

# Warren County Conservation Naturalist Program Ideas

**Have a program topic not on our list? Please let us know and the naturalists will tailor an educational program to fit your needs.**

## Pre-K-Kindergarten

### Chickens Aren't the only ones

Listen to *Guess What is Growing Inside This Egg* and discover birds aren't the only animals that lay eggs. Students will have a chance to examine bird replica eggs, discuss the life cycle of a bird, and possibly see live chicks.

### Birds

Read the story *Bird Calls*, hear different bird sounds, examine bird mounts, and make a bird craft.

### The Mitten

Students will hear the story *The Mitten* by Jan Brett with the use of a giant mitten. They will learn about some of the animals in the story and make a mitten craft.

### Fishing Fun

Listen to the story *Catfish, Cod, Salmon, and Scrod*, learn about IA fish, cast a line for magnetic fish, and sing a fish song.

### Bear Snores On

Bear might spend most of his winter asleep but find out what other animals do during the winter months. Listen to the story *Bear Snores On* and look at animal furs & skulls from the story.

### Earth Day & Recycle

Students will learn about reducing, reusing and recycling. They will listen to the story *Earth Day*, find out ways they can help the environment, and make a recycled craft.

### Insect Basics

So what makes an insect an insect? Learn about an insect's life cycle, body parts, and unique features. There may be a visit from the hissing cockroaches.

### Let it Snow

In Iowa we are almost always guaranteed snow during the winter months, but what exactly do you know about the white stuff, besides school gets cancelled when it falls? In this program we will learn about the basic shapes of snowflakes, how snowflakes are created, study fallen snow, and why in your lifetime you will never see two snowflakes that are identical.

### Furry Animals

Students will learn about furry animals found in Iowa and touch different animal furs. They will also play a fun animal tail game.

### **Wild Turkeys**

This hands on activity will teach students about habitat, predators, diet, and special characteristics of the wild turkey. They will also hear a fun hide and seek story, play a game, listen to a turkey call, touch feathers, and see a replica egg.

### **Busy Beavers**

Learn all about a beavers special adaptations. Students will have a chance to climb in a human sized beaver lodge, feel a fur, and examine a skull.

## **First & Second Grade**

### **Wiggly Wonderful Worms**

Listen to the story *Diary of A Worm*, identify body parts of the worm, and explore how they move, and their importance to the soil environment. There will be live earthworm visitors to wiggle around.

### **Seeds, Seeds, Seeds**

Student will listen to the *Tiny Seed*, learn about the parts of seed, experiment with a bean seed, learn how seeds travel, and look at different seed types. Mushrooms are different than seeds, but find out more about fantastic fungi.

### **Fabulous Flower**

Students will learn about the life cycle of a plant, parts of flower, and animal usage of flowers. They will demonstrate their knowledge by building a flower with veggies.

### **Bat Loves the Night**

Learn about bats through the story *Bat Loves the Night*. Using a puppet and pictures, we will discuss what makes bats so neat and show why they are not so scary. Several real, but not alive, bats will be shown to students.

### **Lessons from the Lorax**

This program uses Dr. Suess' book *The Lorax* to help students better understand the idea of wise use of our natural resources. Throughout the story we will discuss the decisions that were made and what could have been done differently. Children will make their own truffula tree.

### **Munching Mouths**

Learn about how insects have special adaptations for eating various foods. Students will move around the room trying out various insect mouthparts to see which mouth munches which food. There may be a visit from the hissing cockroaches.

### **Salamander Room**

We will read *The Salamander Room*. Students will learn why salamanders are amphibians, know their life cycle, and play a salamander game. A real, live salamander will come visit as well.

### **Honeybees**

Listen to the story *Honeybees* by Eric Carle, learn about the importance of honeybees, their life cycle, and products from the hive. There might be a surprise peek at live bees inside our portable beehive. (Portable beehive April-May only)

### **Habitats**

Students will examine natural objects to try and determine which habitat is being represented. They will learn what a habitat is and how each is different from one another and how important even backyard habitats are for plants and wildlife.

## **Third and Fourth Grade**

### **Water Cycle**

Water is continually in motion and ever changing. Students will learn about how water cycles through the environment and changes forms. They will become a water droplet and travel from station to station to make a water cycle bracelet.

### **Creatures of the Night**

From bats to owls, meet the creatures that wake up once the sun has set. Find out about adaptations these creatures have for nocturnal living. This program works well as a night hike too. The screech owl may come to visit.

### **Phases of the Moon**

Have you every wondered why the moon changes, or what it would be like to live on the moon? Learn all about what its like on the moon and the moon phases. Students will listen to *Phases of the Moon* and participate in a yummy Oreo activity to visually show each moon phase.

### **Prairie Pioneers**

Meet a 1860s pioneer woman. Follow her on her move west by visiting the general store, packing up the wagon and making important decisions on her family's way to life on the Iowa prairie. Optional make your own butter and cracker snack.

### **Animal Classification**

Learn the differences between a mammal, fish, bird, reptile, and amphibian. Special features of each group will be discussed. Students will demonstrate their understanding of each animal group through an animal vertebrate grab game.

### **Native American Games**

This active lesson will allow students to play games from different Native American tribes. They will learn about each game and how games helped perfect a skill necessary for survival.

### **Beaks and Feet**

Learn about what make a bird different from other vertebrates. Students will become birds and travel from station to station to see what type of beak works best for each food. They will look at pictures of various beaks and feet.

### **Owl & Pellets**

Learn about the owls of Iowa, find out about the special adaptations of owls, and dissect an owl pellet. There may be a surprise visit from our screech owl.

