



CONSERVATION NEWS

A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 31 No. 1 Spring 2018

Mother Knows Best

Springtime; defined by Webster as a time of early or flourishing stage of development. Springtime; at times defined by us as a time of ringing phones with calls from well-meaning people who have found something in an early stage of development in the form of an 'orphaned or abandoned' baby animal.

The majority of times that is not the case. Many babies are left alone for long periods of time so mom doesn't alert predators to "I have babies here!" She may also be out looking for food, feeding or sleeping. Learning about the behaviors of different species of animals can help people make an informed decision as to whether or not an animal is really in trouble.

For all baby animals look for signs that they truly need help.

- the dead mother nearby
- crying for more than a few hours
- diarrhea or covered in feces
- signs of dehydration such as tented skin, sunken eyes, listlessness
- fresh wounds
- maggots
- the animal is lying on its side

If you see any of these signs then it's time to call a wildlife rehabilitator for advice. Never move the animal unless it's in immediate danger. If you must move it, wear gloves (not because you'll leave a human scent on it, but because it may carry diseases or parasites) and put it in a covered box with a towel. Even if it doesn't seem scared, don't pet it, don't show it off to your neighbors.

The less human contact the better. And never give it any food, water, or milk (cow's milk can kill many wild babies).

Baby bunnies are one of the most frequently found animals we get calls about. Moms often build the nest in the middle of a yard or open field. This is so as she sits in the background she can see from all sides if a predator approaches. The nest is a small depression in the ground lined and covered with grass and fur. The average litter size is five. Mom comes for a few minutes several times a day (usually dawn & dusk) to nurse the babies. They grow fast and are weaned and out of the nest at three weeks.

So, if you find an unattended nest of bunnies leave them be. Keep dogs and cats away from the nest and don't mow over or too close to it (your little patch of grass won't get that long in three weeks). If your pet gets into the nest and removes a baby return it to the nest immediately if it's not injured. If you're concerned the mother isn't returning try this; make an X over the top of the nest using some sticks. If the sticks are moved the next morning then mom was there. Wild rabbits get stressed very easily and do not do well in captivity even in the hands of an experienced wildlife rehabilitator.

Fawns are another animal often left unattended. Does have one to three babies with twins being common. Newborn fawns have no scent and are 'told' by their mom "Sit here perfectly still until I return." And that's what they do. They freeze in

a camouflage position lying upright, but flattened to the ground with eyes open wide. A dog, coyote or human can walk right by and not even know they're there. Twins are usually found many feet apart. Mom will come to nurse them several times a day, but she's usually always nearby watching. If you see a fawn in its camouflage position or curled up sleeping don't touch it! Touching it will give it a scent and make it vulnerable to predators. Mom will know too and most likely move it to another area next time she comes to feed it.

At several weeks of age the fawn starts to follow mom around but can't keep up for long so it may just plop down wherever, a sidewalk, yard, middle of the road, etc. If you find an uninjured fawn in the road pick it up and move it to a safe place nearby then leave it alone. It wouldn't be there if mom was not close. Only if a fawn is obviously injured or orphaned should you intervene and call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Squirrels average three babies per litter. Babies are sometimes blown out of the nest during a storm, or the entire nest may be destroyed. If the nest is destroyed mom will search for another nest or build a new one and move her babies there, but this takes time (sometimes hours).

If you find a baby squirrel that is not injured, nail an open box five or six feet high to the tree the nest is or was in, or a nearby tree in the shade if it's very hot out. Mom won't retrieve her baby if it is cold, if the baby is cold make a rice sock by putting uncooked rice in a sock, tie the end up and microwave it for a couple of minutes then put it in the box along with a towel. The rice sock will stay warm for several hours and you may need to rewarm it. If it's hot out or the baby isn't cold just put a towel in the box. If mom has not returned for her baby or babies by the next day then it's time to call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Raccoons usually have litters of three to six. Once the baby raccoons are about three weeks of age they start to get curious and will head out of the den to explore while mom is sleeping (adult

raccoons are mostly nocturnal, juveniles are not). If you see one or several of them out playing, hiding or huddling together mom is probably nearby sleeping. They may not fear humans and even approach them. Mom may also be in the process of moving them to a new den which she tends to do several times in the 8-12 months the young stay with her. She can only carry one at a time so the others may be waiting their turn.

They only need help if they are crying or covered in feces, flies, or maggots. If the mother is dead on the road the babies may be hanging around her body. In this case put the babies in a covered box and get them to a wildlife rehabilitator as soon as possible.

