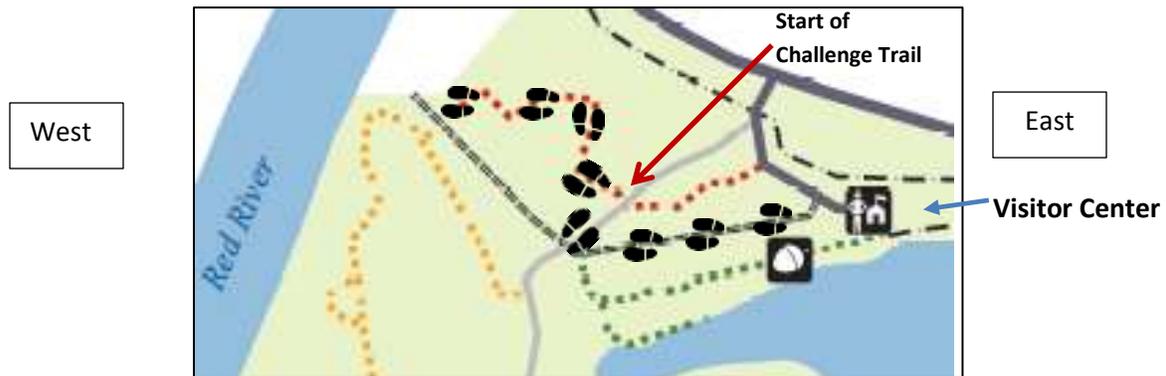


# The Wildlife Challenge Trail

A trail walk activity for groups and families.



## Option 1: Start from the east



From the visitor center boardwalk, face the parking lot. Look to the left and find the river levee behind the wire fence with brown posts. Walk on top of the levee (  ). When you reach the gravel road (  ) turn right. Walk a short distance along the gravel road until you see a blue sign on your left. Turn left onto the Red Trail (orchard trail). This is the start of the Wildlife Challenge Trail. Read the blue "Wildlife Challenge Trail" sign for information and instructions. Then walk the trail reading the animal signs and trying each animal challenge. This section of the Red Trail is approximately 1/2 mile in length. The trail is a mowed grass trail but watch for holes, mud or dirt, and tree branches and sticks. Also be alert for snakes crossing the trail – be sure to leave snakes alone. Take three large steps back away from the snake. Do not attempt to kill, capture or handle any snakes!

# The Wildlife Challenge Trail

There are 9 trail signs highlighting adaptations and behaviors of wild animals that live on the refuge. Start walking the 1/4 mile trail to test your abilities and learn about animals. Look for the blue challenge action boxes on each sign for further instructions.

Questions to think about while you hike the trail and after you finish:

Animals communicate in different ways. How many different ways can you list?



Share one special animal adaptation and one interesting animal behavior that you learned from the Wildlife Challenge Trail.

All animals with backbones are grouped into five categories (called "classes"). Can you name each one? Which animal class is your favorite?



Did you complete all the challenges? Which ones were easy for you? Which ones were more difficult? Which one was your favorite?



Rose Metallano, refuge volunteer, created the graphic illustrations for the Wildlife Challenge Trail signs.

Animals communicate with their bodies. Can you read their messages?



To alert other deer of potential danger, a whitetail deer will stomp its front foot. When alarmed, the deer raises its white tail as it runs away. The “white flag” signal tells other deer to flee.

Skunks spray to defend themselves. A skunk will only spray as a last resort. It gives many other warnings first. It will stomp its front feet, charge for a short distance, and raise its tail straight up.



The spotted skunk will do hand stands before spraying!



Stomp your feet. Then put your hands on the ground and do 5 skunk handstands.

Birds communicate with each other using sounds. A male bird sings to attract a female and to announce his home territory. Birds warn others with alarm calls when a predator is near.



Barred owls stay in touch with each other by hooting "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all."

Try singing  
some of these  
bird songs.

Carolina chickadees say their names, "chick-a-dee, dee, dee."

White-throated sparrow sings, "poor Sam Pea'body, Pea'body, Pea'body."



Mallard ducks communicate with "quack, quack, quack."



