



Dear Teacher:

Thank you for signing up for “Animals in Winter” at Glacial Park. While the weather can be unpredictable and oftentimes harsh, winter can also be an exciting time to witness nature’s variety and resiliency. All of our winter field trips do include an exploratory hike as an integral part of the program. However, our programs are flexible and we do have extra indoor activities planned should the weather force us to shorten or cancel the hike. In the event of inclement weather on the day of your field trip, please call us to discuss the day’s plans.

**Please make sure all teachers and chaperones attending the field trip are aware of the following information**

1. The field trip runs for 1.5 hours. **The Field Trip will begin inside the Lost Valley Visitor Center.** The group will stay all together to listen to the introduction on different local animals and their responses to winter. After a bathroom break, we will split the group into the two classes for the guided hike in Glacial Park. You may come back inside the facility after the hike for a quick bathroom break or head straight to the bus, as we will end the program with the hike.
2. Teachers, chaperones, and students should dress for the weather. Please bring layers as we will be indoors and out. They also will need to have appropriate footwear – to hike on hilly terrain, possibly through snow.
3. Background information as well as pre and post-trip activities are available for this and all McHenry County Conservation District school field trips in your choice of format. Completion of the activities ensures a more successful learning experience for your students.
  - Download information from our website at [www.mccdistrct.org](http://www.mccdistrct.org); click on the Education tab.
  - Request that information be sent to your email or school address (call Kim Compton or Brian Carroll at 815-678-4532)

Again we thank you for your interest in the McHenry County Conservation District. We are looking forward to a day of fun and learning with your class. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 815-678-4532.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Kim Compton and Brian Carroll in cursive script.

Kim Caldwell and Brian Carroll  
Lost Valley Visitor Center Education Program Staff

## Animals in Winter

### **Before You Visit:**

- ❑ Please make sure that all students are dressed for the weather.
- ❑ Read Keeping Warm by Susan Baker and/or Mousekin's Woodland Sleepers by Edna Miller.
- ❑ Have the students make their own animal track field guide by following the directions enclosed. They may then bring their guides on the field trip if you wish.
- ❑ Do the enclosed activity, "Staying Warm".

### **After You Visit:**

- ❑ Fill out the evaluation form given to you during the field trip and send it back to the address listed on the form.
- ❑ Read Stranger in the Woods by Carl R. Sam and make bird feeders by following the directions enclosed.
- ❑ Do the enclosed activity, "The Ultimate Winter Animal".
- ❑ Do the enclosed activity, "What Do the Animals Do?"
- ❑ Check mark which tracks were spotted on the field trip in your animal track field guides.



### ***Pre-visit Activity: Making an Animal Track Field Guide***

Photocopy the enclosed pages of animal tracks. Species' names are both in English and Spanish. Have the students cut them out and paste each species' track on its own half sheet piece of paper. Punch holes in the pages and tie them together with yarn. Please notice that we only included animals whose tracks you can find in the middle of winter. Discuss with the students which local animals might be missing. Why?

### ***Pre-visit Activity: Staying Warm***

Prepare liquid flavored gelatin by following the directions on the package. Fill film canisters or other similar containers mostly full of gelatin mixture. Seal them with a lid. Use different ways to insulate the containers. You may choose to wrap one in feathers to represent a bird, or wrap one in cloth or fake fur to represent a mammal. Your students may also come up with many other ideas to keep the gelatin warm. Take all the containers outside and leave them. If you have snow, definitely bury one in the snow to test its insulating properties! Perhaps you should place one in a hollow log, one in the sun, one in the shade, etc. Check them in 15-60 minutes. You may want to check them more than once, especially in extreme cold. Compare and contrast your results. Which one was the most like finished gelatin? Were any still liquid? Which one(s)? Why do you think there were differences? How do you think plants and animals protect themselves from the cold in winter?

