

Natural Science Topics

Fall Studies Common Trees

Deciduous Trees Key

Estimating Tree Age

Estimating Tree Height

Forest Ecology

Woolly Bear Week

Creatures in the Soil

Forest Songs

Winter Studies Deer Studies

Animal Tracking

Winter Birds

Animal Homes

Nature Crafts_

Nature Poetry

Spring Studies Spring Birds

Observing Geese

Bird Beaks

Signs of Spring

Amphibians and Reptiles

Dragonflies

Zooplankton

Pond Life

Wetland Ecology

Midwestern Fish

Spring Wildflowers

Summer Studies Classifying Insects

Insect Ecology

Bees are Cool

Time of the Grasshoppers

Spiders

Butterflies

Wildflowers

Weeds

Life in the Forest

What to do: Take a hike in the woods in April or May and make a tally by the picture of each living object you find. Which ones are the most common?



Bur Oak



Red Oak



Jack in the Pulpit



Violet



Basswood



Sugar Maple



Turkey-tail Fungus



Trillium



Hornet nest



Chipmunk nest



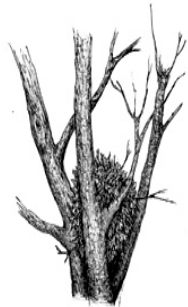
Cardinal



Blue Jay



Woodpecker nest



Squirrel nest



Isopod/sowbug



Chickadee



Millipede



Morel Mushroom

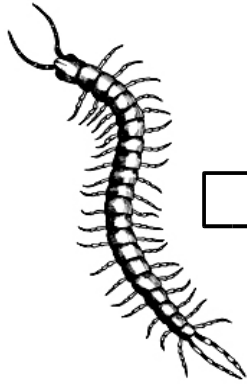
Give yourself 3 points if you took a spring nature hike.

Give yourself 1 point for anything you found up (to 4 points).

Total possible points: 7

Total points for you: ____

Creatures in the Soil



Centipede
 Reddish/orange
 3 inches
 Don't touch



Daddy Long legs
 Found on top of the ground. Be careful, the legs break easily.



Night Crawler
 6-10 inches



Snail



Millipede
 gray/black
 one inch in size
 harmless



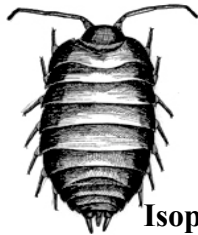
Red worm
 2-4 inches



Wireworm
 Beetle larva
 orange in color
 One inch in size



Fire Fly Larva
 1 inch
 dark color
 Green light





Isopod
 Gray
 1 inch



Cicada Larva
 White in color
 2 inches
 Found 2-6 inches beneath the ground.

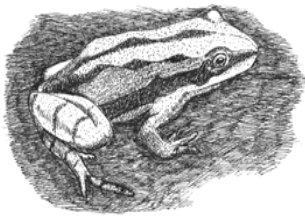
Give yourself five points for starting a worm compost: _____
 Give yourself one point for each critter that you find: _____
 Total Possible Points 15 Your Total _____

 **Worm Eggs** _____
 **Whiteys** _____
Pinkies _____

Old Naturalist – Amphibians and Reptiles

The parade of frogs to the breeding ponds begins soon after the ice is out (usually after April 15th), as they fulfill their yearly mating ritual. In the spring I try to spend as much time as possible in the local frog ponds. Although it may seem gross to be slogging around a mucky pond, it is actually very healing. It is a world unto itself: the frogs calling; dragonflies darting around; and red-wing blackbirds singing from the cattails. All you need is a decent pair of waders or rubber boots and a walking stick to keep from falling in the water.

What to Do: Look for amphibians and reptiles in the wetlands and your neighborhood. Make a check in the box beside the picture if you hear or see any of the animals below. To hear frog calls go to my website@ old naturalist.com. Go to: <http://www.oldnaturalist.com/?p=823>.



