

Leader's Guide
4-H Wildlife Conservation Program, Unit 1



Wildlife Is All Around Us

BOOKS 1-5

PENNSSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences
Cooperative Extension

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Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research, extension, and resident education programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of Congress May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Legislature. T. R. Alter, Interim Director of Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University.

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Information for Leaders

Wildlife Is All Around Us is Unit 1 of the Pennsylvania 4-H Wildlife Conservation Program for beginning 4-H members (ages 9–12). No prior experience is necessary for children entering this program.

In Unit 1, we introduce members to the major groups of wildlife, their basic requirements, and where they can be found. By working through the projects presented in this unit, members will increase their awareness of the animals around them and the signs and clues they leave behind.

As a supplement to the member's guide, a field guide is suggested for many of the projects. Peterson's Field Guides and the Golden Guide series can be found at most public and school libraries.

In addition, all leaders should obtain a copy of the *Pennsylvania 4-H Natural Resources (Wildlife, Forestry, Water) Leader's Guide* by Earle D. Robbins, Jerry H. Reyburn, and Sanford S. Smith, available through your county extension office. The guide provides detailed information on organizing a wildlife club. It also lists resource materials, including wildlife movies and slide sets; names of resource people; and suggested field trips.

The Unit 1 member's guide is divided into five books: *The Wildlife Detective*, an introductory book on habitat and wildlife groups, and a more detailed book on each of the four seasons. All members should complete *The Wildlife Detective* before moving on to the seasons.

As leader, you should plan with club members what season(s) or months your club will be active. We suggest that at least two seasons be covered while your club is organized. Some leaders may want to cover three seasons, then permit members to complete the fourth season on their own.

For each season there is a "workbook" section with a set of questions and three projects. Have members complete the questions and at least two of the three projects. You may want to discuss the questions as a group. Members may substitute projects they design themselves as long as they have your approval. This will allow members greater flexibility to choose projects according to their place of residence.

Most of the projects are designed to be completed on an individual basis, but they can also be conducted as a group. Below are suggested guidelines for modifying each project so that it can be conducted as a group. After members have completed the projects in one of the books, have them give a presentation on their completed projects to the club.

SPRING

Project 1. Amphibians in the Night

Project 1 can be conducted in the same manner by either an individual or a group. For safety reasons, however, we suggest that this project always be conducted as a group or with adult supervision. If completed as a group, discuss what each member saw and heard upon his or her return. Discuss key identifying characteristics of the species found.

Project 2. Building Your Own Birdhouse

As leader, you may want to provide wire to strap the houses onto trees, a ruler, pencil, scissors, and stapler. Guide members as they establish the entrance hole and fasten the overhang.

Project 3. Bird Song Field Trip

Accompany group members on a field trip to visit different types of habitats. Help members identify birds they see or hear. You may want to check out a copy of the record album *Peterson's Field Guide to Bird Songs* from a public library and play it for members before going out.

SUMMER

Project 1. Collecting Your Own Nest Materials

This project can be completed by a group in much the same way as by an individual. You may want to write the names of birds and their respective nesting materials on separate index cards and pass out a card to each child, rather than having children choose a bird. This will eliminate confusion over which bird to pick and may also save time. Once each child has gathered his or her materials, briefly discuss each bird and the nest it builds, the difficulty in finding materials, why the bird might use the materials it does, etc. Have children try to build their bird's nest.

Project 2. Tracking in the Summer

Conduct this project the same way for a group as for an individual. When conducting the project as a group, you may want to provide some or all of the materials. Hint: try the project on your own before demonstrating it to a group.

Project 3. Wildlife Food Quest

Provide guidance if needed. Discuss each kind of food and the animal that consumes it. This project can also be conducted as a scavenger hunt, with each child trying to find as many types of food as possible within a set time limit. You may want to assign point values to different kinds of food depending on how difficult they are to find.

FALL

Project 1. Why Migrate?

