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"Presenting"
Sally Snag and Friends
in "THERE'S LIFE IN DEAD TREES"



"THERE'S LIFE IN DEAD TREES"

Objective: To learn the importance of dead trees and snags as part of a viable ecosystem.

ITEMS NEEDED:

- Sally Snag Costume (with hoops and poles)
- People - 1 Sally, 1 Assistant (be familiar with the script)
- (Optional) Microphone and small PA system (put inside the snag costume for Sally to be heard)
- (Optional) Small stool (for person to sit on inside Sally costume)
- Animal puppets - Pileated Woodpecker, Mountain Bluebird, Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Raccoon, Tree Frog, Cottontail Rabbit, Red Fox, Striped Skunk, Black Bear; and Chipmunk.
- 2 Scripts

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:

- Both persons playing Sally and the Assistant should be familiar with the script to keep the program flowing.

- Each Lime an animal is introduced an audience member should be able to stand up and work the puppet or stuffed toy as if it is talking. Sally or the Assistant can speak for the animal- (OPTIONAL: when presenting to older bids or adults the puppets' lines can be written on 3X5 cards ahead of time and the audience participant can read their own animal's lines.)
- Have all audience members remain up front until the play is over - or - have the person inside Sally work the animals through the hole and underneath the tree and the Assistant work other animals (like the birds and bat, etc.) and then give the puppet to an audience member or set it down by the snag.
- All these ideas are merely suggestions... be creative....

SUGGESTED SCRIPT:

SALLY

Hi, I'm Sally Snag and this is my friend (assistant's name). We're here today to help you understand that there is life in dead, dying and hollow trees.

ASSISTANT

Many animals use standing dead trees, called 'snags," Like Sally, for shelter, or.. perching, or for making their nest.. and even as a place to find or store food. You might say snags are like an inn or motel for animals.

SALLY

Well, today I would like to tell you a little story about my friends in the forest who are guests at us "Animal Inns."

Many years ago, I fell to earth as a Douglas Fir seed. I soon sprouted and became a little seedling. As soon as I could get my roots out, I began to grow and grow. I continued to grow until I was the biggest and tallest tree in the forest. I was shade for the plants and animals living there. Birds would nest in me and perch on my branches. Squirrels would chase around me and tickle me as they scampered up and down my big trunk.

But, as the years wore on I became very old and weak. Then, one dark and stormy night, the wind blew very hard and I swayed back and forth, back and forth. Then, suddenly! A big bolt of lightning hit me! My top broke off and I lost all my needles and some of my branches. I was no longer the majestic tree I once was. Boy did I feel sorry for myself. I thought my life was really over. No more birds would come and rest on my branches, or squirrels to chase around me. But, hey! Was I wrong! Why actually, I had more friends visit me after I died, then when I was alive!

I mean it wasn't too long before insects began chewing on me. I thought they were going to drive me crazy! But then, a friend came to visit and ate those bugs. This friend has a beautiful redhead and makes holes or "cavities" in my wood with its beak. Can you guess who that friend might be?

(Audience participant comes up and takes the Pileated Woodpecker from the hole in the snag. He/She holds the woodpecker while he says:)

WOODPECKER

I'm a Pileated Woodpecker. After I leave my nest in this snag, other animals will use it for raising their babies, or hiding from others.. or... as a safe place to store food. Here's another friend who nests in cavities of snags.

(**ASSISTANT** gives the Mountain Bluebird to another audience participant.)

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD

I'm a Mountain Bluebird. I use cavities in snags made by woodpeckers to raise my babies and keep them safe.

SALLY

Very good! Now took who else uses cavities in snags to make their home.

(**ASSISTANT** hands a Wood Duck to another audience participant.)

WOOD DUCK

Quack! Hi, I'm a Wood Duck. We make our homes and raise our babies in old woodpecker holes located in snags near water.

SALLY

Besides birds, many mammals also benefit from cavities made by woodpeckers.

ASSISTANT (To audience) Do you know what mammal flies like a bird?

(Hands the Bat to another audience member.)

BAT

Hi! We bats love to hide and rest in cavities and crevices of snags and hollow trees. We leave our hiding place at night and fly around to catch bugs in the air. Then we come back and steep upside down all day.

