

Marion County Conservation Department

School Programs

MCCD will be offering school programs throughout the year. Most programs are thirty minutes to an hour and are listed by suggested grade level.

Have a program topic not on the list? Let us know and the naturalist can design an educational program that fits your needs. We may refer you to an organization that is a better fit for your program. Some lessons may be modified for a different grade. To schedule email kjohlaszalkowski@marioncountyiowa.gov

Marion County Conservation Department

Preschool Programs

Furry Friends

Students will listen to a story about how animals use their tails differently, play an animal/tail matching game, and observe & touch real animal furs.

Fish

Listen to a fish story and 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.

Insects

Explore the world of insects through a story and use plastic insects to learn about their biology. We will learn about insect life cycles and dress a student as a butterfly. There may be a visit from live insects depending on the season.

Birds

Students will learn the basics of birds, listen to bird calls, identify replica eggs, and explore feathers. We will learn to identify common birds as we read *Bird Calls* by Frank Gallo and make a bird craft.

Spring is Here

Let's learn about spring and the changes of the season. We will learn through a story, song, and spring bingo. Students will touch furs and learn about different Iowa animals & plants.

Animal Habitats

Students will learn about different types of animal habitats through a story. We will talk about what animals need for survival and why they need a specific habitat. They will have the opportunity to touch furs, feathers, and skulls. Students will work in groups to build mini homes for animals in a specific habitat.

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Kindergarten Programs

Talking Turkey

Students will learn about the wild Turkey by listening to a story. They will participate in a hands-on activity to learn about turkey biology, their nest and eggs, how to identify a turkey, touch feathers, and listen to turkey sounds. They will also play a hide and seek turkey game.

Bear Snores On

We will read *Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson. After the story we will discuss how animals survive in the winter. They will learn the terms hibernate, active, migration, dormant or inactive. They will have an opportunity to touch furs and skulls.

Feathers for Lunch

Students will listen to the story *Feathers for Lunch*, by Lois Ehlert. They will learn more about birds through bird calls and get a close-up view of bird wings and feet.

The Mitten

Students will listen to *The Mitten* by Jan Brett and become "animals" that find the mitten. They will learn about animals from the story by examining furs, skulls, tracks, and making a mitten craft.

Wacky Weather

Students will learn basic weather terminology and find out how scientists measure and record the weather. Participants will have a chance to be a meteorologist and try out their weather reporting skills.

Everybody Needs a Rock

In this basic introduction to geology children will hear a story about the 10 rules for choosing a rock. After selecting a rock of their own, students will investigate the basic properties of rocks through experimentation.

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First Grade Programs

Squirrels and Acorns

Students will learn about Iowa squirrel species, listen to a squirrel story, feel furs, and play a game involving squirrels and how they prepare for winter.

Animal Olympics

How do you match up the jumping abilities of a frog or the wing flapping capabilities of a hummingbird? Students will experiment with their own human abilities and learn how and why animals are well adapted to survive in their environments.

Honeybees

Listen to the story about honeybees, learn about their importance, life cycle, and products from the hive. Students will play a honeybee pollination game.

Turtles of Iowa

Students will learn about Iowa's turtle species, their biology & habitat, touch turtle shells and eggshell pieces. They will listen to a story and observe a live box turtle.

Bats

Students will learn about Iowa bats and their importance in the ecosystem. They will learn how bats hunt for their food by playing the Bat & Moth Game.

Use Your Senses

Students will visit stations using their five senses to explore animal and nature items. They will examine logs & plants with magnifying glasses, touch furs & feathers, smell different scents from plants, sample honey, berries, and nuts. We will discuss how animals use their senses in everyday life. Please advise MCCD of any food allergies prior to scheduling.

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Second Grade Programs

Decomposing Log

Students will learn about the process of decomposition through the book *A Log's Life* by Wendy Pfeffer. They will get hands on examining decomposing logs using magnifying glasses to search for critters and see different stages of decomposition.

Flower Exploration

Students will learn about the life cycle of a plant, parts of a flower, and the importance of pollination. Working in small groups they will dissect a flower. (Available in the spring-summer)

Seeds on the move

Students will try to figure out how the structure of seeds help them to disperse and how their environment affects their survival. We will take a close look at various seeds and play a game.

Landforms

Students will learn about landforms found around the world. They will divide into groups to describe a landform. Groups will create their own landforms with clay, sticks, and other materials to share with the class.

Wiggly Wonderful Worms

Listen to *Diary of A Worm* by Doreen Cronin, identify body parts of the worm, explore how they move, and their importance to the soil environment. We will practice measuring with a gummy worm and there will be live earthworm visitors.

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. They will be able to identify renewable and nonrenewable resources. Students will make their own Truffula tree using a pencil and replica feathers.

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3rd Grade Programs

Vertebrate Grab Game

Students will learn basic animal classification. We will determine the differences between a mammal, fish, bird, reptile, and amphibian. We will examine various furs, skulls, shells, tracks, etc. to highlight each group. Students will show their understanding by playing an animal vertebrate game.