### ***Post-visit Activity: Making A Bird Feeder***

There are many easy and creative ways to make bird feeders. One of the most popular is to cover a pine cone in peanut butter and to cover the peanut butter with bird seed. Please only use natural peanut butter for this activity. Common commercial brands of peanut butter have much too high a salt content and can be harmful to birds. Use any wild bird seed mix. Another way to make a feeder is to fill a small paper cup with natural peanut butter mixed with bird seed, poke a piece of yarn or string into the center, and place the cup in the freezer. Once frozen, peel off the paper cup and hang the feeder outside.

### ***Post-visit Activity: Creating the Ultimate Winter Animal***

Discuss with the students different adaptations that have helped different animals to survive the winter. You might mention the bushy tail of a fox, the furry feet of a rabbit, the extra thick coat of a coyote, the white camouflage of a snowy owl. Then, have the students draw their own fantasy animals, making them as well-suited to winter as they can imagine them to be. They should then share their pictures with the class, explaining why they created the different parts of the animal the way that they did.

### ***Post-visit Activity: What Do the Animals Do?***

Photocopy the enclosed animal pictures and have the students sort them by which animals remain active in the winter, which are inactive, and which migrate. Species' names are both in English and Spanish. The answers are as follows: Active animals include the raccoon, fox, beaver, fish, and blue jay; Inactive animals are the groundhog and thirteen-lined ground squirrel (both are true hibernators), honey bee, turtle, and frog; Migrants are the oriole, great egret, and wood duck.

