

## PREDATOR-PREY TAG GAMES

Tag can be used to illustrate the basic relationships we see existing between predators and prey within an ecosystem. If you are playing in a small space just ask students to walk during the game. To point out the simple relationships, ask a couple of students to be taggers. They represent a particular predator in an ecosystem. The rest of the students represent prey.

When a person is tagged tell them to stand still with their arms crossed in front of their chest. This will represent that the prey was just eaten. Any of the untagged players can walk up to one of these "tagged" players and tap them twice on the shoulders. The tagged player is now free to play again. We tell the students that this action will represent the birth of new "prey" into the ecosystem. As prey is eaten and reborn, you can talk about the idea of a sustainable ecosystem.

By increasing the number of predators in the game, you can show a system that is not sustainable. Example; if the predators tag/eat all the prey, what will happen to the predators in nature?

If you want to illustrate other points such as poison magnification within a food web (bioaccumulation) you could have three or four factors within a game. Example; look at a common food web that could be affected by poisons we put into the environment. (Plants, bugs, birds and foxes). Select students to represent bugs, birds and foxes and give them a colored penne to wear.

To represent plants, put some pieces of red and green ribbon on the floor. The bugs in the game will gather as many ribbons as they can represents eating the plants. When a bird tags a bug, the bug must give the bird all the ribbons he/she has collected and then the bug has to step out of the game... when a fox tags a bird, the bird must give the fox all the ribbons he/she has and then the bird has to step out of the game.

After the game has gone on for a minute or two, stop the game and tell the students that the green ribbons represents healthy plants and red ribbons represent plants that are affected by pesticides. You can then illustrate how the fox could have high levels of poison in its body even though they didn't actually eat any of the bugs.