan: Animal Census Collection

Preparation

Before beginning the lesson place the two bags of skittles in a bowl and remove the purple skittles using gloves. The purple skittles are not needed for the activity. Then place half of the remain skittles in the bowl, into the container labelled START. The remaining half will need to be divided and sorted between the containers labelled POPULATION and VET VISIT. The POPULATION container needs to have a majority of red and green skittles with a few orange and yellow. The container labelled VET VISIT needs to contain only yellow and orange skittles.

Introduction

- Ask the audience “How many dogs are in your community?”
- Do you think we have more boy or girl dogs?
- Are many of the dogs in our community are desexed?
- Does anyone know of a way to find out how many dogs we have in the community?
- Discuss the student’s responses and highlight that by conducting an animal census, animal population can be calculated.
- Explain that an animal census follows a clear set of procedures which are carried out to ensure consistence and accuracy.

Activity

- Lay the census map on the floor, ensuring that everybody can clearly see all sections of the map.
- Explain to the students that the map is a bird’s eye view of a section of their community.
- Tip the container labelled START across the map and explain that they represent dogs within the community.
- Pose the question to the students, “How could we find out how many dogs are in our community?”, “What methods could we use?”
- Allow students time to share their ideas.
- Introduce students to the method of collecting and Animal Population Census.
- Explain that by collecting a census of the animals in the community, we can gain a better idea of how many dogs we have, their body condition, healthy and sex.
- The information from the census helps our visiting vet to understand how many dogs are also entire and desexed, which is very important.

- Inform the students that today they will be practicing how to collect an animal census using skittles and the map.
- Introduce the Animal Census Recording Sheet.
- Using the Animal Census Recording Sheet, highlight to the students that each coloured skittle represents a dog and their reproductive status and sex. For example, a red skittle is an entire girl dog, where a yellow skittle is a desexed girl dog.
- Ensure that students are clear on the colours and their representation.
- Explain to the students that they will be using the recording sheet to count the dogs (skittles) and recording them under the appropriate heading on the sheet.
- Divide the students into four equal groups and assign one colour to each group.
- Each group must now choose one person who is going to walk the map and count all their allocated dogs.
- Explain to the students that the arrows on the map illustrate the path and direction they need to walk. Students must start on the START symbol and end at the FINISH.
- If a dog (skittle) has landed inside a house this dog cannot be counted. All houses and buildings have been painted in a solid colour. Dogs inside a solid structure cannot be seen therefore cannot be considered in the count.
- It is important that students understand that if we were to collect a census in their community, we would not be able to count the dogs inside the houses as we would not be able to see them.
- If a dog is on the outline of the house (solid painted square or rectangle) this can be counted. Explain that possibly the dog is looking out of the window or the front door is open, so we can visually see the dog.
- Remind students that dogs are not allowed in buildings such as schools, clinics or shops. If a skittle is in or on the outline of the building the dog cannot be counted.
- Explain to the students that as we have just come back from school holidays, we need to assist the vet to find out how many dogs are now in the community.
- Allow students time to count their allocated skittle colour. Ensure they are only counting dog along path area with they can see.
- Once all groups have counted all their skittles, record each groups total on the Census Recording Sheet, horizontally in T1. Explain that T1 stands for Term 1 and that you will be following the school terms to collect the census another two times. This will make sure accurate census collection is done pre and post veterinary visit.
- Ensure that all dogs recorded during the first census walk have also been tallied up and recorded in the Total Column at the end of T1.
- Discuss the number of entire and desexed dogs on the recording sheet.
- Are there more entire dogs or desexed dogs? Why might this be?

