



## 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 with your group of students – everyone will enjoy themselves more if you're involved, and you can lead by example!

*"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





# Habitat – Who Needs It?

## Group Leader Guidelines

In each habitat, have students look for different components of an animal's habitat (food, water, shelter, and space).

*Questions to ask as you visit each habitat:*

- What animals (or signs of animals) can you find?
- What kinds of plants can you find?
- What kinds of foods might animals find here?
- Where could animals find water?
- Where can animals find shelter?

Here are some examples to get you started, but please help your students to come up with their OWN answers!

### Forest

Food - Acorns from oak trees, insects, small rodents, leaves and buds, seeds, berries.

Water - Moisture trapped in leaves on the forest floor, rainwater in small hollows, puddles on the ground.

Shelter - Holes in trees, fallen logs, nests in trees, burrows/dens underground or in hollow trees.

### Prairie

Food - Seeds from grasses and wildflowers, nectar from flowers, insects and rodents.

Water - Collects on the fine hairs of plants in morning dew or within the plants' leaves and stems.

Shelter - Underground tunnels, burrows and dens, nests made of grasses.

### Wetland

Food - Aquatic insects and other invertebrates, seeds from aquatic plants, small fish and frogs.

Water - In the wetland itself; collects on wetland plants.

Shelter - Aquatic plants, rocks, nests built in plants, logs, beaver lodges, muskrat huts.

***Have fun and enjoy being outside and making discoveries with your students!***