The main thing to remember is that a baby animal is best off with its mom, no one else can give it the kind of care that mom can. It's also against the law for anyone but a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to care for a wild animal.



Some rehabilitators will accept many species of wildlife while others specialize in one or a few types. To find a wildlife rehabilitator in Southeast Iowa go to the Southeast Iowa Wildlife Rescue Alliance at www.siwra.org. Also, a list of all Iowa licensed rehabilitators can be found on the Iowa DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/files/wildliferehab.pdf.

Being a wildlife rehabilitator is an expensive and time-consuming (24/7 at times) calling. In Iowa rehabilitators do not receive any public funding and most do not charge for their services. They spend a lot of their own money buying food, medicine and equipment to care for these animals so a donation is always welcome.

Thanks Friends

Thank you to all our “Friends” whose donations to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation support the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.

Tim & Debbie Nelson

Sheryl & Lavene Payne

Donna Reed

Wesley & Barbara Walker

Henry & Sharon Marquard

Jim Scott

All Seasons Glass

Robert & Nancy Grunder

Else Paul

Mike & Phyllis Avesing



The names of all donors go into our donor book and those who donate \$250 or more receive a plaque on our donor wall. Please include the form on the right with your donation and become a “Friend” today.

Thank You



Thank you to all those who generously gave time, talent, funding and/or materials to help make our programs, projects, and areas better than ever.

Julie Herold - instructing the Polliwog Playtime classes.

Quad Cities Outdoor Women’s Club - monetary donation.

Lynn Tavener - monetary donation to our environmental education program.

Mary Bulger - help with environmental education programs.

A Gift For the Conservation Foundation

I would like to become a Friend,
please accept my donation.

- Sponsor \$10—\$49
- Partner \$50—\$99
- Patron \$100—\$249
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- Benefactor \$1000 +
- I would like to donate my time.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Thank you for your support!

Please make checks payable to:
Muscatine County Conservation Foundation
PO Box 109, Muscatine, IA 52761



Holiday Closings

The Environmental Learning Center will be closed on Sunday, April 1, Monday, May 28, and Wednesday, July 4.

Programs & Special Events



TROUT RELEASE

The Iowa DNR will release trout in Discovery Pond. Trout stamps are required (see Iowa Fishing Regulation booklet). All Iowa fishing rules and regulations apply and will be enforced.

Friday, March 23 10:00 a.m.
Discovery Pond in Discovery Park

WILDLIFE OF IOWA

Join us to learn all about the wildlife found in Iowa.

Sunday, March 18 1:30 p.m.
Environmental Learning Center
Family event, children must be accompanied by an adult
Free



SPRING NATURE HIKE



Join us for a hike through Discovery Park. We'll search for signs of spring. Dress to be outdoors.

Saturday, April 14 2:00 p.m.
Discovery Park-meet at the Environmental Learning Center
Family event, children must be accompanied by an adult
Free

BUTTERFLY GARDENING

Come learn how to attract butterflies to your yard. Native plant seedlings will be handed out.

Saturday, May 19 10:30 a.m.
Environmental Learning Center
Adult program
Free, but preregistration is requested at (563) 264-5922



FAMILY ARCHERY

Come learn the basics of archery then do some target shooting with our archery equipment.



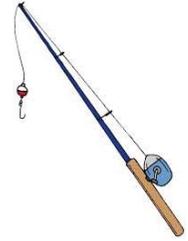
Saturday, June 23 2:00 p.m.
Discovery Park
Family event, children must be accompanied by an adult and at least 8 years old to participate
Free

Summer Programs for Kids

38TH ANNUAL KIDS FISHING SEMINAR

Come learn the basics of fishing. This annual event is geared toward elementary-aged kids, but all ages are welcome. All participants receive a tackle packet and are eligible for door prizes! Registration forms will be available at the Environmental Learning Center and on our website at www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com beginning May 16.

Saturday, June 2 9:00-10:45 a.m.
Discovery Park
Free



11TH ANNUAL KIDS FISHING DERBY

Come to the Kids Fishing Seminar then put your newfound fishing knowledge to use and participate in the Kids Fishing Derby. Prizes awarded in several fish categories and age groups. Registration will open immediately after the fishing seminar ends.