- Encourage students to consider that the vet has not visited community for a while, so dogs have started to breed and have puppies, which has increased the number of dogs in the community.
- Now that we have counted all the dogs in term one, the school holidays have begun. People are going away for holidays, to the show and bringing puppies and dogs back into the community. Dog which were also entire in the community are having puppies.
- Using the POPULATION container, tip the skittles over the map.
- Explain to the students that the new skittles represent new dogs which have been brought into community or puppies which have been born over the school holidays.
- As we now have new animals in the community we need to count again and record our totals on the Animal Record Sheet.
- Allow the students time to count their allocated colour skittles again and record the new total in T2 (term 2). Ensure that all groups numbers are recorded and then tallied.
- What do the dog numbers look like in the community now?
- Has there been an increase and if so, are there more entire or desexed dogs?
- Explain to the students they because the vet has not been out to the community our dog numbers have increased.
- What happens when our dog numbers in the community increase?
- Discuss with the students the negative impacts of having too many dogs in the community. Explain that we have more dog fights, cheeky dogs, puppies and sick unhealthy dogs.
- Explain that people in the community are becoming upset with how many dogs there are in the community and someone has gone to the council to ask for vet visit.
- The vets come to the community in Term 3 and they need some help.
- Explain to the students that they will become Animal Management Workers for the day to help collect dogs for the vet to desex.
- Explain that only the red and green dogs on the mat can be taken to the vet as they are entire dogs.
- Ask each student to remove two to three skittles from the mat. Ensure that students are only taking red or green skittles. (students may eat these skittles as they will no longer be used for the activity)
- Allow students to remove two to three skittles.
- Now that we have taken some dogs to the vet to be desex, do we leave them there or do they need to be returned to their family?

- Explain to the students that when our dogs go to the vet to have the desexing operations they then come back home after.
- Using the VET VISIT container, students must now replace the dogs (skittles) they took from the mat to have a desexing operation and take them back to their families.
- Allow students to take 2-3 skittles from the VET VISIT container and return them to the mat. (Ensure that the students only replace the equivalent amount of skittles they originally took from the mat to have a desexing operation.)
- This symbolise the dogs being returned to their family's post-surgery.
- Explain to the students that the vet program is now finished, and it is important that we collect another census to work out how many dogs we have and most importantly how many dogs in the community are now desexed.
- Groups now walk the path again and count their allocated skittles and this is recorded for the last time on the Animal Recording Sheet.
- You will now have all columns on the recording sheet complete.
- Compare T1 to T2 and discuss what the findings are?
- How many dogs do we now have in community? How many desexed girl dogs' do we have? How many desexed male dogs do we have?
- Allow students time to compare these totals with T1.
- It is important to discuss with the students that the number of desexed animals has increased, thus there are now less dogs that can breed in the community.
- What does that mean for community? Explain that having less dogs means less fighting, cheeky dogs and sick dogs.
- By having more desexed dogs in the community, we have healthier and happy people and animals.
- End the session by discussing the benefits of desexing our animals and having regular vet visit.

Appendix A

Animal Census Map Instructions

Materials

1 x Single sheet or material 2m x 1m
1 x Metre ruler
Fabric Paint
Makers
Pencil

- Start by laying out your sheet or cutting your material to size
- Next use a lead pencil and meter ruler to design your community layout.
- Ensure that your map has a road running through it as this will be the transect which students will walk to record the dogs (skittles) in their community.
- Ensure that all buildings and house block are square or rectangle to allow ease for drawing. Refer to image below for example layout.
- Places which could be included on your map, school, shop, clinic, art centre etc.
- Once all buildings and areas have been drawn, use a permanent marker to trace over the top.
- To demonstrate solid buildings, use a sponge which has been cut into a square shape and covered in paint.
- Place the paint covered sponge and place inside the house/building areas (refer to image below).
- Ensure that there is a space between the painted area and the outline of the building. This outline is the fence of the property.
- Paint all building and houses on your map.
- To illustrate which direction the students, need to walk for the activity place “Go” in the corner of your map.
- From this draw a series of arrows to show which way to walk around the map.
- At the end of the map place the word “stop” This will ensure students walk the same transect during the activity.
- Use a fine fabric paint to colour the arrows in red.
- For open areas which may be included on your map such as a playground or oval, trace over the top of the mark with a coloured fabric paint. Do not colour in the areas with solid paint.

Appendix B

Animal Census Map

