

# Nature Bowl 2026

## Coaches Orientation Packet





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## Overview

Initiated in 1986, Nature Bowl is a fun, science-based team competition for third through sixth grade students in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's North Central Region, which covers portions of the Sacramento Valley, Delta, Sierra Nevada foothills and mountains.

Nature Bowl activities focus on regional ecology, natural history, and conservation. The program's purpose is to motivate students with hands-on science, to reinforce environmental concepts, to connect science to their own environment and to involve students in community conservation projects. Nature Bowl also serves as a model for teachers to use in their classroom's environmental education instruction and meets current educational standards.

## How it Works

### Who Participates?

Any school or youth organization may send one 3rd/4th grade and one 5th/6th grade team to the semi-finals. Each team must have at least 3, but no more than 10 students. Coaches can include teachers, parents or youth leaders.

Teams can be made up of a group of students from a class, an afterschool or lunchtime nature club, or another youth group that wishes to participate, so long as they are within the grade level groups.

### Semi Finals

When teams register to compete at Nature Bowl, they will choose from one of 6 regional semi-final events. Which semi-final site you choose depends on your location and schedule. Each semi-final site will have the same activities with the same questions, competing against the same general number of teams.

Semi-finals take place on a weekday and generally take the full school day (8:30am-3pm). When teams arrive, they will check in and be provided with their schedule for the day. 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade teams will only compete against other 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade teams, and likewise for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade teams. Each team will be grouped with 2-3 other teams to rotate through the activities during the day; however, final scores will be tallied up against all other teams in that grade level.

*For example: Teams A, B, and C will rotate together through activities, as will teams E, F, and G. All 6 teams will be scored separately. At the end of the day, the final scores of teams A, B, C, D, E, F, and G will all be compared to determine a winner.*

Each activity will take 30-40 minutes to complete. If an activity ends early, students will either be led through a short game or released to take a bathroom and snack break. Teams are not allowed to head to their next activity station until the official start time, so as not to disturb the teams currently doing that activity.

All teams should bring their own snacks, lunches, and water. Bathrooms and water fountains are available at all sites, and a lunch break will be provided.

Once all activities have concluded, there will be about 45 minutes of free time during which final scores are being tallied. At some semi-final sites, a special activity (like a game, songs, or story) will be provided for those who wish to participate.

At the awards ceremony, each team will be called up in random order to receive a small team prize and be recognized for their strengths. The top scoring teams in each grade group, who will advance to the finals, will then be announced.

## Finals

Finals take place each year on a Saturday in May. This year, Finals will be held at Camp Pollock in Sacramento on May 9th, 2026. Families of participating teams are welcome to join the festivities so long as they do not disrupt the students from their activities.

Finals will follow the same general schedule format as the semi-finals. The activities will each have slightly more difficult questions, and some activities may be swapped out for new ones all together. Coaches will be given details about which activities to expect at the finals after the last semi-final event has concluded.

At the end of the day, during the awards ceremony, each team will once again be called up in random order and recognized for their strengths. The winning team at each grade level will then be announced and presented with their final prize. Winning teams will get to take home the Golden Pinecone award, which they are allowed to have in their classroom for one full school year until next year's Nature Bowl, and they will be offered the chance to participate in a CDFW adventure of their choosing.

Nature Bowl officials will follow up with the winning teams to confirm the details of their final prize after the event concludes. Adventures may include options such as attending a CDFW fish plant, a field trip to visit a CDFW land with a naturalist, or a special guided trip to one of our local nature conservancies.

## Nature Bowl Activities

### Outdoor Investigations

*Groups of 4 – substitutions allowed mid-game if additional team members want to play. Coaches may not follow their teams for this activity.*

In this activity, a short nature trail is set up with a series of 4-5 questions along the trail. The emphasis of these questions is on observation skills, natural resource knowledge, and teamwork, with some questions specific to nature found along the trail. Questions are longform and multiple parts and typically include a short lesson before the main question. Teams are accompanied by a judge as they work through the trail, the judge will ask the question and write down the team's responses without further prompting.

To ensure teams are coming up with their answers fully on their own, coaches may not accompany their own team on the trail. The trail is short enough that teams are in view of their coaches, who wait at the starting line, for the full activity.

#### **How it works:**

Each team will start at a different station along the trail, so that only one team is at a station at a time. Only 4 team members may answer questions at each station, however the remaining team members may follow along silently if they plan to swap out halfway through the activity.

