

The Ultimate Eating Competition!



How did you choose what to have for lunch today? Did you have just one type of food, or did you have a several different types? Animals in nature, in most cases, have just as many lunch choices as you do in the cafeteria, but do they choose the same way you do?

Today, you will all play the role of wild birds (what type of bird are you?) trying to secure food items. In order to obtain enough food, you will spend some time searching and some time eating each item. It is your goal, as a group, to obtain the most food in a five-minute period, so that your group of birds will survive and pass on their genes to the next generation.

Here are the rules:

1. Choose a site for your group; New England, Georgia, or Brazil.
2. You will have five minutes, which will be timed.
3. Only one group member is the forager, the other members should record the number and type of food captured.
4. You can start at any “site” (cup).
5. The forager moves to a new cup every 5 seconds.

6. The forager may choose to take or not take the food item once it is discovered. If you choose to take the item, you must wait 10 seconds before moving to the next cup.
7. The forager can only move one cup away from his/her current cup, in any direction.
8. The group with the most POINTS (not food items) WINS THE COMPETITION.
9. The points are assigned as follows:

M&Ms = 2 points

Peanut M&Ms = 5 points

Reese's Cups = 10 points

Record your results here:

	M&Ms	Peanut M&Ms	Reese's
Trial 1			
	X2	X5	X10
Points			
			Total
	M&Ms	Peanut M&Ms	Reese's
Trial 2			
	X2	X5	X10
Points			
			Total

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Analysis of Results:

1. Who won the competition? Why? What do you know about each of the geographic areas that you competed in?
2. Look under all of the cups at your station and determine if you had a poor, medium, or high-quality habitat. Now look at what types of food you ate. Were you a **SPECIALIST** (ate only one item) or a **GENERALIST** (ate many types of items)?
3. Share your results with the other groups. What did they eat? Were they specialists or generalists? What type of habitats did they forage in?
4. Can you think of any **BIOLOGICAL** reasons for the trends you observed? If being a specialist is so great, why not do it all the time in nature? What else must animals consider when eating food in their natural environments?