



Dear Teacher:

Thank you for signing up for “Winter Ecology” at the Lost Valley Visitor Center in 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 that all teachers and chaperones attending the field trip are aware of the following information:**

1. The field trip runs 9:30am to 1:00pm, including a lunch inside of the **Lost Valley Visitor Center**. The trip will begin with indoor lessons on wildlife adaptations and plant identification. After a bathroom break, we will split the group into the two classes for an interpretive hike to teach students about seasonal changes and life cycles. 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. Encourage everyone to bring a waste-free lunch! Pack lunches in insulated containers and include items that can be eaten in their entirety, recycled or composted. Examples are whole fruits and vegetables, drinks in reusable bottles, snacks purchased in bulk and brought in a reusable container, cloth napkins, and reusable ice packs. For additional information on reducing waste visit [www.epa.gov/epawaste/wycd/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/wycd/index.htm).
4. 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.mccd.org](http://www.mccd.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.

Sincerely,

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

## Winter Ecology

### **Pre-trip Activities:**

1) Have the students complete the worksheet, “What Do Animals Do in Winter?”. We will go over all the answers during the introduction at the beginning of the field trip.

### **Post-trip Activities:**

1) Use the data compiled during the “Oh Deer” game to complete the enclosed blank graph. Brainstorm a list of factors that may contribute to the fluctuation of populations in nature. Why do wildlife populations really peak and decline? Is nature really ever in balance, or are ecological systems involved in a process of constant change? You may even continue by staging a debate about hunting as a wildlife management tool.

2) Lead a discussion reviewing the questions from the self-guided hike worksheets. If students do not know the answers, direct them to resources in which they can find them.

2) Use what you learned and observed at Glacial Park as well as the chart of “Northern Illinois Animals in Winter” to complete the page entitled, “Wintertime at Glacial Park”.

## What Do Animals Do In Winter? Definitions

Listen to the introduction of your field trip to find out what the following words mean and fill them in the appropriate blanks below.

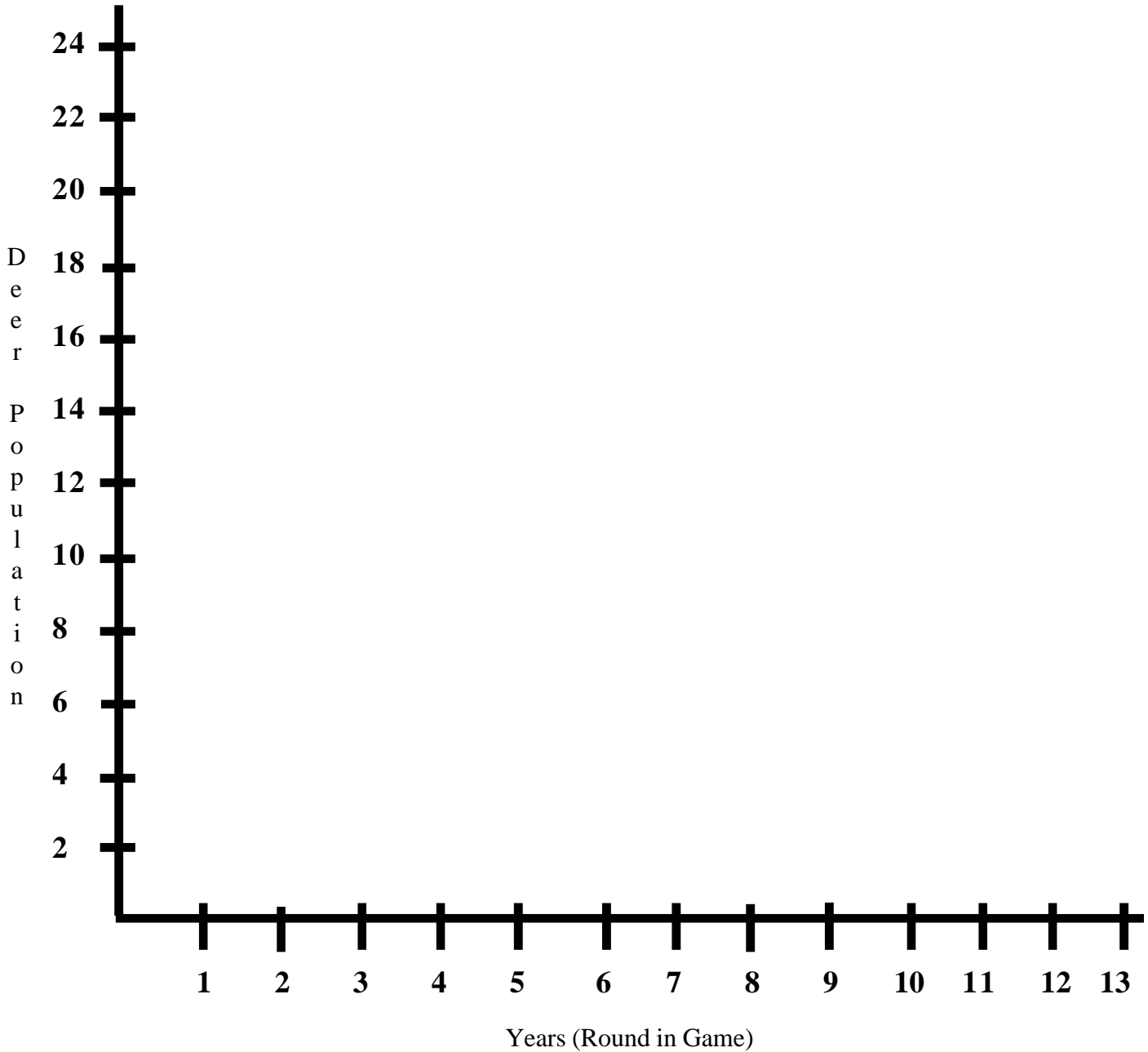
**adaptation**  
**migration**  
**dormant**

