

Tree Homes at Ivy Creek- A Little Naturalist Activity

Created for use by the Ivy Creek Foundation

Did you know that dead trees can be homes for many animals? At Ivy Creek Natural Area, dead trees are left standing so that birds, squirrels, insects, and other animals can make their homes in them. A dead tree is called a snag.

Dead trees on the ground are also used by insects, woodpeckers, and other animals for food and homes. The next time you are on a trail at Ivy Creek, look for a dead tree. See if you can see any insects or animals using the tree as a home.



On the next page we will share a story of a little girl who wants to save a dead tree. This story also has some pictures for you to color.



A Tree Home



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One day, Zoe and her father go to the forest to gather firewood.



“Look for a dead tree to cut down,” her father says.



Zoe sees a tree ahead that towers over the other trees but has no green leaves on the branches. It makes her sad to see it so bare.



Her father sees it too. “This will make a great firewood tree. We can cut it now and the wood will be dry for winter.”



Her father goes back to the truck for the chainsaw.



While she waits, Zoe looks around. She spies tiny white flowers near the tree and breathes in the fresh smell.



Near her foot, a small gray tree frog clings to the mossy base. Ants march up the tree from their hill near its roots as a lizard slithers around the trunk.



Zoe hears a noise and looks up.

A woodpecker face peeks out of a hole.

When her father returns, Zoe says, “We can't cut this tree down. It is a home.”

She points to the woodpecker hole and the tree frog.

Zoe's father slowly nods his head. “You're right, Zoe. We need to look for another tree.”



He walks further into the forest.

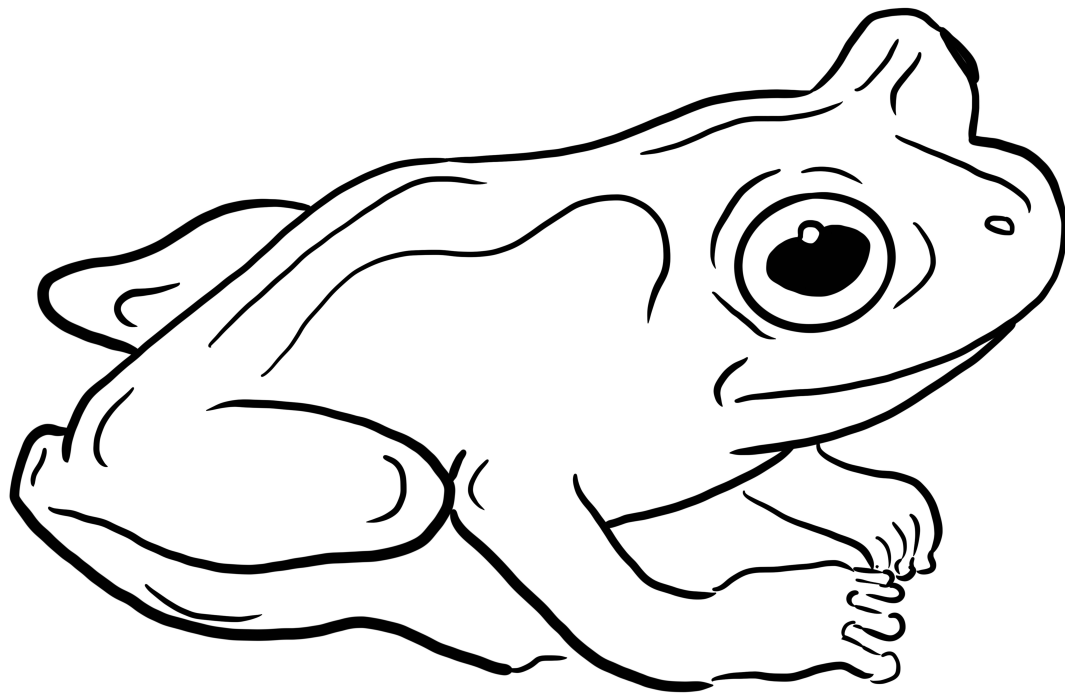


Zoe hugs the good old tree. She thinks she hears a sigh.









Activities:

Make a paper plate bird nest. You will need a white paper plate, brown construction paper or small sticks, crayons, and glue.

Cut the brown paper into small, thin pieces or break the sticks into small pieces. Glue the pieces onto the paper plate in a circle shape. Leave a space in the middle. Draw several egg shapes or birds in the middle of the circle. Think about how hard it must be for a bird to gather material and make nests in trees using only their beaks!



Make an edible bird's nest. Crush 5 large Shredded wheat biscuits. Add one cup of peanut butter or sunflower seed butter. Melt one cup of chocolate chips. Stir together and press into the cups of a muffin pan. Refrigerate for one hour. Enjoy!

Read: *Tell Me Tree- All About Trees* for Kids by Gail Gibbons.

This book is available at the local library: jmrl.org.