Each station will be marked along the trail with a numbered cone. Some questions may include a prop, such as binoculars, a field guide, or seeds representative of the area. The judge will read the lesson and question, then will write down exactly what the students say in response. The judge will not provide any additional context or prompting other than what is written on the question.

#### **Sample Questions**

1. Here on the trail is an animal track. What type of animal made this track? What are two things you can tell about the animal that made this track? (90 seconds)
2. Search the trail and list the objects that would not naturally be found there. (The trail will be identified by the staff.) 20-25 items. (3 / minutes)
3. What is a deciduous tree? Locate a deciduous tree nearby, and explain one advantage of being deciduous (2 min)
4. Using a tree key, determine the name of this tree using this branch of leaves. (2 minutes)
5. Identify the niche, or job, of three invertebrates found in this soil sample. (90 seconds)

#### **2026 OI Theme – Wildlife Conservation**

*Questions may include topics such as – human-wildlife interactions, invasive vs. native species, human impact on wildlife and/or local habitats, conservation, etc.*

## Nature Relay

*All team members participate*

In this “relay” activity, items representing environmental concepts from the Nature Bowl Glossary are placed in a large saucer. Each team competing in a round will line up in front of their own saucer (each saucer contains the same items). Team members line up opposite the saucer and one at a time, speed walk to the saucer to retrieve items that represent the concepts announced by the judge. All team members are encouraged to participate.

### How it works:

Throughout the game, students on a team rotate so that a different team member is “it” for each question asked.

For each question round: The judge will announce a concept. The team members that are “it” have 20 seconds to speed walk to their saucer, review the items, and return with their selected item to the front of their team line. When all teams have returned, the judge will announce the correct item answer. Teams with the correct item get full points.

If a student selects a different item than the “correct answer”, that student may defend/explain their rationale for that selection to the entire group. The judge will then determine if the student’s defending rationale of the item deserves a full point, half point, or no points.

After each question, the items are returned to the saucer and that round’s team member goes to the back of their line.

### Sample Questions

Word or phrase is what the judge’s prompt would be. Item they are looking for is in parenthesis.

<i>3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade</i>	<i>5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Amphibian (frog puppet)</li><li>• Decomposer (fungus)</li><li>• Nocturnal mammal (bat)</li><li>• Migration (toy salmon)</li><li>• Seed (pinecone)</li><li>• Herbivore (mouse picture)</li><li>• Metamorphosis (butterfly)</li><li>• Pollution (oil can)</li><li>• Marsh plant (cattail)</li><li>• Aquatic Animal (fish picture)</li><li>• Predator (rubber snake)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Symbiosis (lichen)</li><li>• Invertebrate (spider)</li><li>• Feral (toy cat)</li><li>• Commensalism (gall)</li><li>• Raptor (hawk talon)</li><li>• Exotic (opossum)</li><li>• Terrestrial mammal (deer antler)</li><li>• Riverine (smooth rock)</li><li>• Coniferous (pinecone)</li><li>• Renewable (water)</li><li>• Spawning (toy salmon)</li></ul>

## Team Problem Solving

*Groups of 4 – substitutions allowed mid-game if additional team members want to play.*

As the title suggests, in this activity teams will be presented with several questions that require them to work together on problem solving. Creativity is encouraged. Teams will be seated at tables facing the judges and provided with a sheet of paper to write their answers on, which must be turned in to the judges at the end of the activity.

For each question, the judges will read a prompt to the group. Teammates must then quietly discuss, agree upon an answer, and write it on their answer sheet--all within a set time limit for each question. Judges will then call upon one team member from each group to present their team's answer.

Often pictures, puppets, skulls, bones, or other ecological props are used to find the answers. Team problem solving might also include charades or songwriting, as well as questions where teams propose solutions to existing ecological problems.

### Sample Questions:

#### *3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade*

1. Using at least four of the animal puppets in front of you, create a food web found in our region. Write down the animals of your food web and how they are connected, and identify a local habitat type where your food web occurs (90 seconds)
2. You are reporters. Write a simple, but complete caption for this nature photo. Include who, what, where, why and how. (2 minutes)
3. Choose one of the animals listed on the blue card in front of you. Write your word on the answer sheet. Act it *out as a team* for the other teams to guess. You will have 60 seconds to prepare and 30 seconds to act out the word you selected. You may not use sound effects. The other teams will have 30 seconds to write down their answer. Each team receives points when they correctly guess and when their acting is correctly guessed.