Saturday, June 2 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
Discovery Park
Free



GREEN THUMBERS

\$10.00/session maximum 16/session

Duffy DeFrance will introduce kids to gardening! We'll cover the basics of proper planting and care for the plants afterward. Participants will bring home potted plants and plants to transplant at home.



kids who just completed kindergarten or 1st grade
kids who just completed 2nd or 3rd grade

June 19 1:00-3:00 p.m.
June 20 1:00-3:00 p.m.

WILDCAT DEN DAY

\$10.00/session maximum 16/session bring a sack lunch

Join the naturalists for a fun morning exploring Wildcat Den! We'll hike, creek stomp, and have a picnic lunch.

kids who just completed kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade
kids who just completed 3rd, 4th or 5th grade

June 26 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon
July 6 8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon

GEOLOGY ROCKS!

\$10.00/session maximum 16/session

Join the naturalists at Discovery Park for an earth-shaking day of geology activities.

kids who just completed kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade
Session 1 July 17 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon
Session 2 August 8 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

kids who just completed 3rd, 4th or 5th grade
July 24 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon



Summer Programs for Kids

ANIMAL TRACKS

kids who just completed kindergarten, 1st or 2nd grade \$10.00/session maximum 16/session

Join the naturalists to learn about the animals who live at Discovery Park.

Session 1 July 19 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Session 2 August 9 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon



RAPTORS

kids who just completed 3rd, 4th or 5th grade \$10.00 maximum 16

Join the naturalists to learn all about raptors. We'll play games, make owl calls and get up close to our resident raptors.

July 25 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon



AMAZING REPTILES

kids who just completed 3rd, 4th or 5th grade \$10.00 maximum 16

Join the naturalists to learn all about snakes, turtles and lizards of Iowa, and best of all meet our resident reptiles.



August 7 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

POLLIWOG PLAYTIME

ages 18 months through 3 years \$5.00/session maximum 10/session

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for activities designed to help toddlers explore nature. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



June 4	“Pond Life”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
June 18	“Bees & Pollinators”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
July 2	“Fishing”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
July 16	“Butterflies, Insects & Prairie”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.
July 30	“Water”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30-11:30 a.m.

KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS

4-5 year olds \$5.00/session maximum 10/session

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and outdoor exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



June 11	“Gardening”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
June 25	“Pond Study”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
July 9	“Forest Animals”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
July 23	“Butterflies”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
August 6	“Creek Stomping”	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon

Summer Programs for Kids

CHIPMUNK CAMP

kids who just completed kindergarten or 1st grade \$30.00 maximum 16

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stomping, games, crafts, and more.

June 12, 13, & 14 1:00-4:00 p.m. Meets at the Environmental Learning Center. We'll explore Wildcat Den, Saulsbury, Mad Creek, and Muscatine Riverfront.



KESTREL CAMP

kids who just completed 2nd or 3rd grade \$30.00 maximum 16

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stomping, games, crafts, and more.

July 10, 11, & 12 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Meets at the Environmental Learning Center. We'll explore Mad Creek, Muscatine Riverfront, Deep Lakes Park, and Saulsbury.

OTTER CAMP

kids who just completed 4th or 5th grade \$30.00 maximum 16

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stomping, games, crafts, and more.



July 31, August 1 & 2 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Meets at the Environmental Learning Center. We'll explore Saulsbury, Deep Lakes Park, and Wildcat Den.

OUTDOOR SKILLS

kids who just completed 5th-8th grades

Come experience a variety of outdoor skills and recreation opportunities. Sign up for one or more sessions. All sessions will meet at the Environmental Learning Center.

Shelter & Fire Building & Canoeing We'll head to Saulsbury to build shelters and fires as well as canoe on Chicken Creek.

June 15 1:00-5:00 p.m. \$10.00 maximum 16

Cedar River Float Trip We'll take the bus and canoes to Jack Shuger Park in Moscow, put the canoes in the Cedar River and float down to Saulsbury.

June 29 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. \$20.00 maximum 16 bring a sack lunch

Voyageur Canoeing We'll head to Deep Lakes Park and paddle 29-foot canoes just like Marquette & Joliet paddled down the Mississippi River in the 1600's.

July 20 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon \$10.00 maximum 20

Shelter Rentals

The Conservation Board has picnic shelters at Discovery Park, Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area, and Jack Shuger Memorial Park that may be reserved. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for a reservation form.

Discovery Park

small shelter	\$15.00 (no electricity)
large shelter	\$35.00

Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

shelter #1	\$20.00
shelter #2	\$20.00

Jack Shuger Memorial Park

large shelter	\$20.00
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The Saulsbury Lodge is also available for rent if you prefer air conditioning or a weatherproof venue. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for more information.

