



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





Prairie Insect Survey

Group Leader Guidelines

Thanks for agreeing to be a group leader today! Here are some quick tips to get the students started on capturing insects and transferring them from net to jar.

- Find a section of the prairie where other students are not collecting.
- Have each student take a turn using the net.
- After each round of sweeping, have students empty the net into the insect jar.
- Students without a net or jar should still be looking for insects. Encourage students to look on the ground for ants and beetles. Look closely at each plant. On cold days, insects are not active and may be hard to see. They may be keeping warm hiding inside a seed pod or on the underside of a leaf.

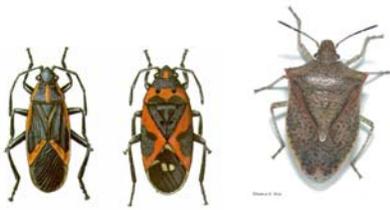
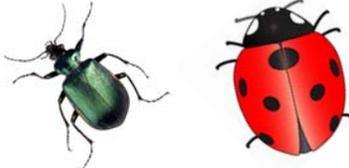
Yikes! Bees and Wasps



DO NOT collect bees and wasps. Instead, observe and tally the ones you see. If a student accidentally gets one in their net, DON'T PANIC. Simply instruct them to hold the net handle so the net is open and as far away from them as possible. The insect will simply fly away.

Common Characteristics of 6 Insect Orders

Use the chart below to remind students of the insect characteristics they learned about in class.

<p>True Bugs Wings fold to make an X. Flattened body.</p> 	<p>Flies Only 2 transparent wings. Mostly black.</p> 	<p>Beetles Many colors. Wings form a hard outer "shell," folding in straight line down the back.</p> 
<p>Bees, Ants, & Wasps Black & yellow warning pattern on body. Usually has a "waist."</p> 	<p>Dragonflies / Damselflies Double wings are elongated & transparent. Long, thin bodies.</p> 	<p>Grasshopper Large hind legs. Green, brown, or gray coloring.</p> 