



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





Wetland Safari



Group Leader Guidelines

Help students explore the wetland wildlife, collect pond life, and examine their discoveries.

How to Lead a Successful Safari

- Remind students to keep their binoculars around their neck at all times.
- Seek out wetland wildlife photos along the trail to practice using binoculars.
- Stop. Listen! Look up, down, and all around for signs of wetland wildlife.

Pond Insect Collection Etiquette

- While using skim nets, swipe on top of the water and just under the water's surface.
- It is okay to pick up some plant material from the nets, but it is not okay to collect mud.
 - Pond insects live on or around aquatic plants, how many can you find?
- After each scoop, swish the net through the collection tub. Pond life is much easier to see when they are swimming in the clear water of the collection tub.
- Avoid scooping mud. Scooping the banks of the wetland clouds the water and makes observing pond life in the collection tub.

The Rules at the Water's Edge

- Allow only one student from each team along the bank at a time. This will help reduce the chance of someone accidentally falling in the water.
- Students waiting for their turn should transfer specimens from the large team tub into smaller collecting containers for easier observation.

When it is Time to Clean Up

- Have students slowly walk the pond life back to the wetland, carefully tipping the containers just below the water's surface.

