

Title of Session: Nuts About Nature - It's 9pm. Do you know where your turtle is?

Moderator: Bill Hilton Jr.

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Room: Tree House Conference Room

BillHi joined the room.

JimAL: howdy

BJB2 cheers for our fearless discussion leader. Hi, Bill

BJB2: Welcome to tonight's Nuts About Nature discussion

BJB2: We usually start all the Tapped In discussions with introductions. Please tell us where you are located and what you teach

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania

JimAL: I teach math at a high school in central IL

DavidWe: I'm David Weksler. I'm in Bucks County, PA, north of Philadelphia. I work with math and science teachers, helping them learn more about technology

AmandaB: I teach ESL at an elementary school in North Carolina.

BillHi: I'm Bill Hilton Jr. Sorry for being tardy. I was actually multitasking, since at the precise moment that BJ asked me in the Reception Room about hummingbirds I caught one in a mist net. Fortunately, it was already banded, so I can devote my full attention to tonight's topic, which is (BJ?):

BJB2: looking for turtles?

BillHi: TONITE'S TOPIC: "It's 9 o'clock. Do You Know Where Your Turtle Is?"

BJB2 . o O (whew! I remembered)

BillHi: Actually, it's only 9 o'clock EDT, but bear with us.

BillHi: Amanda, where are you in NC?

AmandaB: Raleigh

BillHi: Have we met, Amanda?

AmandaB: No, this is my first time in session. I love to use science in the classroom, so I thought I'd choose to start here for my first session!

JeffC joined the room.

BillHi: Well, welcome. I've done some work in the Raleigh area.

BillHi: Again, I'm Bill Hilton Jr., executive director of Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History in York, South Carolina.

BillHi: Jeff, how about you?

JeffC: I'm Jeff Cooper, unemployed Education Technology Specialist in Oregon.

BillHi: Thanks, and welcome.

BillHi: I taught high school and college biology for about 20 years and also travel the country giving talks about natural history topics and doing inservice and preservice teacher training.

BillHi: "Nuts About Nature" is a discussion aimed at helping teachers (and future teachers) use the out-of-doors--either for real or virtually--to excite students about learning science and other disciplines.

BillHi: Each month I select a topic for discussion that is intended to make you think and, in the end, to give you some ideas for implementing activities with your current (or future) students.

BillHi: Try to stay on-topic during the discussion so we can get to a meaningful end-point during our hour together.

BJB2 . o O (Bill also has an Environmental Education group to provide resources between these Nuts About Nature discussions)

BJB2 hopes that wasn't too far off topic

BillHi: Tonight's topic, again, is "It's 9 O'clock. Do You Know Where Your Turtle Is?"

DavidWe listens attentively

BillHi: In case you aren't aware, there was a TV campaign some years ago entitled: "It's 9 O'Clock. Do You Know Where Your Children Are?"

BillHi: I thought it would be easier to find your turtle than your children--especially if you have none of the latter--hence my topic for tonight.

BJB2 nods.

BillHi: If you also have no turtle, that's okay. Just pretend that you do.

AmandaB: Does stuffed count?

BJB2: Any particular kind of turtle, Bill?

BillHi: Stuffed doesn't count.

BJB2 . o O (are we talking about tiny or large turtles?)

BJB2 . o O (or doesn't it matter?)

BillHi: I'm talking about actual turtles; i.e., not plastic, paper mache, or other artificial ones, of any size, shape, or species.

JimAL: is there a difference between turtles and tortoises?

DavidWe has a real question about the difference between a turtle and a tortoise

BJB2 nods and visualizes a real turtle

BillHi: Jim, do YOU know where your turtle is?

AmandaB: Ignoring David, but seriously... I did have a turtle in the pond in the backyard. But, it got washed out during a downpour. I suppose that he, or she, found its way through the backyard to a safe place!

DavidWe: yo

BillHi: Thanks, Amanda, so you DON'T know where your turtle is?

AmandaB: precisely!

JimAL: my turtle has been misplaced?

BillHi: Has it?

BillHi: Did you have one?

JimAL: not for a loooooong time

BillHi: How 'bout Jeff? I know you have a mouse (on your computer), how about a turtle?

AmandaB: I nearly ran over one coming out of the driveway yesterday (a.m.)! Not sure where that one came from... scared me a bit!

AmandaB: And, I live in the city!

BillHi: Sounds like Amanda is almost covered up with turtles.

BillHi: And she makes a valid point.

BJB2 . o O (Jeff went to look for his turtle)

BillHi: Slowly.

BillHi: Your turtle may very well be under your nose at 9 o'clock.

BJB2 wonders if Amanda put the turtle in the pond in her back yard

BillHi: You beat me to that question.

BillHi: (-:

BJB2 sighs and sits on her hands again

JimAL: I had turtle flavored magic shell on my ice cream tonight...does that count?

BillHi: BJ is the Queen of Multitasking AND Handsitting.

