

Program Ideas

In school programs are offered October 31- April 14.

Field trips are offered September 1- October 31 and April 15- May 31 to accommodate as many groups possible during the warmer months. Have a program topic not on our list, please let us know and the naturalists will tailor an educational program to fit your needs.

PreK-Kindergarten

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothes

Students will listen to the story “Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothes.” They will learn about how animals are adapted for survival in their environment. Students will try on different clothes and compare how an animal’s fur, skin, scales, or feathers provide the same warmth, waterproofing, etc. that different clothes provide.

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, make a fish print, and sing a fish song. They will also observe minnows swimming and touch a live fish.

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.

Animal Homes

Students will learn about different types of animal homes through a story. We will talk about why certain animals live in specific habitats based on the needs of each animal. Students will work in groups to build mini homes for animals in specific habitat.

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 or butterflies.

Furry Animals

Students will learn about furry animals found in Iowa, where each animal lives, and what an animal needs to survive. They will have a chance to feel different animal furs, play a fun animal tail matching game, or try on costume animal tails.

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 beaver's special adaptations. Students will have a chance to climb in a human sized beaver lodge, feel a fur, and examine a skull.

Spring is Here

Students will listen to a story about spring, learn about animals from the story, play spring bingo and sing a spring song. They will have a chance to see animal mounts and furs from the story.

Squirrels

Students will learn about Iowa species of squirrels and their adaptations. They will listen to a story, touch squirrel fur, play a squirrel nut game, and make a craft.

First & Second Grade

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.

A Log's Life

Students will listen to the story *A Log's Life*. They will learn about how water, sun, and animals assist with the decomposition of a log. They will also get a chance to examine real decomposing logs using magnifying glasses to search for critters and see decomposition in progress.

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 the importance of pollination. They will dissect real flowers to examine all the parts.

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. They will also play the game bat/moth.

Lessons from *The Lorax*

This program uses Dr. Suess' book *The Lorax* to help students better understand the idea of the 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 using a pencil and replica feathers.

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 some live insects.

Salamander Room

We will read *The Salamander Room*. Students will learn why salamanders are amphibians, know their life cycle, and make a salamander craft. Younger students will play a salamander matching game. A real, live salamander will come visit your classroom.

Honeybees

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

Landforms

Students will learn what a landform is and different types of landforms found around the world. They will divide into groups and describe a landform. Then each group will create their own landforms with clay, sticks, and other materials to share with the class.

5 Senses

Students will visit stations using their five senses to explore animal and nature items. They examine logs & plants with magnifying glasses, touch furs & feathers, smell different scents from plants, sample honey, berries and nuts. There will also be a brief discussion on how some animals use their 5 senses in everyday life. (Please advise WCCB of any food allergies prior to scheduling)

Third and Fourth Grade

Bison

Students will learn basic bison biology. They will work in groups to discover the names, height, weight, and specific information about bison. They will look at a fur, skull, and other bison parts.

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.

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. We will read a story, bring furs, and possibly a live owl.

Phases of the Moon

Have you ever 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. This activity involves groups working together to make decisions as pioneers. 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.

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. Students will see a variety of taxidermy owls. There is also a chance for a live screech owl to visit your classroom.

Migration Headache

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 water birds face during migration, the effects of habitat loss and limiting factors. This activity requires a large open classroom or outdoor area.

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 trees age.

Soil Exploration

Students will learn about what makes up soil, different types of soil, and how soil is important for plants and animals. Students will use clay, sand, and plants for a hands-on experience in determining the difference in soils.

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. Geared towards 4th-5th grade)

Fall Colors (different age group??)

Learn about the science of why the leafs change color and what the trees do in the winter. Students will look at real leafs and make a leaf craft.

Terrariums

Students will learn the basic needs of a plant. They will construct their own terrarium to take home. WCCB will provide instructions, plants, and soil. The classroom will need to provide suggested glass containers or glass jars, one per student.

Fifth & Sixth Grade

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.

Trees

Students will learn tree identification, parts of tree, and the benefits of trees to the environment. We can take a hike to identify trees at your school or on a field trip.

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 simply 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.

Endanger

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. This lesson takes about an hour.

Bison Box

Students will learn how important bison were in the Native American culture. They will examine various bison parts and learn about their usage. They will see a bison fur and skull. If time allows they will play a buffalo hoops and learn about the history of the bison population in Iowa.

Winter Survival

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

Tomahawk Throwing

Students will learn a brief history of how pioneers and Native Americans used the tomahawk. They will then try their tossing skills with tomahawks. This lesson must be done outside.

