



## Tips and Tricks for Group Leaders at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

- **Do** remind your students what it means to be a naturalist – being observant, quiet, curious, etc. This is a great way to get everyone focused and back on track!
- **Do** stay in front of the group. That way, everyone will have the same chance to see wildlife and share their discoveries.
- **Do** stop and sit down from time to time with your students. It's important to have quiet time in your group and work on your journal pages.
- **Do** ask questions to keep students engaged. (Ex. what do you see? What do you hear? Who might have made this hole? etc.) Even if you know the answer, allow them to make discoveries, even if they're "wrong."
- **Do** foster participation from all of your students.
  - If someone is reluctant, give them a "job" to do, or ask specific questions.
  - If one student is answering everything, encourage them to give others a chance.
  - If students are distracted or unfocused, bring them back into the task by asking a direct question, or encouraging them to explore a specific object.
- **Do** let the students figure out how to use the equipment - this is part of their learning process!
- **Do** encourage students to fill out their journal pages completely. Remember, they do *not* have to be perfect. (For example, you do not have to spell words for them...they can sound them out).
- **Don't** feel like you have to know all the answers. "I don't know" is acceptable, but "I don't know, but let's sketch it or make some notes and see if we can find out together when we get back" is even better! We encourage you to come back with unanswered questions!
- **Don't** be afraid to jump right in and explore, journal, and share discoveries

*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder...he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in."*

- Rachel Carson





# Birding Basics

## Group Leader Guidelines



Challenge your student's skills in observing birds in their natural habitats. By carefully looking, listening, being respectful, and quiet they will discover that many bird species share common characteristics. If you don't see or hear birds, look for bird signs like nests, feathers, and scat.

### What is the overall Size and Shape?

Sparrow Size



Robin Size



Crow Size



### What Habitat is it in?

- Forest, grassland, wetland.....?

### What Bird Behavior do you notice?

- Is it sitting on a branch, holding onto the trunk, or hanging upside down on the tree?
- Is it eating (what is it eating?), pecking, singing, cleaning its feathers (preening), sitting on a nest, or soaring high in the sky?

### What are the Color Patterns? — Is it one solid color ? Does it have streaks or color patches?

