



# Virtual Outdoor Adventure Programs

## *National Wildlife Refuges (Grades K-5)*



### **Objectives:**

- To teach kids what a national wildlife refuge is in comparison to other outdoor areas (parks, reserves, sanctuaries etc.).
- To introduce concepts of habitats, adaptation, and outdoor observation.
- To review the work being done at Refuges (conservation, management, and restoration).

**Running time:** ~6:30 minutes

### **Materials:**

- Paper
- Pencils/other writing utensils
- Crayons
- Markers

### **Video Outline:**

1. Introduction to National Wildlife Refuges (NWR)
2. Background on number and locations of Refuges (accompanying activity, So Many Refuges)
3. Main purpose of NWRs to provide habitat for a variety of animals and plant life
4. Definition of habitat
5. Definition of adaptation (accompanying activity, How Do You Adapt?)
6. Various recreational opportunities at NWRs
7. Outdoor observation using senses of sight and sound (accompanying activity, Refuge Sights and Sounds)
8. NWR resources for people and wildlife to survive
9. Management of NWRs by biologists, managers, and other staff
10. Final reflective question: What Refuges are located near you?

## Script and Activity Outline:

*\*Tip for Teachers: This video has some cues for pausing and playing, but feel free to pause at any point to give enough time to go through each activity.*

There are many different types of beautiful outdoor spaces throughout the United States. There are local parks, National Parks, wildlife reserves and sanctuaries and even your own backyard! National Wildlife Refuges are another type of outdoor space. National Wildlife Refuges are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and there are over 500 of them throughout the whole country!

**Activity Time:** So Many Refuges (Pause the video and find you're your state! Each dot represents a Refuge. How many can you count in your state?)

National Wildlife Refuges are special places for wildlife and for people to enjoy the great outdoors. What makes them unique is that they were created to provide habitats for the conservation of all sorts of animal life and plant life. From the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico, where one can find prickly pear cactus growing in the desert, to the wetlands of the Seatuck National Wildlife Refuge in New York, where saltmarsh sparrows make their home, there are various habitats throughout all Refuges. (**Vocab:** Habitat ("the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism."))

Each wildlife species has specific adaptations to survive and thrive in its habitat. (**Vocab:** Adaptation (Physical characteristics animals or plants have or adjustments they make to survive in their habitat.)) Adaptations can change over time, and some are even based on the seasons. For example, many monarch butterflies migrate south in the fall and stop at sunny and warm St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in Florida on their way to winter in Mexico.

**Activity Time:** How Do YOU Adapt? Grab a piece of paper and something to write or draw with. What are some ways you adapt to changes in the seasons? Write down or draw all the ways you can think of! Share with your peers!)

National Wildlife Refuges are great places to participate in many kinds of recreational activities like fishing, hiking, hunting, and even wildlife observation. Some Refuges even offer environmental education programs and events for everyone.

Each Refuge has many unique sights and sounds year-round.

**Activity Time:** Refuge Sights and Sounds Keep playing the video. What are some sights and sounds you can identify? Observe with your eyes and ears and share what you saw and heard with your peers.

What did you see and hear?

National Wildlife Refuges have all the resources plants and animals need to survive. These include fresh air, clean water, multiple food sources and space to build shelter. Human beings need the exact same resources to survive! All these resources for wildlife come from healthy habitats that biologists, managers, and other staff take care of using their senses and other important tools. This includes trapping, tagging, and tracking animals to record how they're doing physically and to check how they're interacting with their environment; conducting prescribed burns to control invasive species and help native grasses grow and also planting native trees and grasses to restore native habitat.

What Refuges are located near you?

Credits

Thank you for watching!

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### Additional Activities:

- **USFWS (2<sup>nd</sup> grade)**
  - What is a National Wildlife Refuge (Set of 3 worksheets to highlight what a Refuge is for, what to do there and the wildlife one can see there.)
  
- **Growing Up Wild (PreK-K)**
  - Wildlife Is Everywhere (Children make observations and understand that wildlife is all around us.)
  - Hiding In Plain Sight (Children play a game of hide and seek to learn about important adaptations in many wild animals.)\*

- **Project Wild (K-5)**
  - Adaptation Artistry (Design and construct your own bird and describe your creation's adaptations and habitat.) Grades: 3-5
  - Color Crazy (Create representations of wild animals designed to visually blend into or stand out in their habitats, then discuss coloration as an adaptation for survival.) Grades: K-5
  - What's That Habitat (Sort daily items into categories of "wants" and "needs" to examine what humans and wildlife need to survive.) Grades: K-5
  - Habitat Circles (Physically form an interconnected circle to demonstrate the interdependence of habitat components.) Grades: 3-5
  - Map That Habitat (Create a map to identify the location of the components of an animal's habitat.) Grades: 3-5
  - Habitat Heroes (Take action in your community by designing and completing a habitat improvement project.) Grades: 3-8
  - Urban Nature Search (Go on a scavenger hunt to observe and record different types of wildlife and habitat features in your schoolyard.) Grades: 3-8
  
- **Project Learning Tree: Explore Your Environment Activity Guide (K-5)**
  - Birds and Bugs (Camouflage is an essential survival strategy in the natural world. Students discover the value of protective coloration as they pretend to be birds in search of colored bugs.) Grades: K-2
  - Trees as Habitats (From their leafy branches to their tangled roots, trees provide habitat for a host of plants and animals. Students will inventory the plants and animals that live in, on and around trees and discover how plants and animals depend on trees in many ways.) Grades K-2
  - Charting Biodiversity (Students explore the amazing diversity of life on Earth and discover how plants and animals are adapted for survival. This activity helps students understand why there are so many different species and teaches them the value of biodiversity) Grades: 3-5