For a group project, you may want to have each child pretend to be a bird. Pass out cards labeled "I eat" Some foods are mosquitoes, worms, berries, fish in small ponds, squirrels, caterpillars, frogs, nectar, ants, fish in streams, seeds, mice, snakes, rabbits, grasshoppers, and insects under bark. Have each child tell what it eats, whether or not its food is available in the winter, and whether or not it will have to migrate. You may also want to take your club on a field trip to locate migrating birds.

Project 2. Providing Shelter for Wildlife

Take your club to a woodlot or field and make some of the suggested improvements as a group (e.g., build a brush pile, erect birdhouses, etc.). You may want to have children display the maps they have made and give a presentation to the group on the types of cover available in that area.

Project 3. Hawk and Owl Pellets

Provide guidance by taking the group to appropriate places to find pellets and helping to identify skulls, bones, fur, feathers, etc. You may want to conduct a brief discussion on the food preferences of different hawks and owls before going out into the field.

WINTER

Project 1. Animal Signs Scavenger Hunt

Have children form small groups. Give each child a card listing the items to look for. Have groups return at a specified time to compare findings.

Project 2. Tracking in the Snow

Conduct this project in the same way for a group as for individuals. Discuss findings.

Project 3. Feeding Birds in Winter

Divide members into groups and let each group make a different type of feeder. When members have completed their feeders, have them take the feeders home and hang them up. After children have had time to observe the birds visiting their feeders, meet to discuss their observations.

SUGGESTED FIELD TRIPS

1. Visit Hawk Mountain in the fall to observe migrating hawks. Hawk Mountain is located in Schuylkill County, southeastern Pennsylvania.
2. Visit a lake or wetland in spring or fall to observe migrating waterfowl. Suggested trips include Middle Creek Wildlife Refuge (Lebanon County), Presque Isle State Park (Erie), and Pymatuning Waterfowl Management Area (western Pennsylvania).

WILDLIFE IS ALL AROUND US
Program Evaluation

Thank you for organizing a wildlife club and for using the *Wildlife Is All Around Us* project books. We need feedback from you so that we can continue to update and improve the 4-H Wildlife Conservation Program. For each club you lead, please xerox this form, complete the questions below, and send to:

Margaret Brittingham
Ferguson Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

1. County _____
2. Number of club members _____ Age _____
3. What season(s) did your club complete? _____
4. How would you rate your awareness of and knowledge about wildlife before becoming a club leader?
- Poor Moderate Good Excellent

In the questions below, please rate your opinions about each book by circling the appropriate number:

5. How would you rate club members' knowledge and awareness of wildlife before participating in the club?
- Poor Moderate Good Excellent

6. THE WILDLIFE DETECTIVE

Content	Easy to understand, well organized	1	2	3	4	5	Confusing, disorganized
Club members' knowledge and awareness	Improved	1	2	3	4	5	Did not change
Stimulated club members' interest	Very much	1	2	3	4	5	Bored them

7. SPRING

Content	Easy to understand, well organized	1	2	3	4	5	Confusing, disorganized
Club members' knowledge and awareness	Improved	1	2	3	4	5	Did not change
Stimulated club members' interest	Very much	1	2	3	4	5	Bored them

8. SUMMER

Content	Easy to understand, well organized	1	2	3	4	5	Confusing, disorganized
Club members' knowledge and awareness	Improved	1	2	3	4	5	Did not change
Stimulated club members' interest	Very much	1	2	3	4	5	Bored them

9. FALL

Content	Easy to understand, well organized	1	2	3	4	5	Confusing, disorganized
Club members' knowledge and awareness	Improved	1	2	3	4	5	Did not change
Stimulated club members' interest	Very much	1	2	3	4	5	Bored them

10. WINTER

Content	Easy to understand, well organized	1	2	3	4	5	Confusing, disorganized
Club members' knowledge and awareness	Improved	1	2	3	4	5	Did not change
Stimulated club members' interest	Very much	1	2	3	4	5	Bored them

11. What is your overall evaluation of the *Wildlife Is All Around Us* project books?
Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Poor

12. How would you evaluate the 4-H Wildlife Conservation Program in terms of its ability to attract and retain 4-H club members?
Excellent 1 2 3 4 5 Poor

13. Any additional comments, suggestions for improving projects, or suggestions that might benefit other club leaders?