#### *5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade*

1. Name three types of wetlands found in California, three values of wetlands to wildlife, three values for people, and three current threats to wetlands. (2 minutes)
2. On the map provided, pick a California river. Follow the flow of that river from its origin to its drainage into the Pacific Ocean. Name three towns or cities it passes by. (90 seconds)
3. Match the animals with the term that most accurately describes their current status. (At-risk, native, invasive, resident, migratory) (60 seconds)
4. Select an animal/puppet and construct a five-part food chain appropriate for the animal (90 seconds).

### **2026 TPS Theme – Wildlife Conservation**

*Questions may include topics such as – human-wildlife interactions, invasive vs. native species, human impact on wildlife and/or local habitats, conservation, etc.*

## Speedy Ringers

*Groups of 3 – substitutions allowed mid-game if additional team members want to play.*

This activity is set up “game show” style. Teams will be seated at tables facing the judges. At each table is a bell or buzzer for students to use when they want to answer a question. Teams are presented with short answer questions and answer on a “first-ring” basis. Questions are based on the Nature Bowl Glossary.

### How it works:

The team who signals first is called upon to answer. The person who rang the bell must start answering within 3 seconds – only one student answers the question for their team. No discussion amongst the team is allowed once the bell is rung. If that student can't come up with the answer within three seconds, or if the answer is incorrect, then the team that rang in second is called upon. An individual from the second team can then answer the question, following the same rules as above. If they fail to answer correctly within the time limit, the judge will move on to the next team to ring in, and so on.

If another team does not ring in, or if all teams answered incorrectly, the question will be read again, and teams will have another chance to ring in. Important: If a student answers incorrectly, their team is “out” for that question. They may not ring in again until the next question.

Sometimes it’s difficult to tell who rang-in first. In this case, we will have all the teams who rang-in write their answers on a piece of paper. Each team that answers correctly will get points.

This is the only activity where all teams are competing for the same group of points. The highest score goes to the team that correctly answers the greatest number of questions and so on. In the event that there are an odd number of teams participating (i.e. 3 teams in one group vs. 4 teams in another group), the total number of questions asked to each group will be adjusted so that the ratio of questions available per team participating remains the same. *For example, if there are 60 total questions being asked to the group of 4 teams, 45 questions will be asked to the group of 3 teams. In this way, there are 15 questions available per team.*

### Sample Questions for Speedy Ringers

*3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade*

1. Name two reasons animals migrate. (*Climate, food, to live*)
2. Name one animal species that migrates on the Pacific Flyway. (*Tundra swan, pintail duck, sandhill crane, fox sparrow*)
3. Wildlife needs four basic things to survive. Humans need these things too! What are they? (*Food, water, shelter, space*)
5. Name two natural resources and the reasons why we should conserve them.
6. I am a wild animal native to California. I will read a series of clues. As soon as you think you know what animal I am, ring in.
7. Name the California State Flower (*CA Golden Poppy*)



5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade

1. What is a biologist? (see glossary)
2. Name two renewable energy sources. (*Solar, wind, geothermal, hydro*)
4. What is a major cause of air pollution in California? (*Automobile, wildfires*)
5. Name two benefits and two problems of dams. (*Recreation, power, irrigation, flood protection; disrupts natural migrations, prevents sediment distribution, changes river patterns*)
6. Name an endangered or threatened species in our region. Name two reasons this species is at-risk.
7. What are two functions of feathers? (*Flight, warmth, camouflage*)

Teams should study for this activity by learning the concepts found in the Nature Bowl Glossary. Teams can also practice Speedy Ringers with the Kahoots games available in our resources.

**2026 SR Theme – Wildlife Conservation**

*Questions may include topics such as – human-wildlife interactions, invasive vs. native species, human impact on wildlife and/or local habitats, conservation, etc.*

## Enviromercial

### Full team

An enviromercial (environmental commercial) is a presentation that is prepared in advance of Nature Bowl. Enviromercials must focus on a local\* environmental issue and propose a viable solution. Teams will be provided with a general list of topics to choose from that can be narrowed down to their own local issue. Students are encouraged to **gain first-hand information** by visiting a site, interviewing people, attending a meeting and/or being part of a solution.

*\*Local can mean issues that impact all of California, or that are more specific to your city, neighborhood, or school. If you choose a broad issue, such as air quality, be prepared to focus your enviromercial on the local impacts of this issue.*

Each team will have 2 minutes to present their enviromercial to a panel of judges. All team members must participate in a specific role – actors, researchers, prop makers, screenwriters, etc. After each presentation, the judges will ask questions about their subject, research, and presentation. Enviromercials may be videotaped by the coach or parent at the event.