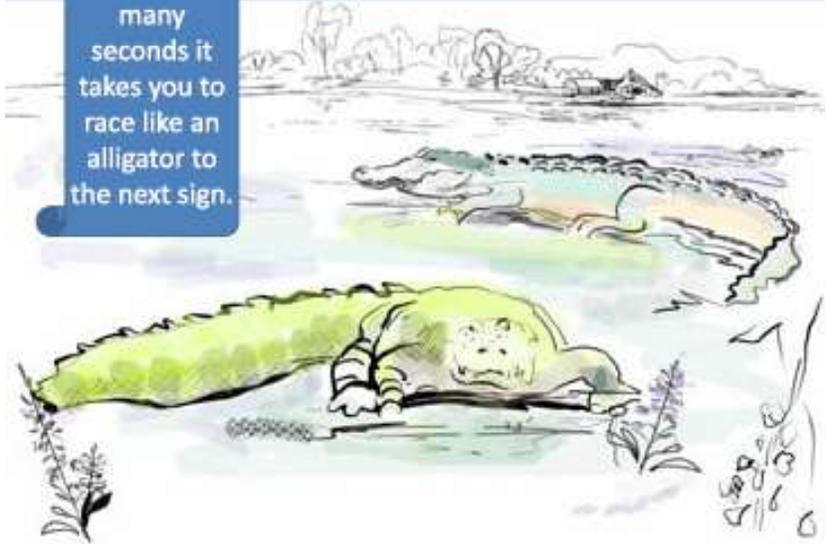
Lizards communicate by doing push ups. Male lizards puff up their dewlap under their chin and raise their body up and down with their front legs to defend their territory and to attract females.

Be like a lizard and do 10 push-ups!



Count how many seconds it takes you to race like an alligator to the next sign.

Alligators are "sit and wait" predators that are capable of extreme bursts of speed over short distances.





Turtles hide from predators by pulling their head, legs, and tail into their shell.

Shrug your shoulders, drop your chin to your chest, bring your arms to your chest making an "X" and then release. How many turtle tucks you can do in one minute?



Fish can breathe underwater using gills. People have lungs and cannot breathe underwater, so we must hold our breath when swimming underwater.

How long can you hold your breath?





Schreeeeeeech!

Some insect wings beat so fast that we hear them as they fly by!  
Some communicate by rubbing their body parts together.

Chirp, chirp, chirp!

Mmmm...



Bzzzz!



Click, click, click!

Frogs and toads have a throat sac that inflates as air is pushed over their vocal cords to make sound.

Weh!  
Weh!  
Weh!



Breeee!



Imitate the sounds made by these insects and frogs!



Large birds, such as eagles and vultures, have long wings for soaring. Looking up in the sky, you can tell the difference between an American bald eagle and a turkey vulture by their flight profile --- by the way they hold their wings.



Eagles hold their wings straight out when soaring. From wingtip to wingtip a bald eagle's wingspan can measure up to 7 feet!

Use the rope to compare your outstretched arms to the wingspan of a bald eagle and turkey vulture.

Keep your arms stretched out straight to be an eagle or hold your arms up in a V-shape to be a vulture. Now fly to the next sign!




Turkey vultures hold their wings up in a "V" shape when soaring. Special tendons allow them to "lock" their joints, making it easier to outstretch their wings for longer periods of time.

**Wingspans (wingtip to wingtip): Use the tape measure or rope to compare wingspan lengths**

Turkey Vulture: 6 feet (72 inches)

Black Vulture: 4.4-5.5 feet (52-66 inches)

American Bald Eagle: 6-7.5 feet (72-90 inches)

The female bald eagle is larger in size than the male.

Female: 35-37 inch body length (head to tail), 79-90 inch wingspan (wingtip to wingtip)

Male: 30-34 inch body length (head to tail), 72-85 inch wingspan (wingtip to wingtip)



On cool mornings butterflies warm up by shivering or basking in the sun. Some butterflies pump their wings when warming up.