BillHi: No, Jim, you're starting to sound like David.

JimAL gasps

BJB2 . o O (tsk, tsk, Jim)

BillHi: Amanda, could you respond to BJ's wondering?

AmandaB: Yes! A friend of my dad's found the turtle in her yard and gave it to us for the pond in my backyard. My nephew loves all creatures, so you can imagine how much he enjoyed having a turtle... until it washed away

BillHi: So what kind of turtle was it?

AmandaB: It was just a small box turtle

BillHi: So why was it in a pond?

BJB2 wonders that also

AmandaB: Only because we put it there!

AmandaB: That may be why it didn't stay around!

BillHi: Ahah! We have a teachable moment!

BJB2: acckkkkkk...Amanda drowned the turtle

AmandaB: Nope, not Amanda... Amanda's family! It was all done before I knew about it!

BillHi: Without going elsewhere on the Web, let's see what we know collectively about the life history and environmental needs of the Eastern Box Turtle, *Terrapene carolina* (which roams into the Midwest).

BillHi: Anyone?

JimAL: air

BillHi: Anyone?

BillHi: Jim, that's a bit general. Virtually all living things need air.

AmandaB: they have bright markings

BJB2: it's not aquatic

BillHi: BJ's being negative again.

JimAL: is it vegetarian?

BJB2 groans. Box Turtles live in the woods

AmandaB: Ha Ha

BillHi: Jim, you mean herbivorous?

AmandaB: they live on land, but do need moisture

BillHi: Vegetarian is a term applied to humans, not turtles.

BillHi: Good, Amanda.

BillHi: That was a positive statement.

AmandaB: just not as much moisture as my family gave the poor turtle

BillHi: Well, don't start feeling guilty. (The moderator was a little accusatory with the "killed the turtle" statement.)

BJB2: they lay eggs

JimAL: they are cold-blooded which means they need an environment that is conducive to regulating body temperature.

BillHi: Any more points?

AmandaB: they can completely close their shells to protect against predators

AmandaB: And, the eastern box turtle hibernates in the winter

BillHi: Okay, we have some good things to talk about, so let's stop for a minute so I can clarify a few items.

BillHi: Everybody ready?

BJB2 listens

AmandaB: yep

BillHi: First of all, although their real name is Eastern Box Turtle, many people call them box tortoises.

BillHi: That's because they are indeed terrestrial and remind people of the big Galapagos Tortoises that are completely terrestrial.

BillHi: Box turtles are turtles and NOT tortoises because they have webbed toes.

BillHi: And all tortoises lack that webbing.

BillHi: So, Amanda, what can we conclude from this?

AmandaB: They don't swim well?

BillHi: Actually, they DO swim well.

JimAL: but with webbed feet they should swim ok

BillHi: Turtles do, that is.

BillHi: Box turtles are pretty good swimmers.

BillHi: Yes, Jim, you're right.

BJB2 thinks Amanda is off the hook

BillHi: Would you guess that sea TURTLES have webbed toes?

JimAL nods

BillHi: Actually, their toes are SO webbed that they're flippers.

BillHi: And if you've ever seen photos of sea turtles coming ashore to lay eggs, you can see that they're pretty poorly adapted for land movement.

BillHi: But back to box turtles.

BillHi: Even though they can swim, box turtles pretty much avoid fully aquatic habitats.

BillHi: Anyone know when you're most likely to encounter a box turtle roaming about?

JimAL: (side question) what kind of turtles do you buy in a pet store? And if they are box turtles, why are they always in a tank of water?

AmandaB: Hence, the turtles retreat from the backyard pond!

JimAL: at 9:00!

BillHi: Hold your side question a few minutes.

BillHi: Nope, not 9 o'clock.

BillHi: When?

BJB2: turtles like to be in the warm sun...9pm would be a little dark

JimAL: mid-afternoon

BillHi: Box turtles don't usually engage in sunning behavior, which is characteristic of aquatic turtles.

BillHi: Maybe mid-afternoon, but not the answer I seek.

AmandaB: are we looking for a specific time of day or a reason for them to be out?

BillHi: Not the former.

JimAL: they are looking for food?

BillHi: Think environmental conditions.

BillHi: Animals are ALWAYS looking for food. (-:

BillHi: Think environmental conditions.

AmandaB: don't turtles leave their areas when they are looking for a mate

BillHi: Yes, that's what they do during those few minutes they're not looking for food. (-:

JimAL: when they need to change temperatures?

BillHi: Sex and food. Food and sex.

AmandaB: Ok, so when it rains you see a number of turtles! Does that have anything to do with it?

BillHi: (BJ. Will you have to edit out that last statement?)

BillHi: Amanda has it!

BillHi: The time when you're most like to see box turtles is after it has rained heavily.

BJB2 smiles...sounds like a typical teenager, Bill

BillHi: Explain.

BillHi: Explain the after the rain part, not the teenager part.

BJB2 laughs

BillHi: Anyone?