### What to include in your Enviromercial:

- Describe a local or regional environmental issue, its cause(s) and effects. Be specific in topic and focus (how does this impact your community?).
- Describe what, if anything, is currently being done about the issue in your community.
- Suggest a practical solution that would help correct the issue.
- *Optional but encouraged:* Students can create visual aids and other props to use during the presentation. Judges prefer students' homemade props over those purchased or created by adults.

Students may write presentation notes on the back side of a 3x5 inch card. Students do not need to memorize their presentation.

Each team must also provide a **Judges Packet** to the panel of judges prior to their presentation. This packet should only be 1-2 pages and provides the judges with evidence of research, team involvement, and actions taken. Keep it simple and put the creativity toward the enviromercial itself!

### What to put in the Judges Packet

- 1-2 sentences explaining the topic
- 1-2 sentences explaining why the team chose this topic
- Identify each student and their role in preparing the enviromercial
- Provide a list of at least 5 sources used in research. This should be a **variety** of up-to-date sources, such as websites, videos, news articles, site visits, etc. At least one source should be from a person in an agency or project currently working on the issue.
- Effectively describe any conservation actions taken by students during their research.

### Enviromercial Judging Criteria

- Choice of Topic: Is it relevant, is it regional/local, is it important?
- Thoroughness: Covers problem, impacts, solutions, depth of research

- Creativity: Creative approach, originality, artistry
- Teamwork: Did everyone participate equally? Did you work together well?
- Resources: Diverse, credible, local or regionalized, different perspectives
- Response to judges' questions: Demonstrates strong comprehension of material
- Overall: Communication abilities, grasp of subject, persuasiveness, enthusiasm, took appropriate action to reduce the problem, direct or indirect
- Time: Under the two-minute time limit
- Judges Packet: meets all requirements

#### Examples of Past Enviromercials:

- [Grey Water Reclamation, By Ethan Rezendes](#)
- [Pollinators - by the Watershed Wonders](#)

*As you watch these, think about whether all the criteria were met. If not, what would you add?*

#### Suggested Topic List

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Air quality                | • Endangered species |
| • Drought                    | • Consumer choices   |
| • Water quality              | • Urban wildlife     |
| • Habitat loss               | • Sustainability     |
| • Population growth          | • Pollinators        |
| • Recycling/Composting/Waste | • Non-native species |
| • Pollution                  | • Open space         |
| • Endangered species         | • Climate change     |

#### 2026 Nature Bowl Theme – Wildlife Conservation

*While your enviromercial is not required to use the Nature Bowl theme, it can help to better focus the presentation. For example, students could take a broad topic like "pollution" and narrow it down to something local, such as "How reducing plastic litter in our neighborhood creek helps local wildlife."*

## Special Activities for Finals Only

For teams advancing to the finals, new activities are added to extend learning and provide a new challenge for participants. All advancing teams will be given additional information regarding any new activities shortly after the last semi-finals event concludes.

### Enviromercial Poster Session

During the finals, **teams will not be presenting their enviromercial as a skit** as they did in the Semi-Finals. Instead, teams should prepare their issue, research, and actions as a poster to be posted and presented at the finals, science-fair style. At the beginning of the day, all posters will be hung up in the main gathering space at Camp Pollock, and they will remain there all day. Throughout the day, all teams are encouraged to view the posters and learn more about what issues their fellow competitors worked on over the last few months.

The official Poster Session will happen at the end of the day, once all other activities have concluded and while scores are being tallied. All teams will stand by their poster and a small group of judges (one team for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, one team for 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>) will walk through to talk with each team. Teams will have 3-5 minutes to present their issue and discuss their research and solutions with the judges. The scores from the poster sessions will then be included in the final scores for the day. Posters must be either a regular (full-sized) or trifold posterboard.

### Jeopardy

During Finals, students will participate in an additional game – Jeopardy. This game will be similar to Jeopardy that we see on TV, with a few rule changes to adapt it for Nature Bowl.

#### How it Works:

To determine which team goes first, a judge will choose a number 1-20. The team that guesses the closest number will go first.

Jeopardy will begin when the first team picks a category and points amount from the board. The question will be read, and the team will have a chance to answer. Teams will be given a specific amount of time to discuss the question amongst themselves before answering. If they answer correctly, they will win the points. If they guess incorrectly that question will go to the next team in line. If the second team doesn't get it, the question moves to the third team and so on. If no teams can answer the question, it goes back to the first team for one last chance. After that, the game moves on to a new turn/question.

