

Creature Cards

Over 60 illustrated information cards featuring Great Lakes plants and animals



Creature Card Definitions

Carnivore: a flesh-eating animal

Colony: a population of plants or animals in a particular place that belong to one species

Consumer: a plant or animal that preys on other living things or eating particles of organic matter

Crustacean: any of a large class of mostly water-dwelling arthropods (as shrimps, wood lice, water fleas, and barnacles) having an exoskeleton of chitin

Decomposer: an organism that lives on and breaks down dead organisms

Detritus: particles of decaying organic material

Diurnal: active in the daytime

Endangered species: a species in immediate danger of extinction

Flock: a group of birds or mammals assembled together

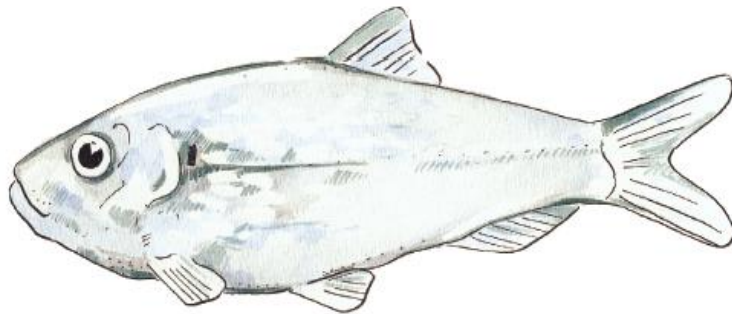
Forage fish: fish that primarily eat phytoplankton and zooplankton (especially diporeia); they are prey for larger predators such as lake trout and whitefish; they include smaller fish such as herring, alewives, chubs, and smelt.

Herbivore: animal that eats only plants

Invasive species: plant or animal that enters an ecosystem to which it is not native and competes with one or more species for food, shelter, and/or reproductive opportunities.

Larva: a young wingless, often wormlike, form (grub or caterpillar) that hatches from the egg of many insects

Migrate: to pass from one region or climate to another usually on a regular schedule for feeding or breeding



Creature Card Definitions

Mollusk: any of the category (phylum: mollusca) of invertebrate animals (as snails, clams, and mussels) with a soft body lacking segments and usually enclosed in a shell

Nocturnal: active in the night

Omnivore: feeds on both animal and plant matter

Phytoplankton: very small, freely floating plant that drifts with water currents

Plankton: small water organisms that exist in a drifting, floating state; is the base of freshwater ecosystems, provides food for larger animals and indirectly for humans, whose fisheries depend on phytoplankton and zooplankton

Predator: an animal that lives by killing and eating other animals

Prey: an animal hunted or killed by another animal for food

School: group of fish that swim together; generally of the same species for protection, feeding and other reasons

Solitary: growing or living alone; not forming part of a group or cluster

Spawn: to produce or deposit eggs

Species of concern: a plant or animal that may become threatened

Threatened species: a plant or animal needing special action to protect it from becoming endangered

Toxin: a substance produced by a living organism that is very poisonous

Zooplankton: Very small floating or swimming animals that drift with water currents

Name: Species' common and scientific names are provided.

*: Indicates that this card can be used in the activities Tangled Web and Web of Life.

who? description

A description of the species that includes type, physical characteristics and species status (endangered, invasive, etc.)

Scale: A scale conveys the relative size of the species. A darkened column indicates the species place in the size range. The sizes for each column are as follows:

#1: less than .6 cm / .25 in

#2: .6 cm / .25 in – 6.3 cm / 2.5 in

#3: 6.6 cm / 2.6 in – 30 cm / 12 in

#4: 31 cm / 12.1 in – 61 cm / 24 in

#5: 63.5 cm / 25 in – 122 cm / 48 in

#6: 123 cm / 48.5 in – 183 cm / 72 in

#7: more than 183 cm / 72 in

Size:



where? environment

An explanation of the species' general environment and specific habitat

what? characteristics

Facts about the species role in the food web, reproduction and other distinguishing habits



Interesting Fact ★

Characteristics that make this plant or animal unique

American Beech

Scientific Name:
Fagus grandifolia

who? description

Type: tree

Height: 26.6 m / 80 ft maximum

Leaves: alternate, coarsely serrated, wavy edges

Flowers: separate male / female flowers, early spring

Other: deciduous, holds the dead leaves all winter

where? environment

Sunlight: partial sunlight

Habitat: forested backdune, woodlands, moist, well-drained soils

what? characteristics

Feeding:

➤ **Who eats me?**
mammals and birds eat the nuts in autumn

Ⓒ **What do I use to make food?**
sunlight

Role: producer

Reproduction: female flowers become nuts after 50 years



Interesting Fact ★

The American beech holds onto its dead leaves all winter. Beeches keep their smooth bark as they get older.

