

MINNESOTA VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

# OUTDOOR EXPLORER

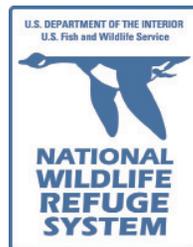
## spring/summer activity book

For a list of events and recreation opportunities at  
**Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge,**  
visit us online at:

[www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota\\_valley](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley)

Refuge Headquarters/Bloomington Education  
and Visitor Center  
3815 American Blvd. East  
Bloomington, MN 55425  
Phone: 952-854-5900  
TTY: 1-800-877-8339

Rapids Lake Education Center  
15865 Rapids Lake Road  
Carver, MN 55315  
Phone: 952-361-4500  
TTY: 1-800-877-8339



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Write your name here

## In this activity book:

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When completed bring this activity book back to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and receive an Outdoor Explorer badge!

## Wildlife Scene Investigation

Animals leave clues behind as they walk along refuge paths. You can often find tracks and scat of a variety of mammals and birds. Draw a track you found on the wildlife refuge. Did you find scat too? We challenge you to draw the scat, then guess which animal left it behind. A ranger can help you identify the mysterious animal.

## Let's Go Outside!

Try these fun activities to explore nature and enjoy the outdoors:



Count the number of birds you see on a walk

Go fishing

Draw a picture of a leaf

Play animal charades



Come for a nature program at  
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

# Habitat Detective

Employees at National Wildlife Refuges manage habitat, an area that consists of enough food, water, shelter, and living space for a plant or animal. They first need to learn about the space and animals living there. Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge has three main types of habitat: prairie, forest, and wetland. Choose one of the habitats to investigate and begin your fact finding mission by answering the questions below.

1. Describe what the habitat looks like. What kinds of plants are present? (Trees, grasses, bushes, wildflowers) Name or draw any animals you see or hear.

2. What would the animals in this habitat eat?

3. Where do the animals in this habitat seek shelter?

# Complete the Scavenger Hunt

**Find these items at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, in your backyard or at a park:**

- 3 animal tracks
- A nest
- 5 different birds
- A tree with rough bark
- Triangle shape
- A mammal
- Something red
- A circle shape
- 5 letters of the alphabet in nature
- Something left over from an animal (feather, cracked nutshell, antler, track, nibbled leaf)
- 4 sounds in nature
- Something smooth
- 4 different leaves

How many did you complete?: \_\_\_\_\_

# Who am I?

Read the clues, then guess the animal.

I like to climb trees.  
I am a mammal.  
I gather my food and store it so that I can find it later.  
I like to eat nuts, seeds, berries, mushrooms, tree buds & bark.  
I make a nests of leaves in the tops of trees.  
My name starts with the letter S: \_\_\_\_\_

I can fly.  
I am a mammal.  
I am small.  
Although people think I am blind, I am not.  
I use echolocation to find food and find my way in the dark.  
I eat thousands of bugs each night.  
My name starts with the letter B: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a bird.  
I have very long legs.  
I like to eat fish, frogs, snakes, and even mice.  
My feathers are blue-gray.  
I walk in water but can also fly.  
Sometimes I stand in the water like a statue, waiting for my food.  
My three-part name starts with the letters G, B, H:  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Habitat Haiku

Use this space to write your own poem. A haiku is an easy poem for beginners.

## How to write a haiku:

1. Pick a topic, try writing about your favorite habitat at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (wetland, prairie, or forest)
2. Make a list of words related to that topic.
3. Write your haiku in this format  
Line one- 5 syllables  
Line two- 7 syllables  
Line three- 5 syllables

## Example:

Watching prairies bloom  
Butterflies float over flowers  
Bees gather nectar

## My Word Bank

## My Haiku

# My Favorite Plant

What is your favorite kind of plant? Draw it below.

Where does your plant grow?

What insects or animals use your plant for food or shelter?

# A Wild Food Web

From plants to insects to fish to eagles, all living things in an ecosystem are part of the web of life. Plants depend on the soil and light to grow, insects and animals eat the plants, and larger insects and animals eat them. Energy transfers through the web until it finally reaches the top of the food chain.

Make your own food web below. Here are some connections to get you started. How many pieces can you add?

Algae → Caddisfly → Bluegill → Walleye → Eagle

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## Food for thought:

What would happen if a piece of the food web was removed? For example, the monarch butterfly depends on milkweed for its caterpillars. Milkweed is the only thing the caterpillars eat. What would happen to the monarch if milkweed disappeared?

How can you help monarch butterflies? Ask a ranger for some ideas of how you can help.

# Nature Journal

Explore nature in your backyard, at a city park, in the garden, or at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. When you're exploring, record your adventures. Use these pages to sketch, write your thoughts, and record your memories. Use the questions on the side of the page for inspiration.

Watch a bird flying..... Imagine where it has been .....  
..... What would it feel like to fly? .....

If you were a bird, where would you build your nest? .....  
..... What would you feed your young? .....