If the team that is "it" answers their first question correctly, they get to pick another question. After the second question is answered, their turn is over and the game moves to the next team. Each team gets the chance to answer two questions during their turn. A team cannot "steal" the board. If they guess the correct answer on another team's turn, they will get the points, but the next turn will then rotate to the next team in line.

Teams are encouraged to discuss answers amongst themselves and not just blurt things out. Answers should be provided in the form of an actual answer, and not as a question like on TV (for example, say "Irrigation" and not "What is Irrigation").

Additional rules, and the theme of this year's Jeopardy, will be provided to the teams advancing to finals shortly after the last Semi-Final event.

## General Participation Rules

- Up to 10 children may be on a team. Some events have a limit to how many students may participate at a time and will state that in the rules for that event.
- Teams earn points for correct answers. Most activities are worth a total of 100 points. Partial credit may be given at the judge's discretion. No points will be lost for an incorrect answer. If students are unsure of an answer, they should guess. You have nothing to lose. You may be right!
- Team members should listen to the complete question before answering and must wait for the judge to call on them for their answer.
- Teams must show respect and good sportsmanship to each other during the activities and free time. This includes remaining quiet when other teams are responding to questions.
- Team members, coaches, and parents are not allowed to attend any other session of Nature Bowl semi-finals except for the one their team is participating in. Doing so may result in disqualification. Voice or video recording is also prohibited during the event, except during Enviromercial. Photography is allowed as long as it does not interfere with the competition.
- Please remember that we are guests in all event spaces. Please respect the physical event space, as well as any flora and fauna found at your semi-final and final sites. Additional rules and regulations may apply to your specific semi-final or final site.

### **A note about the competition:**

Nature Bowl strives to deemphasize the competitive nature of the games. Instead, the intent is to maximize cooperation, learning, self-esteem and a connection to nature. Students are positively reinforced for correct and semi-correct answers, and all participating teams receive the same prizes at their semi-final events.

We purposefully only announce the top scoring teams at the end of each event. Coaches may privately request detailed feedback about their team's scores via email after the event concludes. There is no such thing as "failing" or "losing" Nature Bowl – we are all here to learn and create meaningful connections to the outdoors!

## Coaches' Preparation Checklist

### Getting Started

- ☐ Attend the coaches' workshop
- ☐ Attend other optional coach training opportunities
- ☐ Form a team
- ☐ Register for your semi-final event

### Preparing your team

- ☐ Acquaint students with Nature Bowl
- ☐ Schedule time for your team to meet 1-2x a week leading up to your semi-final event
- ☐ Review the rules/format of the event as a whole and each specific game
  - ☐ Practice each game format
- ☐ Learn about CA natural history
  - ☐ Focus on regional environments and conservation of natural resources
- ☐ Study the Nature Bowl Glossary
- ☐ Create your Enviromercial
  - ☐ Practice this in front of others – multiple times!
  - ☐ Try practicing in front of parents, other teachers, the PTA and school admin so students get used to practicing in front of adults.
- ☐ Plan the details of your semi-final day
  - ☐ Contact your school to let them know which students will be attending the semi-finals, and on what day
  - ☐ Confirm transportation arrangements (bus, parent cars, etc.) and have a backup plan
- ☐ Contact your school's public information officer or local media for coverage

### Day of Event

- ☐ Dress for the weather and a day of being outside
- ☐ Bring snacks, lunches, and plenty of water
- ☐ Review the format and rules of the games with your team – stress teamwork
- ☐ Arrive early at your site to allow time for check-in and restrooms
- ☐ Please contact site and coordinator if you are late or unable to attend!
- ☐ Review format, rules; stress teamwork
- ☐ Stay for the entire day – awards ceremony included!

### After the Event

- Encourage students to continue studying the environment and get involved in local issues and activities.
- Write an article for PTA/school newsletter about your experiences at Nature Bowl
- Recognize team at school assembly
- Share enviromercials with schoolmates

**Most importantly – Enjoy your experience with Nature Bowl!**

## Getting Started

*How do I get started? Here are some suggestions gathered from former coaches that may help guide you.*

- Start with the CDFW Nature Bowl website:
  - <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/2/Nature-Bowl>
  - Here you will find general information, this year's schedule, an FAQ, and a link to a resources page. If you have ideas for the resources page, please send them to the coordinator.
- A great source of information is the **California Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI)**. Find curriculum and webinars at [www.Californiaeei.org](http://www.Californiaeei.org).
- Visit [www.creec.org](http://www.creec.org). This is the **California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC)**, administered by the California Department of Education. It is a site designed to link teachers to high quality environmental education resources.