**caching**  
**hibernation**

1. When a plant or animal is inactive, allowing it to endure a period of environmental stress such as extreme heat, cold, or scarcity of food, it is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A prolonged state of decreased body temperature and a reduced heart rate that allows an animal to survive winter without eating is called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A periodic or seasonal movement of an animal from one location to another is called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A certain characteristic of an organism that allows the organism to survive the conditions of its environment is called \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The act of hiding or storing food until it is needed again, or \_\_\_\_\_ is a common practice among some animals as they prepare for winter.

# Oh Deer!

Graph the results of the OH DEER! game in the following graph.



Beginning Population: \_\_\_\_\_

Round 1	_____	Round 7	_____
Round 2	_____	Round 8	_____
Round 3	_____	Round 9	_____
Round 4	_____	Round 10	_____
Round 5	_____	Round 11	_____
Round 6	_____	Round 12	_____
	Round 13	_____	

## WINTERTIME AT GLACIAL PARK

Compare and contrast the ecosystems of Glacial Park. Look for sources of food, water, and shelter. Look at the space available and think of the carrying capacity of each ecosystem-what animals could and do live here? Use the Northern Illinois Animals worksheet to help you.

### PRAIRIE

### SAVANNA

### WETLAND

FOOD:

FOOD:

FOOD:

WATER:

WATER:

WATER:

SHELTER:

SHELTER:

SHELTER:

ANIMALS:

ANIMALS:

ANIMALS:

## NORTHERN ILLINOIS ANIMALS IN WINTER

Species	Overwintering Stage	Habit	Habitat	Food Sources
Little brown bat	--	hibernates	cave or mine	--
Beaver	--	active	lodge under ice	bark & twigs
Chipmunk	--	dormant	below frostline in burrow	cached seeds and nuts
Coyote	--	active	fields & woods	animals
Deer	--	active	sheltered woods	twigs, buds
Mink	--	active	near water	muskrats, etc.
Jumping Mouse	--	hibernates	below frostline	--
Deer Mouse	--	active	woods & fields under snow	seeds, nuts, bark, insects
Muskrat	--	active	cattail lodge	roots, stems, clams, fish
Raccoon	--	dormant	hollow trees, under rocks	omnivorous, near streams
Carpenter ant	adult	inactive	in trees or logs	--
Monarch	adult	migrates	Mexico, CA	nectar
Bumblebee	queen only	inactive	underground, under logs	--
Cricket	egg	inactive	in the ground	--
Ladybug	adult	inactive	under leaves & grasses	--
Snapping turtle	--	hibernates	under mud, in marsh or pond	--
Canada goose	--	migrates	S. US & Mexico	greens
Chickadee	--	active	N. US & Canada	insects, conifer seeds, berries
Great horned owl	--	active	N. America	small mammals