



In this project area, you will learn about the different types of wildlife groups, their habitat needs, wildlife conservation, and interactions between humans and wildlife.



Exploring 4-H Wildlife

Spark Activity: Go Wild in Your Own Backyard

Observe the wildlife in your own backyard. Create your own field journal with illustrations or photos to describe the wildlife you observe – be sure to include what they're doing, what they're eating, how many you see, the date, time of day, and the weather.

If you don't see any wildlife, be sure to describe signs of wildlife, like tracks, burrows, and plant damage. Take your field journal with you as often as you can. You never know where you'll see wildlife! Make suggestions of how you might be able to observe wildlife without disturbing them to get an accurate picture of their true behaviors.



4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner

- Learn about Illinois' native wildlife
- Investigate wildlife by observing birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, or amphibians
- Learn how different wildlife types are similar to each other and different from each other
- Choose an animal to research and share what you learned with others
- Learn about Illinois' endangered native animals

Intermediate

- Investigate how animals are adapted for living in their habitats
- Visit a nature center and learn about the creatures that live in that area
- Learn about endangered species and what is being done to protect them and why they are ecologically important
- Learn about invasive species and how they affect native wildlife
- Learn about rehabilitating injured or captive wildlife back to their natural environments

Advanced

- Use scientific tools and information to measure changes in a wildlife habitat area over time
- Compare different wildlife habitats as to the kinds of organisms, food webs, and water conditions found in each
- Investigate an environmental issue affecting the health of a wildlife species and its habitat or community
- Research and produce an action plan to improve a wildlife habitat and reduce invasive species in your area

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills

- Make a poster with wildlife local to your area
- Display of a wildlife-friendly backyard
- Develop a wildlife management plan for species that are struggling in your area
- Construct a feeder or birdhouse and list the species that commonly visit it
- Identify tracks or signs of wildlife in nature
- Develop a wildlife survey for your area and explain the benefits of obtaining this information

Service and Leadership

- Pick up trash to clean up habitat for wildlife
- Organize a fundraiser to donate supplies to a local wildlife rehabilitator
- Build bird houses or feeders to donate to an organization or local park to attract wildlife
- Work with your local Department of Natural Resources (DNR) office to host a community forum on local wildlife issues or concerns
- Host or lead a wildlife workshop or 4-H SPIN club

Entrepreneurship

- Wildlife photography
- Build and sell custom bird houses
- Grow seedlings of native plants or trees to sell, encouraging others to provide habitat for wildlife on their property

Technology Connection

- Use GPS technology to mark where you have found wildlife and then map their movements
- Wildlife Facebook groups
- Motion-sensor trail cameras

Connecting with a Mentor

- Connect with DNR biologists
- Veterinarian specializing in exotic or wild animals
- University of Illinois Wildlife Medical Clinic
- Connect with a local Audubon Society

Events

- 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP)
- Illinois 4-H Barred Owl Nest Box Challenge
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources events



Careers for People Interested in Wildlife

Wildlife Biologist	Veterinarian (Exotic or Wild Animals)
Wildlife Rehabilitator	Field Biologist
Federal Wildlife Officer	

Start a Conversation

Which species signify the changing of the seasons – what animals do you see at the first sign of Spring, Summer, Winter, or Fall?

What are three simple things anyone could do in their own backyard to benefit native wildlife?

Speak with your grandparents or an older member of your community to find out if the wildlife has changed at all in the area over the years.

Want to learn more?

go.illinois.edu/4Hwildlife

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

4-h.extension.illinois.edu



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