## Coaches Workshops

Two virtual workshops are available for coaches. These workshops take place on weekdays after school. Additionally, there is limited space available for an in-person Aquatic WILD training this year.

### Coach Orientation – 1/7/26 (*recording provided after workshop*)

This virtual workshop is a chance for new and returning coaches to learn about this year's Nature Bowl. We will go over the event format and each activity and answer questions that coaches have about the program. Coaches get the full experience of what the Nature Bowl is all about. This workshop will help you get started and provide ideas for fun learning activities to do with your team.

### Natural History Crash Course – 1/21/26 (*recording provided after workshop*) – optional

This virtual workshop will provide coaches with an overview of California's natural history and ecosystems, with a specific focus on the Greater Sacramento Valley area. This is a great opportunity for coaches to brush up on their own knowledge of CA nature before working with their teams.

### Aquatic WILD Training (optional) – 1/31/26 – optional

This workshop is for Nature Bowl coaches looking for engaging, flexible, hands-on activities to teach their teams--and other students--key concepts around adaptations, habitats, conservation, and other wildlife topics. We will try out several activities and share tips on how to tailor them to Nature Bowl teams. Participants receive an Aquatic WILD curriculum guide to keep! Space is limited for this workshop and registration is required.

## Assembling a Team

Coaches use many different methods to recruit a team, so feel free to gather your team in any way that works for you. Here are some ideas:

- Teach a natural history unit in class to drum up excitement about Nature Bowl.
- Give a class presentation about Nature Bowl to solicit interest – this could be just your class, or all the grade-specific classes in your school.
- Send a flyer home describing Nature Bowl and ask those interested to contact you.
- Put an article about Nature Bowl in the school newsletter or your class website describing the event and the date for those interested in meeting.
- Have an evening meeting and invite parents too, to hear about Nature Bowl. This may help you get a co-coach.
- Offer Nature Bowl as an after-school and/or lunchtime enrichment activity. Some schools have funds that support these kinds of classes. This way you can meet often and for short periods of time while they're eating.
- If you have a lot of interest from students, host a “qualifier” to help determine which students will be sent to represent your school at the Semi-Finals.
- If you are a teacher, integrate environmental education into your curriculum. For example, have all students do an enviromercial and have the class pick those to represent their school.

## Suggested Preparation Timeline

Most teams start getting organized and meeting regularly in January. Usually, coaches wait until after the Coaches’ workshop to host their first meeting. After that, we suggest that your team meets for at least one hour a week for the 10-12 weeks leading up to your semi-final event.

Here is a suggested timeline for preparing your team:

### January (1-4 meetings)

- Provide overview of Nature Bowl
- Focus on learning glossary words and increasing observation skills
- Make flashcards, have team members come up with examples
- Set up a nature trail or a nature scavenger hunt
- Pick an animal or plant - What's its adaptation?
- Focus on some key concepts - habitat, microhabitat, niche, etc.

### February (4-8 meetings)

- Learn about local environmental issues. Decide on and start preparing your enviromercials.
- Teach phone/email etiquette for interviewing experts, sharing resources
- Discuss food chains, life cycles, water cycle
- Identify food chains from different habitats - oak woodlands, rivers, wetlands, conifer forest, and chaparral
- Practice bell ringers/team problems
- Play charades with environmental concepts from glossary
- List examples to illustrate flashcard vocabulary
- What can you tell from a skull, a track?



**March** (2-6 meetings, depending on when your semi-final is)

- Discuss native/non-native plants and animals
- What are conservation and preservation?
- Apply what you've studied on a field trip to your semifinal site, a local park, or another natural site.
- Finish enviromercials and practice, practice, practice!
- Practice nature investigations by going for a walk at the park or school ground.
- Find an animal sign, stage of a life cycle, and non-native plant
- Practice nature relay
- Practice teamwork

**Late March/Early April** (As needed)

- Semi-final competition at your site
- Talk to classmates about Nature Bowl experience
- Put an article in your school newsletter about the competition and list team members
- If advancing to the finals - Prepare for finals; review concepts, create your Enviromercial Poster

**May 9th**

- Finals!

**Have more questions?**

Email the Nature Bowl Team: [interpretiveservices@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:interpretiveservices@wildlife.ca.gov)

Or visit our website: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/2/Nature-Bowl>