# Winter Tracks in McHenry County



Eastern  
Cottontail  
Rabbit

Conejo



Red Fox



Zorro  
Rojo



Opossum

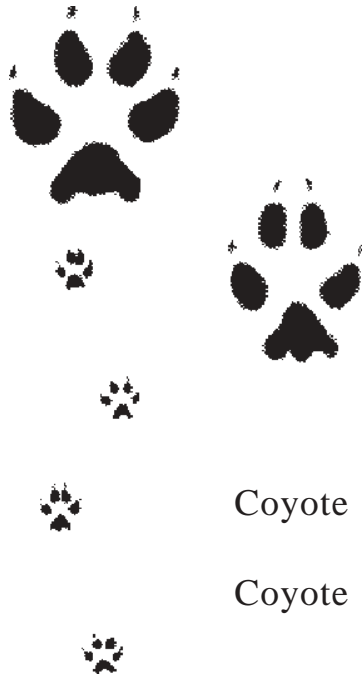
Zarigueya



Raccoon

Mapache

# Winter Tracks in McHenry County



Coyote  
Coyote



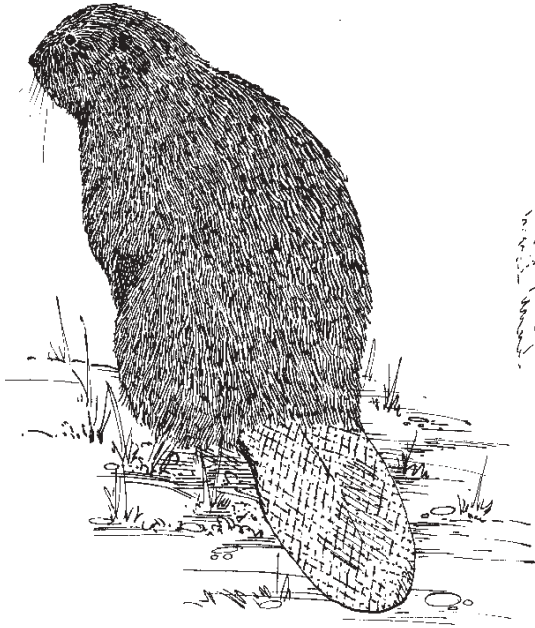
Gray  
Squirrel  
  
Arvilla



Deer  
Mouse  
  
Raton



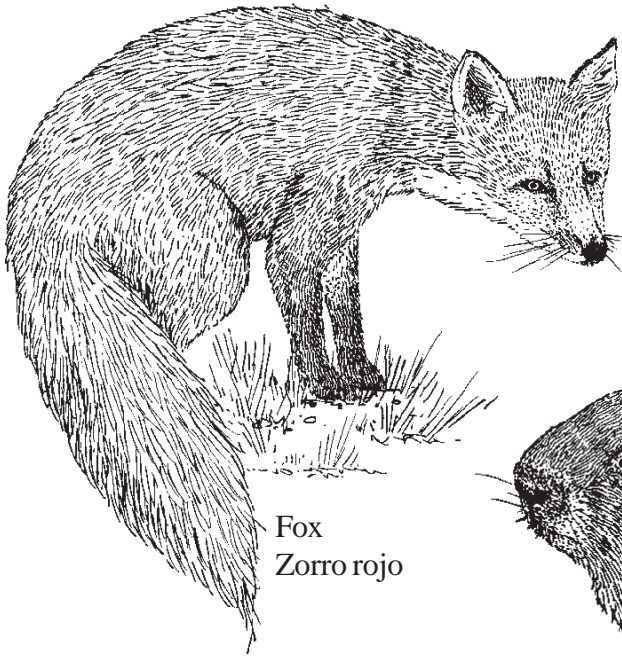
White-tailed Deer  
  
Ciervo



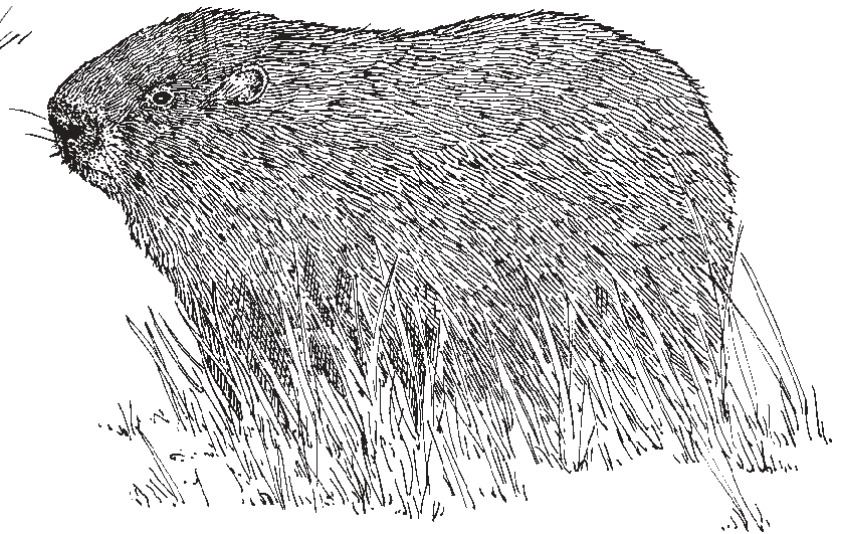
Beaver  
Castor



Raccoon  
Mapache



Fox  
Zorro rojo