Camping at Saulsbury

The Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area campgrounds will open in mid April. Camping fees will be as follows.

- Main Campground \$20/night
- River Campground \$17/night
- Primitive Campground \$10/night
- Permanently Handicapped \$15/night

You can save on camping in the main campground with a coupon book for \$100-that's six nights for the price of five. Available at the Environmental Learning Center or from the park ranger and campground host.

We will also continue with the "Free Wednesdays" and the "Two-for-One" camping specials.



Free Fishing Days

The Iowa DNR's free fishing days this year are June 1-3. Iowa residents may fish on these days without a fishing license. All other fishing regulations must be obeyed.

TWO-FOR-ONE

Camping Weekends

Camp the first night in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury and stay for the next night FREE on the weekends listed below.

April 20-21
May 4-5 & May 18-19
June 1-2 & June 15-16
July 6-7 & July 20-21
August 3-4 & August 17-18
September 7-8 & September 21-22
October 5-6 & October 19-20



FREE Wednesdays

Camp in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury on any Wednesday in April-October for free.

Michelle's Creature Feature

Red-winged Blackbird

Every spring I keep an eye out for one of my favorite birds to return, the one that tells me the cold winter is almost gone and dear sweet spring is soon to come. The red-winged blackbird male usually makes his presence known in February, arriving to search out and protect his new territory. The female then shows up in April. Often times, even before seeing this bird, I will hear the males call "okalee."

Red-winged blackbirds are found throughout the United States and up into Canada and south into Mexico. In Iowa, they are a very common bird; inhabiting wet areas such as marshes, around ponds and even drainage ditches. I often see red-winged blackbirds everywhere there are cattails growing.

Males are all black with red patches on their wings. Females, like most bird species, are duller in color—more able to camouflage against the background when on their nest. They are overall dark brown with lighter tan streaks on the underside. They also have a lighter stripe on their head above their eyes. The average wingspan is 12.2-15.7 inches and they weigh between one and three ounces.

The females are the nest builders and use a variety of materials to make a cup type nest. One to two broods are laid each season with two to four eggs per brood. The eggs are a light bluish green with streaks of brown or black. Mom incubates the eggs for 11-12 days and the young are born helpless and blind but grow up fast and are on their own after 11-14 days. Males fiercely guard their territory and if anything comes near the nest, the males will start dive-bombing and calling loudly, often attacking objects much larger than themselves.

During the summer and fall insects make up most of the diet of these birds. In the winter and spring, these birds eat mostly seeds. The babies are fed insects exclusively.

In our area, the red-winged blackbird travels to warmer areas in the southern United States and Mexico, sometimes leaving for their migration as early as late August! Thankfully, winter does not start that early around here!



Fun Facts

- There may be as many as a million red-winged blackbirds in a flock at one time. Often time these flocks contain other types of blackbirds and sparrows.
- The oldest banded red-winged blackbird was found injured in 1983 at 15 years and 9 months. It was later released after it healed from injuries.
- Journey North at www.learner.org/jnorth/rwbb wants to know when you see your first red-winged blackbird in the spring. Log on to help scientists learn more about migration by your observations.



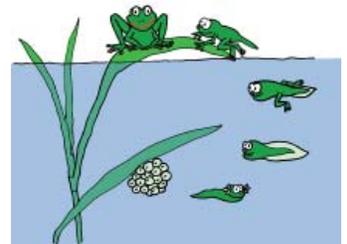
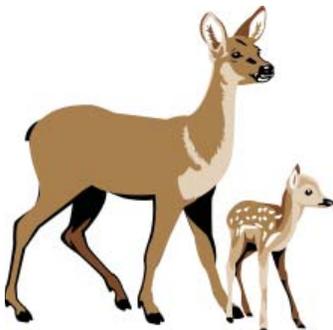
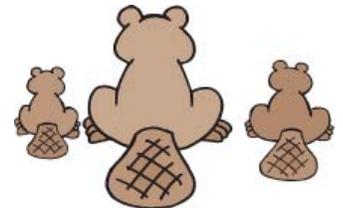
Topper's Page