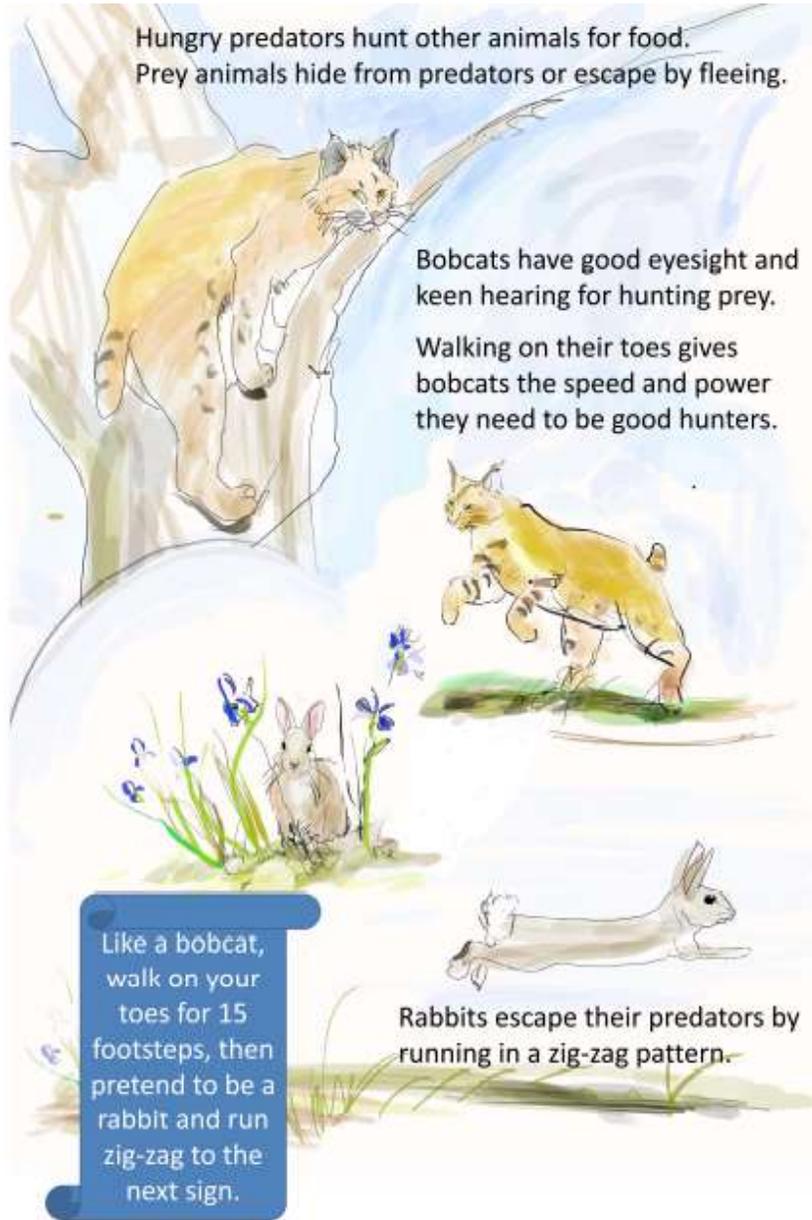
Fold your arms like a monarch and pump up your wings 15 times.

A grasshopper can jump 20 times the length of its own body. If you could do that, you would be able to jump almost 120 feet.

Take a long jump, and another jump and see how far you can go.



Hungry predators hunt other animals for food.  
Prey animals hide from predators or escape by fleeing.



Bobcats have good eyesight and keen hearing for hunting prey.

Walking on their toes gives bobcats the speed and power they need to be good hunters.

Like a bobcat, walk on your toes for 15 footsteps, then pretend to be a rabbit and run zig-zag to the next sign.

Rabbits escape their predators by running in a zig-zag pattern.



Ducks, herons and other birds stand on one leg (called unipedal resting) to help regulate and maintain body temperature.

A bird on ice, snow or in cold water reduces the amount of unfeathered surface area exposed to the elements by standing on one leg.

Stand on one leg and count to 50.

Can you name an iconic, pink bird that is well-known for standing on one leg?



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Rose Metallano, refuge volunteer, created the graphic illustrations for the Wildlife Challenge Trail signs.

# Congratulations!

## You finished the Wildlife Challenge Trail!

Now head back to the Visitor Center and parking lot.

You have two options to return:

1. You can turn around and retrace your foot steps back to where you started the Red Trail. Then walk the gravel road back to the levee. Turn left on the levee (heading east) and walk back to the parking lot and visitor center.
2. Hike out and walk up the levee slope. Then walk the levee all the way back (heading east) to the visitor center and parking lot.