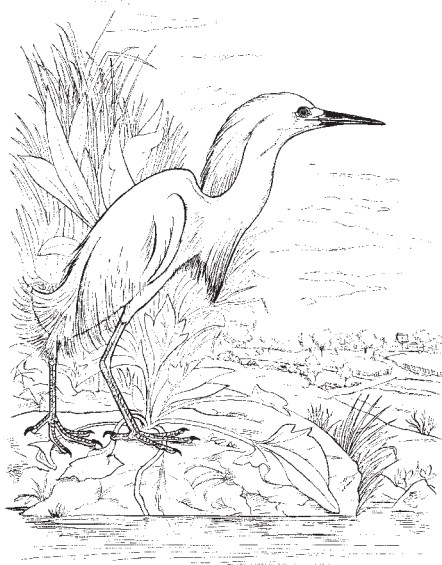
Groundhog  
Marmota



Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel  
Ardilla de tierra



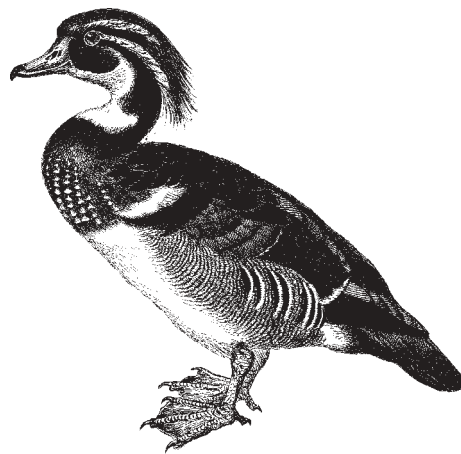
Orioles  
Oriol



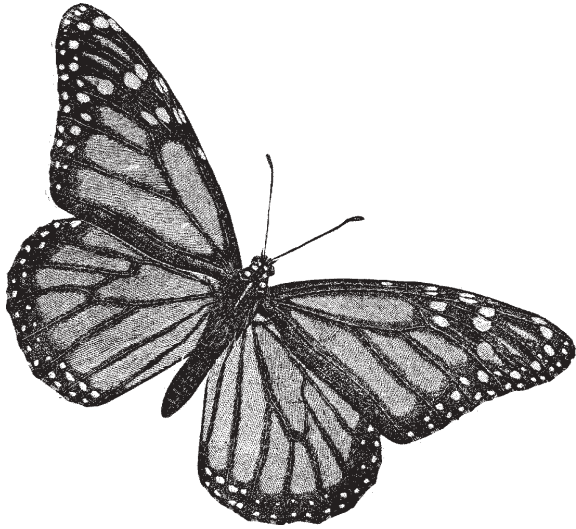
Great Egret  
Airon



Blue Jay  
Arrendajo



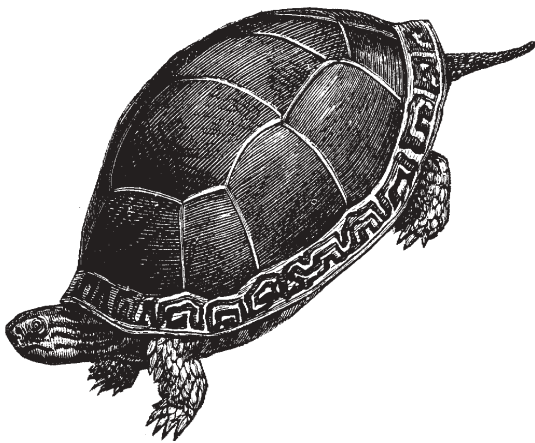
Wood Duck  
Pato



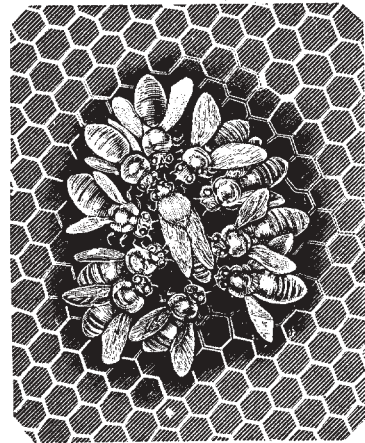
Monarch Butterfly  
Mariposa



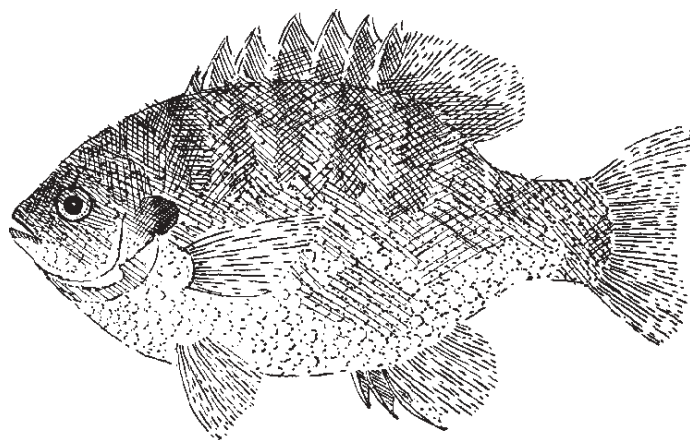
Leopard Frog  
Ama



Painted Turtle  
Tortuga



Honey Bees  
Abeja



Bluegill Fish  
Pez