SPRING



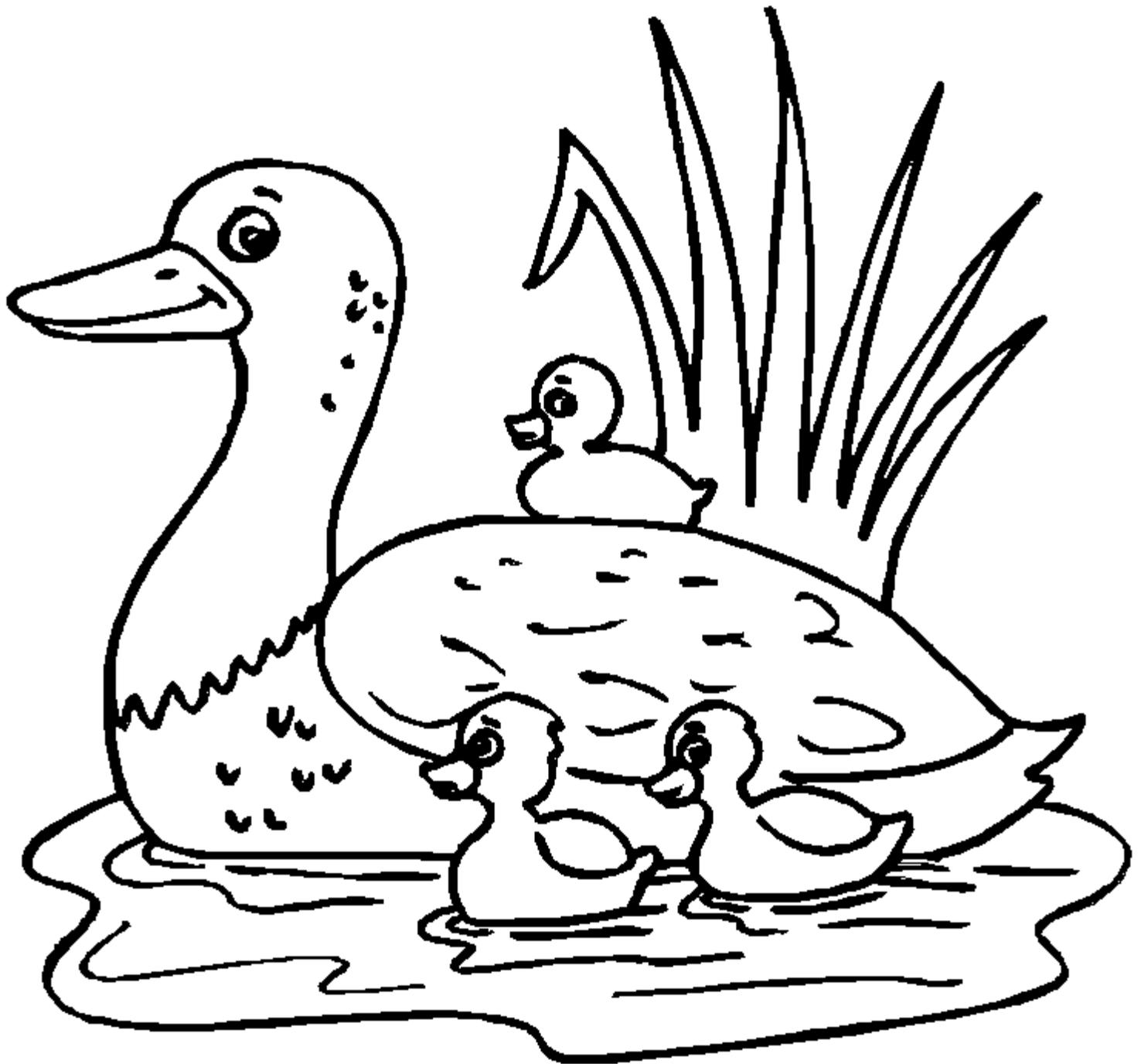
Topper says Spring is a very busy time in nature. Days are getting longer and warmer. Animals wake up from hibernation and return from migration. Birds are singing. Trees are budding and flowers blooming. And it's time for wild babies. Help Topper match the baby to its adult.

1. Frog _____
 2. Trout _____
 3. Turkey _____
 4. Deer _____
 5. Beaver _____
 6. Bat _____
 7. Cicada _____
 8. Eagle _____
 9. Owl _____
 10. Pigeon _____
 11. Rabbit _____
 12. Raccoon _____
 13. Spider _____
 14. Swan _____
 15. Goose _____
- A. Eaglet
 - B. Cub
 - C. Poult
 - D. Bunny
 - E. Spiderling
 - F. Fry
 - G. Kit
 - H. Cygnet
 - I. Owlet
 - J. Nymph
 - K. Gosling
 - L. Squab
 - M. Fawn
 - N. Pup
 - O. Tadpole



WELCOME SPRING!