Size:



Alewife*

Scientific Name:
Alosa pseudoharengus

who? description

Type: fish

Length: 15 cm / 6 in

Weight: 113 g / .25 lbs

Coloring: silver with blue or blue green luster on back

⚠ **Invasive Species**

where? environment

Habitat: lakes and oceans

what? characteristics

Feeding:

➤ **Who eats me?**
lake trout, salmon

Ⓒ **What do I eat?**
phytoplankton, zooplankton and small crustaceans

Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs in summer in water, near the shore

Grouping: swim in schools
Activity: year-round

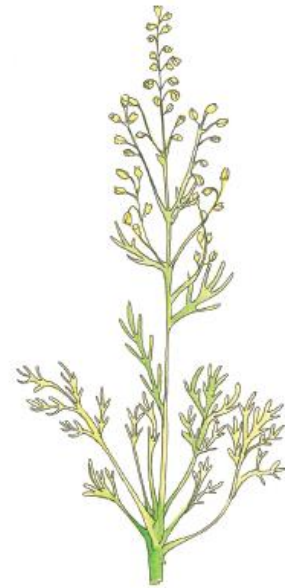
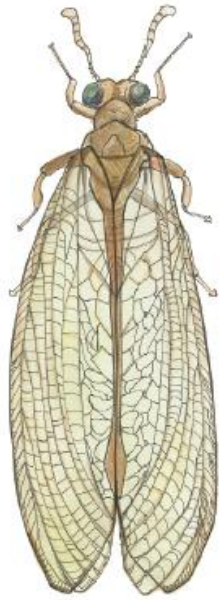


Interesting Fact ★

Alewives are usually a salt-water fish, but they spawn in freshwater. After laying their eggs, many die and wash up along the lake shoreline in the spring and summer.

Size:





Bald Eagle*

Scientific Name:
Haliaeetus leucocephalus

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 76-94 cm / 30-37 in
Weight: 7 kg / 15 lbs
Coloring: dark brown body, white head and tail
Body Features: yellow eyes, beak, and feet

where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, lakeshore and seacoast, nests in trees (especially conifers) or on cliffs near water; nests are 182 cm / 6 ft wide and 91 cm / 3 ft high

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** scavengers eat dead eagles
↳ **What do I eat?** dead or wounded fish, aquatic birds, and mammals
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: 2 eggs in spring
Grouping: solitary or in pairs, live in groups in winter
Activity: diurnal

Interesting Fact ★

Bald eagles can see 3 or 4 times as far as humans and eat one pound of fish in four minutes. They have a 182 cm / 6 ft wingspan!

Size:



Antlion

Scientific Name:
Myrmeleon immaculatus

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 4 cm / 1.5 in
Coloring: brown body
Body Features: 4 clear wings with a netlike pattern

where? environment

Habitat: foredune, sandy areas with shelter, such as a wooded dune

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** birds and spiders
↳ **What do I eat?** ants and other insects
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lays eggs
Grouping: solitary

Interesting Fact ★

Antlions dig cone-shaped pits in which they trap ants to eat. When they create the pits, they make spiral shapes in the sand, which is why they are also called "doodlebugs."

Size:



Beach Wormwood

Scientific Name:
Artemisia campestris

who? description

Type: shrub
Height: 1-1.5 m / 5 ft
Leaves: grayish green
Flowers: yellow

where? environment

Sunlight: full sunlight
Habitat: foredune, dry or rich soil

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: perennial

Interesting Fact ★

The oil and flowers from wormwood have been used as a medicine as well as an insect repellent. When used incorrectly, it can also be a poison.