Chorus Frog

The chorus frog is about 1/2 inch in size. They are very difficult to find in a frog pond if you are searching for them. Chorus frogs have also been called “cricket frogs” because they sound like crickets.



Wood Frog

The wood frog is 2-3 inches, brown with a black eye line. This frog is usually the first to visit the breeding ponds. They are very quick breeders, often only staying at the pond for two weeks. The male’s call is a “clucking” type sound, similar to a chicken.



Gray Tree

The gray tree frog can change colors from gray to green depending on its surroundings. They are two inches in size and have small suction cups on their feet which allows them to climb on windows and in to the treetops (over thirty feet). Gray tree frogs overwinter under leaves on the ground. The frog survives by filling major body organs with an “anti-freeze” substance.



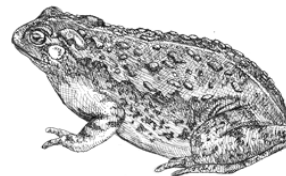
Spring Peeper

Spring peepers are approximately one inch in size. They are brown in color and have a distinctive “X” on their back. Peepers are woodland frogs and like a natural setting without humans. In the spring, peepers come to the ponds and make a “peeping” call that sounds like a chick.



Leopard Frog

The leopard frog is the most well known of all Minnesota frogs. It is a large green frog, three to four inches in size, with many black spots. Leopard frogs are exceptional jumpers. Leopard frogs spend the winter buried in the mud in lakes. When the ice thaws, leopard frogs migrate to their breeding ponds. The males make a low snoring call to attract females. They remain near the water or in wet meadows throughout the summer.

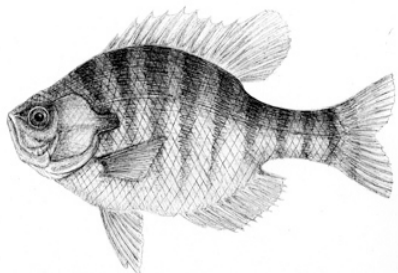


American Toad

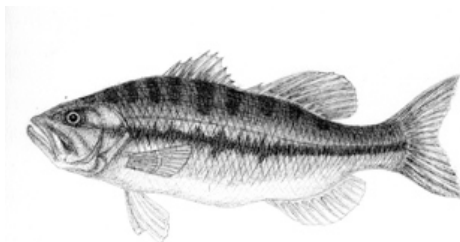
Toads often spend the winter in window wells next to homes. Toads travel to ponds in late April and begin breeding the first week of May. The beautiful “trilling” call of the males is the dominant night sound heard during the month of May. After breeding, toads may move as far as 1/2 mile from the breeding ponds. Toads feed at night on worms, and insects.

Fish Watching

What to Do: Go snorkeling and check off the fish you see.



Bluegill



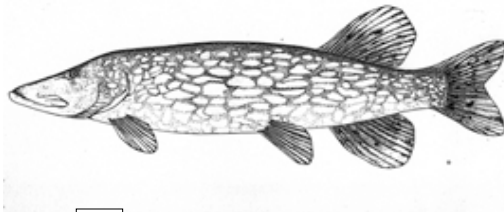
Largemouth Bass



Crappie



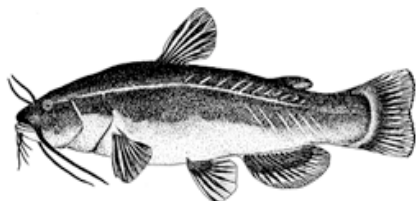
Perch



Northern Pike



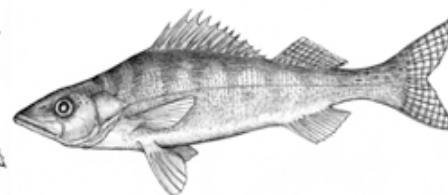
Smallmouth Bass



Bullhead



Carp



Walleye

Give yourself a point for every time you go snorkeling (up to 3 points).
Give yourself a point for every type of fish that you see (fishing, snorkeling, etc.).
Total possible points for this activity: 12 points; Total points you made: _____