

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

Refuge Field Trip Guide

Contents

- Scheduling Your Visit
- Student Behavior Guidelines
- Tips for Planning Ahead
- Outdoor Hike Guidelines



Scheduling Your Visit

✓ Contact is key.

Please alert us to any last minute changes such as late arrival or cancelation please reach out to your point of contact and call the refuge at 215-365-3118. To reschedule a program or inquire about access to additional space at the refuge, contact Kelly Kemmerle at kelly_kemmerle@fws.gov or 267.969.3207.

✓ Starting your day.

If your group is scheduled for ranger-led programming, bring your students to the Front Desk of the Visitor Center to check-in and meet your ranger.

✓ Self-guided.

If your group is scheduled for a self-guided program, note that we have space available for purposes like lunch, however, please be aware that there might be other groups that may already be using these spaces.

✓ Trash-In-Trash-Out.

John Heinz Refuge is place for wildlife first. Please be mindful of your group's footprint and leave the refuge as you found it. Please encourage students to pack their trash out with them when your group departs or be prepared to bring all generated waste back to school with you (trash bags available upon request)

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Materials available to borrow upon request:

- Clipboards
- Binoculars
- Field guides
- Bug nets/boxes
- Hand lenses
- Water quality testing materials (pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Nitrates, etc.)
- Pelts, feathers, & skulls
- Leaf, twig, and seed identification kits

Tips for Planning Ahead

✓ **Make predictions.**

Brainstorm with your students about what they may expect to see and experience during their visit. This creates a great opportunity for dialogue or use of the scientific method. Have students hypothesize about what plants and animals may live in a wetland habitat or consider why a wildlife refuge is necessary.

✓ **Come prepared.**

Discuss what students will need. We recommend closed-toe, older shoes and long pants to protect from biting insects or any overgrown plants along the trails. Sun protection and reusable water bottles are also ideal for hot days. Students should avoid bringing unnecessary items like heavy backpacks or cell phones.

✓ **Trails.**

Our 10 miles of trails are mainly flat and a combination of paved, packed dirt and gravel. Plan your footwear accordingly!

✓ **Loan boxes.**

Our Mammal and Bird Loan Boxes are a great tool for introducing students to refuge wildlife from the comfort of your classroom! For more information or to reserve a Loan Box contact Meagan Mendoza at meagan_mendoza@fws.gov.

✓ **Remember your chaperones.**

Chaperones are excellent aids for classroom management. We recommend a ratio of one chaperone per ten students. Always inform your chaperones of your expectations before your trip.

Student Behavior Guidelines

✓ **Set your expectations.**

Encourage students to show respect to their classmates, teachers, refuge staff, and to plants and wildlife when they arrive. Ask students to explain to you how they might respect nature. Students may carefully observe but should avoid picking flowers or squashing insects..

✓ **Prepare for good behavior.**

When your class visits, it is likely that there will be other visitors here as well. Prepare your students for this by reminding them to talk quietly and walk calmly, instead of running around and yelling. Remind them that the best way to see wildlife is by being quiet.

✓ **Create safe boundaries.**

Be sure that students remain on the trails. To keep everyone within sight and listening range, give them boundaries. We recommend keeping an adult in the lead and at the end of the line. Inform students of potentially harmful plants and animals including poison ivy, stinging nettle, and ticks. If they are unsure of what a plant is, it is best not to touch it.



Outdoor Hike Guidelines

✓ **Encourage students to use their senses!**

See who can find the best smelling plant. Allow a few seconds of extreme quiet to listen to nature's sounds and discuss what they heard.

✓ **Ask students to look for signs of wildlife.**

Prompt your students to search for holes in the soil, scat (animal droppings), leaves that have been eaten, tracks, and more!

✓ **Help your students look for phenological changes**

These are also called, seasonal variations. For example, in the summer tree leaves are green, but in the fall they turn brown, yellow, or red. Have students look at all the plants in bloom and wonder how they might change from season to season.

✓ **Incorporate your curriculum.**

Science isn't the only subject you can cover at the refuge! Encourage students to think about how early settlers may have navigated through or survived on the land. Connect nature to a math concept by having students count different plants or estimate the number of plants in a small area. Refuge staff can assist you in making curriculum connections.

✓ **For more detailed info on leading your hike, please request our *Hiking Guide for Educators*.**



John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at
Tinicum
America's First Urban Refuge
8601 Lindbergh Blvd. Philadelphia, PA
19153 215.365.3118

www.fws.gov/heinz



@JohnHeinzNWR



SEPTA Routes 37, 108, 115
Stop at 84th and Lindbergh (5
min walk to refuge)

Regional Rail- Airport Line
Eastwick station (0.5 miles from
refuge)