Manching Mouths

Students will learn the basics about insects and their adaptations. They will move through stations trying out different insect mouth features to determine what type of prey they would feast on.

Fall Colors

Students will learn how to identify common trees, the science behind why leaves change color, and make a fall leaf craft.

Phases of the Moon 3

Have you ever wondered why the moon changes, or what it would be like to live on the moon? Learn about what it's like on the moon and the moon phases. Students will listen to a book about moon phases and participate in an Oreo activity to visually show each moon phase.

Monarch Migration

Students will learn about the magnificent monarch butterfly through hands on bio artifacts, interactive game and activities. Topics include their biology, migration, and lifecycle. If this program is held during fall, students may also get to see and tag live caterpillars and butterflies.

Feather and Sketching

Discover the world of birds and their unique feathers. We will cover different types of feathers and how birds use them. Using magnifying glasses, we will take a closer look and then sketch feathers.

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Fourth Grade Programs

Amazing Animals

Students will put on their detective hats, using clues to figure out some mystery animals and the adaptations that make them unique.

Water Cycle

Water is continually in motion and ever changing. Students will discuss where water is found and how it moves through the environment. They will become a water droplet and travel from station to station to make a water cycle bracelet.

Wetland Metaphors

Students will describe characteristics of a wetland. Each group will have a selection of items to investigate as metaphors for the natural functions of wetlands.

Animal Signs and Plaster Tracks

Animals leave behind signs or clues that can help us identify who was there. Students will learn various signs, identify tracks, and examine natural objects. They will make a plaster track replica. Please note this program will take at least hour depending on the class size.

Owl & Pellets

Students will discover the owls of Iowa. This lesson will discuss owl adaptations through the exploration of wings, feathers, talons, and replica eggs. Small groups will then dissect an owl pellet to discover what the owl was eating. This lesson can be divided into two classroom visits to allow more time for the pellet dissection.

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5th - High School Programs

Geology Rocks 5th-6th

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 MCCD of any food allergies prior to scheduling.)

Animal skull identification 5th-6th

Students will use a simple key to identify an animal by their skull. We will discuss the differences of an omnivore, carnivore, and herbivores.

Archery 5th-HS

This program promotes student education and participation in the lifelong sport of archery. The focus is to provide international style target archery training in physical education classes. All equipment will be provided and can be presented inside most gyms or outdoor areas. This program can vary from one day to a week.

Tomahawk Throwing 5th-HS

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 is an outdoor program that can be done at a county park or at a school site. Any school site will be approved by a MCCD prior to being scheduled.

Atlatl 5th-HS

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

Geocaching 5th-HS

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.

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Field Trip Ideas

MCCD can help you make your next field trip educational and fun! Each field trip is tailored for your class and can take place at Cordova Park or another park based on activities.

Half or full day experiences may be scheduled. A typical day will include an opening large group activity followed by several small group rotations. The naturalist will lead the opening and a small group session. Additional sessions will be led by a teacher or other school staff.

Program outlines and materials will be provided for sessions. Teachers are welcome to prepare their own small group session.

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

MCCD has provided a list of ideas for field trips based on grade level. You may also choose from the school program list. Have a program topic not on the list? Let us know and the naturalist can design an educational program that fits your needs. To schedule email kjohlasszalkowski@marioncountyiowa.gov

Field Trip Opening Programs

Quick Frozen Critters K-1

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

Use your Senses K-1

Students will be 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 animals use their 5 senses in everyday life. (Please advise MCCD of any food allergies prior to scheduling)

Frog Chorus 2nd-3rd

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.

Fall Colors Hike & Craft 2nd-4rd

Students will learn the difference between deciduous and coniferous trees, how to identify common Iowa trees, and make a craft.

Oh Deer 3rd-4th

Students will learn about the basic requirements animals need in their habitat 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 effects on wildlife.

How Many Coyotes 4th

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 quality habitat.

Turtle Hurdles 4th-5th

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.

Monarch Tagging 3rd-6th (Late August-early October)

Students will learn to identify a monarch, their life cycle and migration route. We will learn about why and how to tag a monarch. This activity will involve small groups using insect nets to try and capture a monarch. Additional adults may be requested based on class size.

Field Trip Group Rotations

Hikes K-6th

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.

Forest Hike & Build a Stick Person Kin-3rd

Birding K-6th

Painting with Plants K-6th

Pond Study K-6th

Fishing 3rd-6th

Canoe 5th-6th

Wildflowers & Prairies K-6th

Woodland Animals K-6th

Tree Identification and hike 2nd-6th

Explore Iowa Habitats K-6th

Atlatl (spear throwing) 4th-High School

Archery 5th-High School

GPS and geocaching 4th-High School

Tomahawk Throwing 5th- High School

Winter Survival 4th- High School

Prairie Seed Collection 4th-HS