



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



Migration Matters



Group Leader Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to be a group leader today! Here are some quick tips to help facilitate your group. Have fun and enjoy your time at the refuge!

Outdoors: While hiking through each habitat, have students look for birds or signs of birds (nests, tracks, food, etc.)

Questions you may ask as you hike:

- **What birds do you see/hear?**

Knowing the name of every bird you see is not necessary. Describing what the bird looks like is fine!

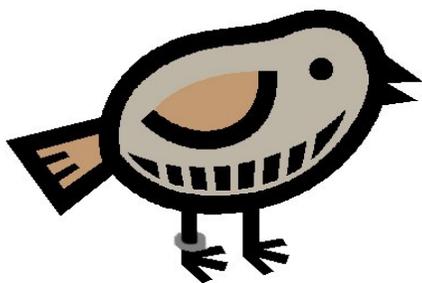
- **What are the birds doing?**

Here are some examples to get started, but allow students to come up with their own interpretation of behaviors: feeding, calling, flying, preening, bathing, soaring, perching.



Indoors: While going through the learning stations, have students take turns and help each other use the equipment.

Station 1: Songbird Capture - Students should gently toss birds into the net. Remind them to *gently* untangle the birds from the net. Real songbirds can be easily hurt. This not a race to see who removes the birds the quickest!



Station 2: Songbird Data Collection - To calculate the weight of the bird, students will need to weigh the filled bag first. Next, weigh the empty bag. Subtract the weight of the empty bag from the weight of the filled bag. Students

now have the actual weight of the bird. (*Bags are filled with sand to represent the actual weight of the birds*).

Station 3: Duck Banding - Use the bird field guides to help students identify the species of the laminated birds. Once they figure out the species, the band size reference booklets should be used to find the correct band size.

Station 4: A Bird's Solution - Students can work alone or together to solve the problems on the sheets.