### **Migration Madness**

Students will learn about the wide variety of animals that migrate and why they do. They will participate in an activity to discover the challenges animals can face during migration.

### **Tree Factory**

Students will learn the parts of a tree from inside to outside. They will become a tree to better understand how a tree functions. They will observe a tree ring and determine the tree's age.

## **Fifth & Sixth Grade**

### **Trees**

Students will learn tree identification, parts of tree, and the benefits of trees to the environment.

### **Geology Rocks**

This program focuses on Iowa geology. Students will learn the three main types of rocks. They will enjoy making a cookie that features rocks of Iowa "fruit" and learn about how these rocks are used. (This program takes an hour, please advise WCCB of any food allergies prior to scheduling)

### **Who Dung it?**

Although it may be difficult to see some of Iowa's animals, they do leave many clues behind. The challenge is to figure out who left those clues. Students will become detectives to help solve the mystery of just who "dung it" in Iowa. Students will identify and learn about various species through hands-on discoveries.

### **Skullduggery**

Students learn how to tell an omnivore, carnivore and herbivore apart by looking at their teeth. They also use a simple key to discover which species skulls belong to.

### **Wetland Wonders**

Students will learn the importance of wetlands to humans and wildlife. They will become part of a wetland to demonstrate how wetlands serve as filters and provide other benefits to the environment.

### **In Danger**

Students will participate in a hands-on game to learn how animal populations can decline. We will explore what this leads to, what it means for a species to be endangered or threatened and learn about at-risk species in Iowa.

### **Dream Catchers**

The children will discover the history behind the dream catcher and make one of their own. This crafty lesson fits in nicely with any Native American lesson.

### **Leave No Trace**

Participants will be introduced to the Leave No Trace Principles and explore their own outdoor ethic through activities and games.

### **Winter Survival**

After your student's finish reading *Hatchet* or another wilderness survival based book, bring them to the Annett Nature Center to experience survival shelter and fire building.

### **Archery**

This program promotes student education and participation in the life long sport of archery. The program's focus is to provide International style target archery training in physical education classes. All archery equipment will be provided and can be presented inside most gyms or outdoor areas.

## **Middle School and High School**

### **Archery**

This program promotes student education and participation in the life long sport of archery. The program's focus is to provide International style target archery training in physical education classes. All archery equipment will be provided and can be presented inside most gyms or outdoor areas.

### **GPS**

Using handheld GPS units, students learn about how satellites and modern technology help us find our way. Map reading and orienteering may be combined with GPS. This activity can be done in the classroom with an outside component.

### **Osprey**

This PowerPoint presentation will introduce students to osprey, their life cycle, and migration route. They will see an osprey mount, wings, replica egg, and learn about the reintroduction of osprey in IA and hacking project that was completed at Annett Nature Center.

## **Programs for All Ages**

### **Live Animal Programs**

Enjoy a classroom visit from the screech owl, hissing cockroaches, turtles, snakes, or salamander. Each program will feature the characteristics of the animal and possibly a craft or game that is age appropriate.

### **Star Lab**

This portable and inflatable planetarium provides a unique way for students to learn about earth science and astronomy without leaving the school building! Star Lab programs that are available include: Greek Constellations, Native America Constellations, Plate Tectonics, The Solar System and Milky Way Galaxy, and The Navigation Stars of Lewis and Clark (requires the "Navigation Stars of Lewis and Clark" classroom program).

### **Snowshoeing**

Don't spend all winter inside watching it snow, join us to get out and explore the park on snowshoes. Snowshoeing is easy and a great way to experience park. This activity can be tied into surface area and PSI experiments.

### **Monarch Migration**

Students will learn about the life cycle of a monarch butterfly, host plants, monarch migration, and how to tag monarch for research. During late summer-early fall a live monarch may be brought to the classroom to tag for research.

### **Tracks**

Have you ever seen an animal track in the mud or snow and wondered who made it? During this program students will become animal detectives and learn how to identify common Iowa mammal tracks and read the story they have left behind.

### **Shocking Developments**

Students will learn about different type of electricity, where it is found, and how it is used.

### **FOSS Kit Complementary Programs**

Let the naturalists create a fun and interactive program to complement your FOSS Kit.

## **Field Trip Ideas**

WCC can help you make your next field trip educational and fun! Each field trip is custom made and can take place at the Annett Nature Center or at any of our other county parks.

Half or full day experiences may be planned. The typical day will include several rotations (number dependent on group size). Naturalists will lead one rotation and the others can be lead by teachers or parents. Program outlines and materials will be provided. The following are some possible activities.

**Archery** ~ upper elementary & above

**Birding** ~ all ages

**Canoe** ~ Upper elementary & above

**Paddleboarding** ~ upper elementary and above

**Fishing** ~ upper elementary and above

**GPS** ~ upper elementary and above

**Hiking** ~ all ages

**Insects** ~ all ages

**IA Animals** ~ all ages

**Monarch Tagging** ~ all ages

**Nature Center Tour** ~ all ages

**Nose Knows** ~ upper elementary and above

**Orienteering** ~ upper elementary and above

**Painting with Plants** ~ all ages

**Park Packs** ~ all ages

**Pond Study** ~ all ages

**Snow Shoeing** ~ upper elementary and above

**Tipi Building** ~ upper elementary and above

**Unnature Trail** ~ lower elementary

**Wildflowers & Prairies** ~ upper elementary and above

**Winter Survival** ~ upper elementary and above

**Scavenger Hunts** ~ all ages

**Story Walk** ~ lower elementary

**Wildlife Games** ~ works great for an opening activity choose from a variety of games

**Do you have a specific nature or wildlife topic in mind that you would like us to cover?  
Let the naturalists know and we can tailor a program to fit your needs.**