

Pop-up Seal Pup

Objective

Students will learn that ringed seals dig lairs in snow as a place to give birth to their young.

Background

To protect their young from cold weather and predators, ringed seals build lairs under snow drifts. They give birth in March or April, usually to one pup. The pup stays in the lair for about six weeks, drinking mother's milk and growing stronger. The pup lives on its own after about two months; able to swim and catch small fish.

Materials

per student:

- one sheet each of white construction paper and regular white paper
- one white cotton ball
- one cotton swab

per class:

- colored chalk
- glue
- staplers
- black paint

Action

1. Distribute a sheet of white construction paper to each student. Have them fold it in half so the two short ends meet. Staple it together on the sides. Leave the end opposite the fold unstapled.
2. Have students rip small, semi-circle pieces off of the top of the open end of their papers (to give the effect of snow drifts). Save these the paper scraps.
3. Have students tear a small door in the top paper layer, close to the fold, so that the door swings open and shut. This will expose the lair.
4. To make more snow drift images, tear a "wave" pattern along an edge of the regular white paper. Lay the torn paper patten on top of the white construction paper (like a stencil). Rub the flat side of the chalk over the pattern so that the reverse image shows up on the construction paper. Move the pattern as needed to create overlapping snow drifts.
5. Place three or four staples around the lair opening (be careful not to staple the door shut!). Use the paper scraps from Step 1 to stuff the inside of the construction paper envelope. Staple the top shut.
6. Distribute swabs, cotton balls, and paint. Glut the cotton ball in the lair opening (this will be your pup). Dip the cotton swab in black paint and gently touch it to the cotton ball to make eyes and a nose.