

MISSION CONSERVATION ACTIVITY GUIDE

August 2026 – Explore the Great Outdoors

Hello agents! This August, Wonders of Wildlife invites you to explore the great outdoors, and take part in discovering the amazing plants, animals, and other wildlife right outside your door! Through these activities you'll sharpen your senses, connect with local wildlife, and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world! Grab your explorer's gear and get ready to discover the wonders waiting all around you!

Outdoor Activity: Birdwatching Basics



Birdwatching is one of the most popular outdoor activities you can participate in! Although many birders wake up before the sun even rises to use expensive cameras and binoculars to spot birds, birdwatching is one of the most accessible hobbies there are! You can even participate yourself, and all you need to do is head outside! This activity guide covers basic birdwatching skills and provides tips that may be helpful as you begin looking for our feathered friends!

Procedure:

1. Grab a notebook and a pencil (binoculars and a mobile device are beneficial, but not necessary), and head outside!
2. Take a walk around your yard/neighborhood/public park. Make sure to scan the trees for any birds you might see.
3. Anytime you see or hear a bird, write down what they sounded like, what they looked like, or how they behaved. You can even sketch a photo if you'd like! Here are some tips on what to look for as you birdwatch —
 - a. Size & shape

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- b. Colors & markings
 - c. Behavior
 - d. Habitat & location
 - e. Sound
4. Try to write down how many birds you see that are of the same species! Even if you don't know how to identify them, that is completely okay! You can look at their feathers, the color, how they are behaving, or what their call sounds like to compare and contrast similar species.
5. When you return home, use field guides, the computer, mobile devices, or any other source you may like to identify any bird you saw! How many similar species did you see? These are all excellent things to record that professional birders do as well!

Great job on becoming a birdwatcher! Many scientists and institutions use citizen science like you just did to write papers and even keep track of populations! By participating in birdwatching, you're helping birds and scientists alike! How neat! Here are some additional tips and good birdwatching behaviors to practice out in the field!

- You can bird whenever you want, wherever you want! You can do it right out your window or anywhere you go around the globe!
- Patience is key. Animals don't always cooperate, and being able to wait patiently is vital for spotting rare species.
- Become familiar with birds in your area. Which ones show up in the summer or winter? Are there any that stay year-round? Which birds are more comfortable with humans than others? Which birds are introduced or invasive species?
- Choose the right time of day. Birds are much more active in the morning and at dusk, due to the lower temperatures. Some species can also only be seen at night!
- Make sure to bring water, snacks, sunscreen, and anything else you may need to keep yourself safe, especially if you plan on hiking while birding.
- Do not disturb any wildlife you see, especially birds. As exciting as seeing a Bald Eagle or Great Blue Heron might be, birdwatchers must treat the environment with respect and care.

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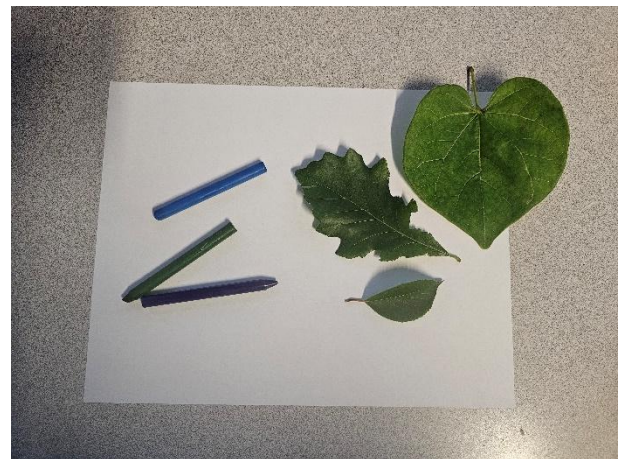
Indoor Activity: Leaf Rubbing



Leaf rubbing is a fun and easy way to explore nature through art! Participants can use the attached guide to create their own leaf rubbings while observing the details that make each leaf unique and creating beautiful artwork."

Materials:

- Leaf/leaves
- Plain printer paper
- Crayons

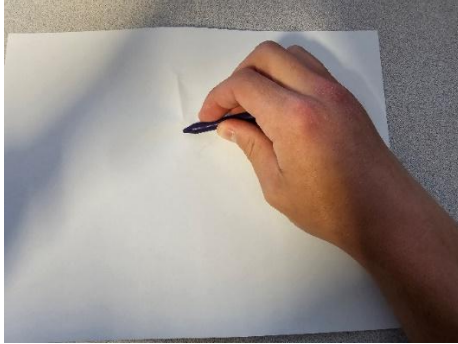


Steps:

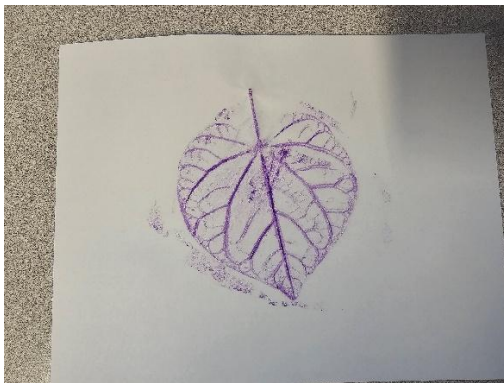
1. Go outside and grab a leaf or leaves. Try to find leaves that look different from each other. If you remove a leaf from a tree, only take one, as taking too many leaves can damage the tree.
2. Place the leaf as flat as you can on a desk, table, or other hard surface.

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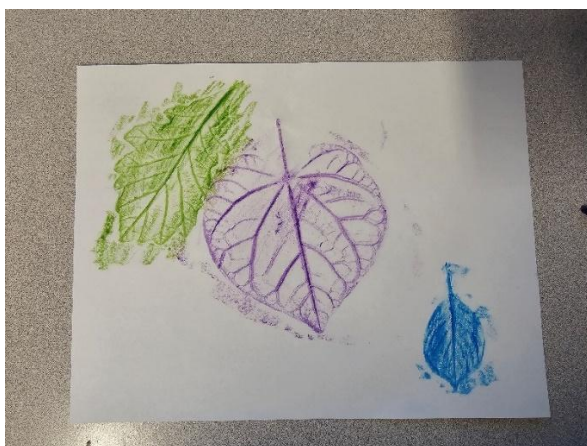
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3. Place a piece of plain printer paper on top of the leaf, covering it entirely.
4. Using a crayon, color on the piece of paper where the leaf is and watch how the leaf begins to appear on the paper!



5. Add more leaves underneath, and use more colors to make the art pop!



We hope you enjoyed the activity guide this month! Don't forget to check out the at-home mission for this month! To see a list of our other missions or to learn more about Wonders of Wildlife, visit us at

<https://wondersofwildlife.org/mission-conservation/>