



**School Program Description**  
**Hurray for Herps**  
**Level: 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**Saginaw Bay Visitor Center**  
**Bay City State Recreation Area**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Students will discover why wetlands are important for our amphibians and reptiles through this hands-on exploration. The program starts out with an indoor naturalist slide-talk which focuses on the definition of the term “herp”, characteristics, similarities, and differences between reptiles and amphibians, and introduction of several herps that are found in area wetland habitats. This auditorium presentation is followed by a short lab in the classroom on identifying frogs by their call and a “herp hunt” in the museum to get the students ready to go outside and hunt for real herps and their sounds. Outside, the students are divided into small teams to search vernal and permanent wetland ponds for frogs. Captured specimens are temporarily contained in aquariums for other students to observe. In conclusion, naturalists will present the problems facing frogs caused by the destruction of wetland habitat.

**PROGRAM GOALS:**

To stimulate an awareness and appreciation of Michigan’s wildlife populations and the wetland habitat where they live.

To help park visitors become aware of the Michigan DNR Frog Survey Program and volunteer opportunities for visitors.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will be able to list four frogs which live in the wetland habitat of our area
2. Students will be able to define herpetology.
3. Students will be able to list two ways reptiles and amphibians are similar and two ways they are different.
4. Students will be able to identify two problems facing frogs and other Michigan herps.
5. Students will be able to list one herp which is an endangered species.
6. Students will be able to identify one of nine mid-Michigan frogs by their physical characteristics.
7. Students will be able to predict what will happen to Michigan’s frog population as we drain more and more habitat.
8. Students will be able to list at least one way the DNR is trying to help Michigan’s herps.

**PRE-VISIT SUGGESTIONS:**

1. Be sure that every student is dressed for the weather conditions. It can be 5-10 degrees cooler next to the Saginaw Bay. (Bring a box of square bottomed trash bags for an emergency rain poncho)
2. Review the following animal classifications: reptile, amphibian, fish, mammal, bird, insect, mollusk, predator, prey

3. Obtain a copy of the National Wildlife Federation's Nature Scope: Hurrah for Herps!. Do one of the activities in the guide. Or request reprints of activities from the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center.
4. Have students draw the life cycle of a frog onto a large piece of paper. Next, have them draw the live cycle of a turtle and compare the two cycles for similarities or differences.

### **POST-VISIT SUGESTIONS:**

1. Draw a class mural in which each student draws a herp that lives in the wetlands of Michigan.
2. Assign each student a Michigan herp to do a report on. Contact: Lori Sargeant, Wildlife Biologist , for more information at: Natural Heritage Program, DNR Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 30108, Lansing, MI 48909-7680.
3. Project Aquatic Wild *Are You Me?*—“analyze water” quality and make recommendations for improvement; *Dragonfly Pond* –students create a collage of human land-use activities around an image of a pond; *Blue Ribbon Niche* –students create representations of animals which live in riparian habitats.
4. Project WILD: *Color Crazy* – students create representations of colorful wildlife; *Wildlife is Everywhere* – students search their environment for evidence of wildlife; *Everybody Needs a Home* –students draw pictures of homes and compare their needs with those of other animals.
5. Project Learning Tree: *Trees for Many Reasons* –by reading fables students examine the importance of conserving natural resources.

### **COORDINATING WITH THE MICHIGAN SCIENCE GRADE LEVEL CONTENT EXPECTATIONS:**

Science. Inquiry Process: S.IP.04.11, S.IP.04.12, S.IP.04.13, S.IP.04.14, S.IP.04.15, S.IP.04.16, S.IP.05.11, S.IP.05.12, S.IP.05.13, S.IP.05.14, S.IP.05.15, S.IP.05.16,  
 Science. Inquiry Analysis & Communications: S.IA.04.11, S.IA.04.12, S.IA.04.13, S.IA.04.14, S.IA.04.15, S.IA.05.11, S.IA.05.12, S.IA.05.13, S.IA.05.14, S.IA.05.15,  
 Science . Reflection& Social Implications: S.RS.04.11, S.RS.04.14, S.RS.04.15, S.RS.04.15, S.RS.04.16, S.RS.04.17.S.RS.04.18, S.RS.04.19, S.RS.05.11, S.RS.05.12, S.RS.05.13, S.RS.05.15, S.RS.05.16, S.RS.05.17, S.RS.05.19,  
 Life Science. Organization of Living Things: L.OL.04.16,  
 Life Science. Evolution: L.EV.04.21, L.EV.04.22  
 Life Science. Ecosystems: L.EC.04.11, L.EC.04.21  
 Earth Science. Earth in Space & Time: E.ST.04.32  
 Life Science. Heredity: L.HE.05.11, L.HE.05.12

### **Coordinating with M.E.A.P Social Studies Content Standard Benchmarks**

Geographic perspective

- II.2—I.e.1, I.e.3, I.e.4
- II.4—I.e.5
- II.5—I.e.1