The first day of Spring
is March 20.



**Muscatine County Conservation Board
2018 Summer Nature Camp Registration Form**

Polliwog Playtime (18 mos.-3 yrs. with an adult)		
\$5.00/session	Max. 10/session	
	9:00-10:00	10:30-11:30
June 4	_____	_____
June 18	_____	_____
July 2	_____	_____
July 16	_____	_____
July 30	_____	_____
Total \$		

Chipmunk Camp (just completed K-1st grades)		
\$30.00	Max. 16	
Session 1	June 12,13,14	1:00-4:00
Total \$		

Kestrel Camp (just completed 2nd-3rd grades)		
\$30.00	Max. 16	
Session 1	July 10,11,12	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Otter Camp (just completed 4th-5th grades)		
\$30.00	Max. 16	
Session 1	July 31, Aug 1,2	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Outdoor Skills (just completed 5th-8th grades)		
Shelter/Fire Building & Canoeing	June 15 Max. 16	1:00-5:00 \$10.00
Cedar River Float Trip	June 29 Max. 16	9:00-3:00 \$20.00
Voyageur Canoeing	July 20 Max. 20	9:00-12:00 \$10.00
Total \$		

Camps meet at the Environmental Learning Center, unless noted otherwise. More specific information on each camp is available in the spring issue of the County Conservation News. The County Conservation News can be found on our website www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

Return completed form with payment to
Muscatine County Conservation Board
PO Box 109, Muscatine IA 52761

Name _____ Age _____ Phone _____

one child per form

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Emergency Notification Name _____ Phone _____

Allergies or Special Needs _____

Email _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Camp reminders will be sent via email.

Knee-high Naturalists (4-5 yrs. with an adult)		
\$5.00/session	Max. 12/session	
	9:00-10:00	10:30-11:30
June 11	_____	_____
June 25	_____	_____
July 9	_____	_____
July 23	_____	_____
August 6	_____	_____
Total \$		

Animal Tracks \$10.00/session Max. 16/session		
K-2nd grades	July 19	9:00-12:00
K-2nd grades	August 9	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Gardening \$10.00/session Max. 16/session		
K-1st grades	June 19	1:00-3:00
2nd-3rd grades	June 20	1:00-3:00
Total \$		

Wildcat Den \$10.00/session Max. 16/session		
K-2nd grades	June 26	8:30-12:30
3rd-5th grades	July 6	8:30-12:30
Total \$		

Geology \$10.00/session Max. 16/session		
K-2nd grades	July 17	9:00-12:00
K-2nd grades	August 8	9:00-12:00
3rd-5th grades	July 24	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Raptors \$10.00 Max. 16		
3rd-5th grades	July 25	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Reptiles \$10.00 Max. 16		
3rd-5th grades	August 7	9:00-12:00
Total \$		

Optional nature camp T-shirts are available for \$7.00 each. Circle your choice of size(s) and add \$7.00 for each shirt to the amount enclosed. Deadline to order shirts is May 23.

2T 3T 4T YS YM YL AS AM AL AXL

**Muscatine County Conservation Board
2018 Summer Camp Registration Form**

I understand that my child will be engaged in activities in which they may get wet/dirty, and hereby give my permission for this. In the event of an emergency, I give permission for the Muscatine County Conservation Board staff to administer first aid/and or obtain medical treatment for my child. I further understand that every effort will be made to contact me and/or my emergency contact. I do not hold the Muscatine County Conservation Board liable for any accidents which may occur.

Parent/Guardian Signature_____ **Date**_____

I give permission to the Muscatine County Conservation Board to photograph my child and that those photographs may be used on the Muscatine County Conservation Board's Facebook page and/or for promotion of future programs including brochures, displays, web pages, and presentations.

Parent/Guardian Signature_____ **Date**_____

MUSCATINE COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD
3300 CEDAR STREET
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MUSCATINE, IA 52761

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Dave Schuler	Learning Center Assistant

**3300 Cedar Street, PO Box 109
Muscatine, IA 52761**

P(563) 264-5922 F(563) 264-6097

conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us

www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

The Muscatine County Conservation Board meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Environmental Learning Center, 3300 Cedar Street in Muscatine. The public is welcome to attend.

If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Muscatine County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240



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