SALLY

Another mammal, which I knew when I was a live tree, still comes to visit me during the fall and winter.

ASSISTANT (To audience) Can anyone guess who that might be?

(Squirrel puppet appears in the hole in the snag and is given to audience participant)

SQUIRREL

We squirrels use cavities in snags to store seeds and cones for the winter.

SALLY

Well, besides cavities in snags, branches are good for animals, too. I remember one sunny morning a majestic bird flew down and perched on one of my branches to eat a fish it had caught for breakfast.

ASSISTANT

(To audience) Do you know what bird represents freedom and is also our national symbol?

(Audience participant comes up and puts on the Bald Eagle puppet)

BALD EAGLE

Just like our cousin, the hawk, we use limbs on snags to perch upon when eating and resting.

SALLY

Long ago, before I died and became a snag, I had a very large limb on my side. Well, it fell off during one of those terrible storms and rain leaked into me. In a short time, a large opening formed inside of me making my insides very hollow.

ASSISTANT

Sally has a friend who sleeps inside that opening. Do you know who that could be?

(Raccoon puppet appears down by the snag's roots. Audience participant puts it on.)

RACCOON

I am a raccoon. We steep during the daytime in big openings of snags and hollow trees and hunt for food at night.

SALLY

Well, snags don't last forever. As time passes, I will become weaker and weaker and soon I won't be able to stand up anymore. Finally... I will fall over. It makes me sad. Becoming a snag was bad enough, but falling over and becoming an old, decaying log is just too much.

ASSISTANT

Now, Sally, it won't be that bad. After awhile you'll develop some cute little wrinkles as you dry out in the sun.

SALLY

I will? Oh no! Who wants a bunch of old wrinkles?

ASSISTANT

Well, they won't be real wrinkles - they're more like cracks and they'll make a great hiding place for insects and small animals. (To the audience) Do you know who another friend of Sally's is that likes to eat insects?

(A Frog appears from inside the snag. The ASSISTANT hands the frog to audience participant.)

FROG

I'm a tree frog and an amphibian We love to look for food and hide from big fish around snags which have fallen into the water.

SALLY

Yeah, but I like these good ol' days when the eagles and hawks and other birds perch on my branches. And I'll miss my furry friends.

ASSISTANT

What about your furry little friend that likes to crawl inside you for shelter? She'll still be around.

ASSISTANT

(To audience) Who do you think that furry little animal is?

(The Cottontail Rabbit appears in the hole in the snag. The ASSISTANT hands it to an audience member.)

RABBIT

Hey! I'm a Cottontail Rabbit and I love hollow logs lying on the ground as a place to hide from scary predators.

ASSISTANT

Does anyone know what "predator" means?

(Hands the Fox to an audience member)

RED FOX

Well, I'm a Red Fox and we're predators. We hunt for little animals around hollow trees and snags.

(ASSISTANT gives the Skunk to an audience member)

SALLY

(Sniffs the air) What's that I smell?

SKUNK

Hi. I'm a Striped Skunk. We look in hollow logs for food and use them for shelter, too.

SALLY

I remember one morning I was rudely awakened by someone digging down by my roots. Dirt was flying everywhere! Something was making growling and snorting noises beneath me. Who knows what animal that could've been?

(**ASSISTANT** gives Black Bear puppet to audience member)

BEAR

I'm a Black Bear and I sleep all winter long in the hollows and roots of standing snags and beneath fallen ones, too.

ASSISTANT

(To the audience) As time goes by, Sally will slowly sink into the ground and go back to the soil. But it's not all over yet!

SALLY

That's right! Even though I will be breaking down into soil, animals will still be depending on me. **ASSISTANT** (To the audience) Who knows what little animal likes to use fallen and decayed logs?

CHIPMUNK

Hi! I'm a chipmunk and we like to burrow tunnels in fallen, decayed logs to store nuts and cones.

SALLY

Well, we could go on but I think you get the picture. Once a snag falls over and decays it returns good vitamins and minerals to the soil to help new trees and other plants to grow. Forest animals will use these plants to survive and so the cycle continues. Thank you all for giving us the time to talk to you about "Animal Inns." Now you can understand why snags are a very important part of our environment even though they are no longer live trees. "There really is life in dead trees!"