Atlatl

Atlatls are ancient tools used to hunt mega fauna. The atlatl was a result of early humans realizing that throwing a spear by hand was not effective, so they designed a tool. This program is designed for outside only and could easily be a field trip activity. Test your skills at spear throwing.

Geocaching

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

Explore Bowhunting

Explore Bowhunting encompasses outdoor skills used not only to bowhunt, but for anyone seeking a better understanding of the natural world. Explore Bowhunting is a curriculum that teaches students about hunting within a classroom type setting. Lesson topics vary from getting closer to wildlife, calls, a few shooting activities to making a box deer and learning how to field dress.

Programs for All Ages

Live Animal Programs

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

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 monarchs for research. During late summer-early fall a live monarch may be brought to the classroom to tag and release.

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.

Holiday Nature Crafts

Students will make a holiday themed craft using nature items. WCCB will provide all materials and crafts may vary from year to year.

Shocking Developments

Students will learn about the basics of electricity. The different types, where it is found, and different ways it is used. They will learn about the history of how it was discovered and exploited. Students will conduct experiments to learn more about how it interacts with the environment and where/how it can be created.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Students learn the importance of Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling. Through hands-on activities students will learn about our natural resources, what products are made of, and the proper ways to recycle.

Everything Comes from Something

This lesson will discuss natural resources and where we get certain products we use in everyday life. Students will match raw materials with finished products. We will touch on the importance of wise usage of our natural resources both renewable and nonrenewable.

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. Field trips are offered September 1- October 31 and April 15- May 31. We can also accommodate outdoor winter exploration.

Half or full day experiences may be planned. The typical day will include an opening large group activity followed by several rotations. Three-four rotations are recommended depending 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.

Group Opening Activities

Quick Frozen Critters

Kin- First Grade

This animal based quick freeze tag game will teach the students the relationship between predator and prey. They will understand the basic requirements animals need to survive.

Frog Chorus

2nd grade-3rd Grade

Students will learn about Iowa frog species, how they communicate, and special adaptations that help them to survive. Students will take turns making frog calls and attempt to find their matching frog relying on their hearing.

Oh Deer

3rd-4th grade

Students will learn about the basic requirements animals need in their habitat in order to survive. In this active game students will be habitat or deer and learn about how the deer population changes based on the quality of habitat available. They will record deer populations throughout the activity and discuss the affects on wildlife.

How Many Coyotes

4th Grade

Students will define a limiting factor and describe how the limiting factors affect animal populations. Students will be different types of coyotes and collect food & water pieces. They will use their math skills to determine if they survive or not. This activity will demonstrate that sometimes it's not always the young coyotes that survive but those that have a quality habitat.

Turtle Hurdles

4th-5th grade

Students will learn about the life cycle of turtles and Iowa turtle species. They will discuss limiting factors on turtle populations. This active game will have turtles attempting to make it to their nest site while trying to avoid predators.

Team Building 4th-6th grade

Large and smaller groups will work together as a team to complete various tasks. Activities might include: path of life game, balancing activities relying on others, tug of war, and marble/ball challenges.

Group Rotations for Field Trips

Choose from any topic on our indoor program list, any of those listed below, or request a specific topic to meet your curriculum.

Nature Center Tour & Butterfly Garden ~ Groups can take a self-guided tour of the Annett Nature Center educational exhibits. The nature center exhibits feature: animal mounts, furs, Native American artifacts, butterflies, honeybees, and a variety of live animals. The butterfly garden includes a water feature, native plants, and metal artwork.

Hikes~

Choose from various types of hikes: scavenger hunt, signs of the seasons, plants, animals, insect, habitats, or unnature hike. Each hike is geared towards smaller groups and can be tailored to a variety of age groups. Scavenger hunt hikes can easily be lead by a parent or volunteer. Materials and area maps will be provided.

Ashes to Art using charcoal pieces to create artwork ~ 2nd and above

Birding ~ all ages

Monarch Tagging ~ 3rd and above

Archery ~ 5th & above

Atlatl ~ 5th & above

Orienteering ~ 4th and above

GPS ~ 4th and above

Painting with Plants ~ all ages

Pond Study ~ all ages

Tomahawk Throwing ~ 5th and above

Canoe ~ Upper elementary & above

Paddleboarding ~ 4th and above (limited to 11 students per group)

Fishing ~ 3rd and above

Snow Shoeing ~ 4th and above

Enviroscape ~ 3rd and above

Using the “Enviroscape” model, students learn about watersheds, surface pollution, soil erosion and solutions

Tipi Building ~ 5th and above

Dependent on wind conditions and must be done at the Annett Nature Center

Wildflowers & Prairies ~ all ages (can include a take home prairie seed planter)

Woodlands & Woodland Animals ~ all ages

Winter Survival ~ 4th and above