BJB2: ground is wet and easier to dig?

JimAL: their hiding places get filled with water

AmandaB: So, why after the rain? Is it because they need to find an area that is less flooded?

JimAL: and they need to get out...like worms?

BillHi: Good shot, Jim.

BillHi: let's think again about what box turtle eat.

AmandaB: ahh... worms

BillHi: And . . .

AmandaB: worms don't like soggy dirt

AmandaB: so they come up, and turtles can eat them....

BillHi: Well, that could be part of it, but maybe not.

BillHi: Box Turtles may come out of low places after rain because, as Jim says, the low places flood and the box turtles can swim but probably wouldn't rather.

BillHi: The problem with Amanda's point is that YOUNG box turtles DO eat worms and other animal matter, but ADULTS usually have a different diets.

BillHi: Anyone know what the adults eat?

JimAL: I'm going to say plants....but I'm not sure.

BillHi: Again, think wet, rainy weather.

BJB2: mushrooms?

BillHi: Jim, you, too, are partly right.

JimAL: slugs/snails?

BillHi: yes, BJ, 'SHROOMS!

BJB2 . o O (shroomin' turtles with little wrist watches so they know when it's 9pm?)

BillHi: Adult box turtles eat mushrooms . . .and blackberries . . .and other wild fruits and berries, with an occasional slug or snail or worm thrown in.

BillHi: Now to answer Jim's earlier question, the turtles you buy in pet shops--illegally, I might add, in most states--are water turtles, so they SHOULD be in an aquarium.

BillHi: But Amanda's box turtle shouldn't have been in a pond.

BillHi: Now the neat thing about turtle sis that they have HOME RANGE.

AmandaB: A valuable piece of information I shall take with me...

BillHi: So even if Amanda DOESN'T know where her turtle is, the turtle knows.

BillHi: And that's why if you're riding down the highway after a rain . . .

BillHi: (please complete my sentence).

AmandaB: you will probably encounter a turtle!

BillHi: And . . .

BillHi: What shouldn't you do?

BJB2: and put a bumper sticker on your car that says "I brake for Turtles"

BillHi: and what else?

AmandaB: run over it, pick it up and put it in the backyard pond...

BillHi: Zaclly!

BJB2 chuckles.

BillHi: What SHOULD you do?

JimAL: move it to the side of the road.

AmandaB: leave it alone... it knows what it is doing... just take a picture

BJB2: stop the car in the middle of the road, get out and move the turtle

BillHi: Terrif, Jim, because if you take it far it will be out of its home range and then WON'T know where it is, much less what time it is. (-:

JimAL: (another side question) so should the teenage mutant ninja turtles really be the teenage mutant ninja tortoises? (no webbed feet)

BillHi: The moral of the story for teachers is, if you're going to keep an animal captive in the classroom, keep it only a short time, know its needs, and let it go where you found it.

BJB2: before you end the discussion, Bill....

BillHi: Jim has indeed morphed into David.

AmandaB: Just make sure you know the rules set within your state!

BJB2: a reminder that Bill is presenting at the Tapped In Festival on July 20

BillHi: Let me show you some photos of Eastern Box Turtles:

<http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek000901.html>

BJB2: and his Environmental Education Group is featured in the Group Poster Session

BillHi: Thanks for the plug, BJ. Everybody click on that link above.

BJB2: . o O (for more information about the Festival, go to

<http://tappedin.org/tappedin/web/festival/>)

BillHi: Amanda, is this a Web page your ESL students could use?

BillHi: BJ and I are fighting for Web attention. (-:

BillHi: <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek000901.html>

AmandaB: Looks great! I shall use it! Wonderful visuals for them!

BJB2: Amanda, please subscribe to Bill's newsletter. His photos are amazing and the kids will love it

AmandaB: Is that linked through the site above

BillHi: Good, This is a very old installment of "This week at Hilton Pond." Here's a newer one: <http://www.hiltonpond.org/ThisWeek050515.html>

BillHi: This time, an aquatic turtle.

BJB2: Bill, how can Amanda subscribe to the newsletter?

AmandaB: Wow! I love these photographs!

BillHi: Just send a blank email to <mailto:thisweek@hiltonpond.org> with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

BillHi: Thanks, Amanda. And Jim and Jeff and BJ and David and the turtles.

AmandaB: Thank you, Bill! A very enjoyable first session...

BJB2: Thanks, Bill. This was fun

JimAL: "Heroes in a half shell....Turtle Power!"

BillHi: We almost ALWAYS have fun.

BJB2: please join us for the festival, Amanda and Jim. You can earn Certificates of Participation that you can submit for CUE's

BJB2 waves goodnight.

JimAL: seriously though, I always like being able to point out where TV is wrong...the teenage mutant ninja thing could be a good conversation starter in a science class...

BillHi: Jim's exactly right. You always need a good hook.

AmandaB: I'll look forward to hearing more about it... Goodnight, all!