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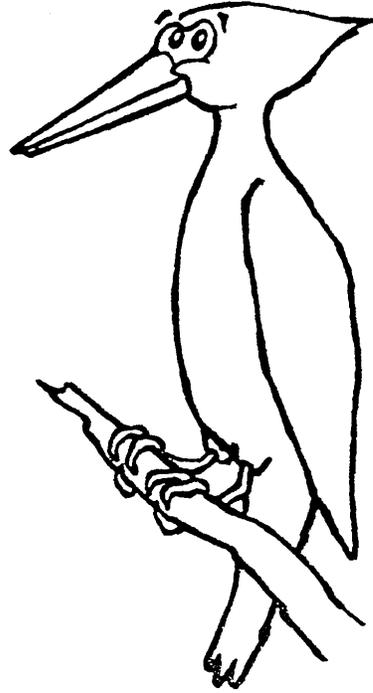
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Copy figures onto heavy stock paper to use as finger puppets.

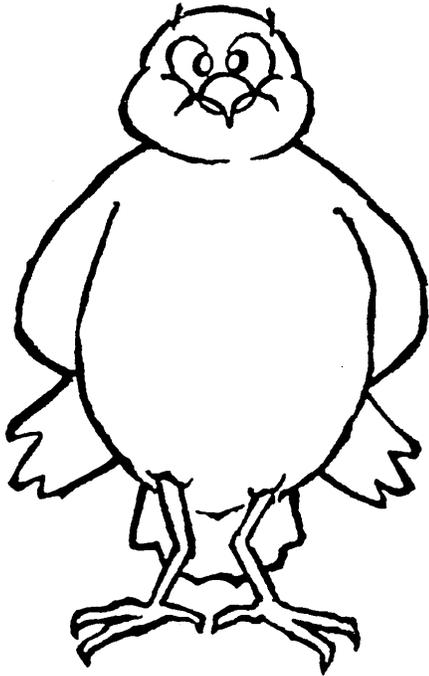
Sammy Snag



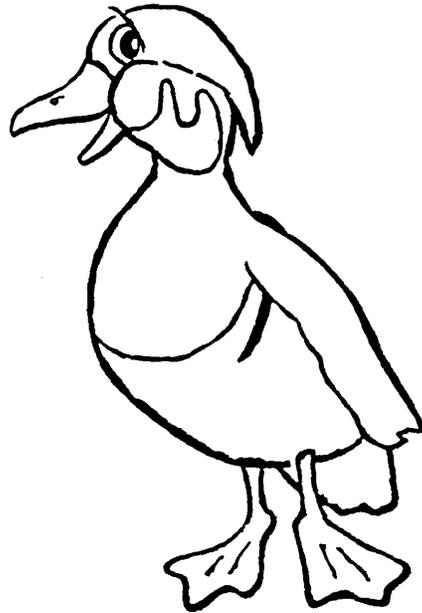
Pileated Woodpecker



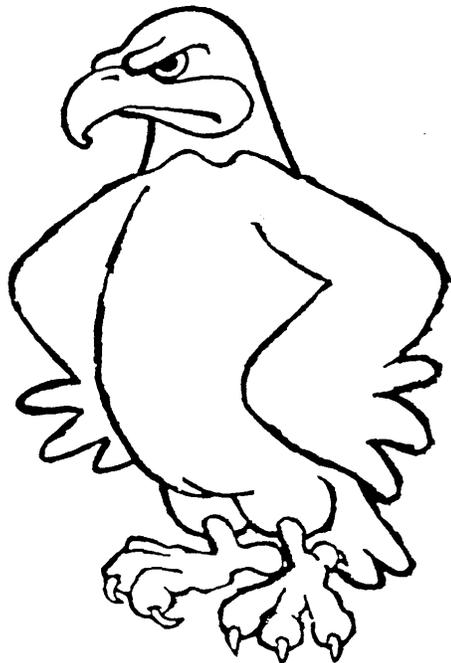
Mountain Bluebird



Wood Duck



Bald Eagle



Raccoon



Striped Skunk



Bat



Red Fox



Cottontail Rabbit