Size:



Beach Pea

Scientific Name:
Lathyrus japonicus

who? description

Type: plant
Height: 30-60 cm / 1-2 ft
Leaves: green, in pairs
Flowers: purple or pink in clusters at the end of the stem
Other: a vine that can climb or lay on the ground, seed pods are like pea pods

where? environment

Sunlight: full sun
Habitat: beaches along lakes and oceans

what? characteristics

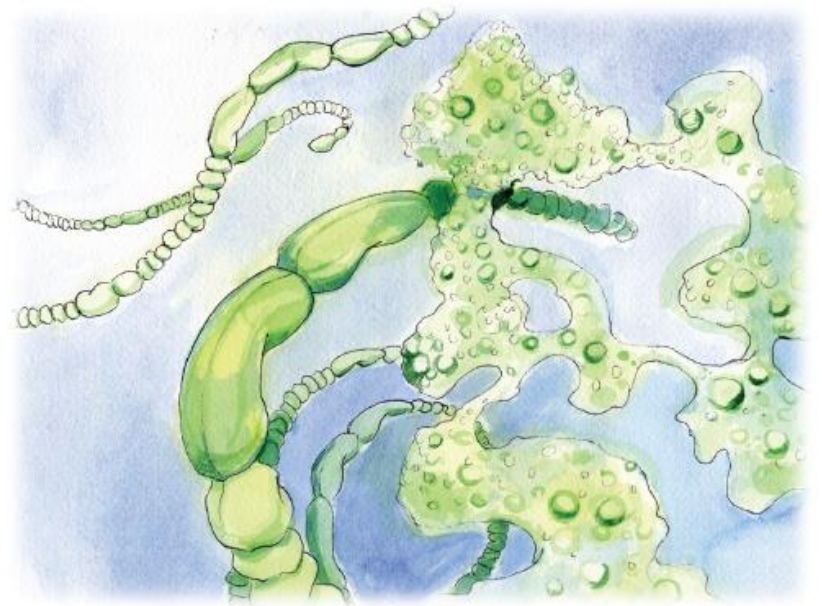
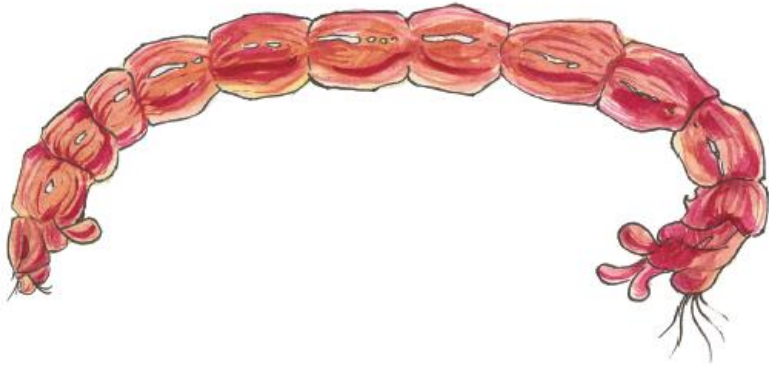
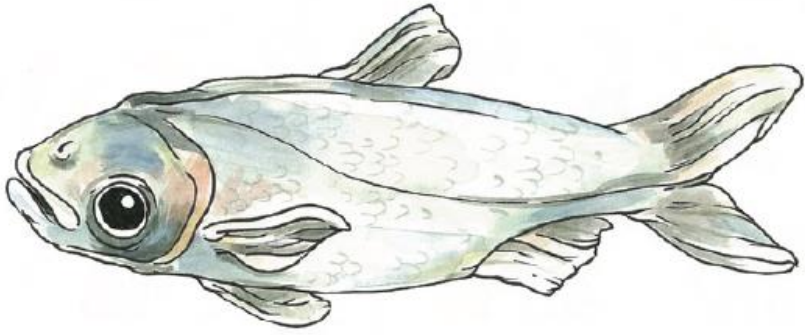
Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** deer and mice
↳ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: peas are seeds

Interesting Fact ★

The beach pea can be poisonous to some animals. It has tough roots and adds nitrogen to the sand.

Size:





Black Oak

Scientific Name:
Quercus velutina

who?
description

Type: tree
Height: 46 m / 150 ft
Leaves: deeply lobed
Flowers: separate male / female flowers are single or in multi-flowered spikes
Other: deciduous



where?
environment

Sunlight: bright sunlight
Habitat: forested backdune, woodlands, rich, moist, well-drained soil to poor, sandy soil

Interesting Fact *
The underside of the leaves are covered with tiny hairs. Native Americans used parts of the black oak as medicine for many things including: fever, chills, and sore eyes.

what?
characteristics

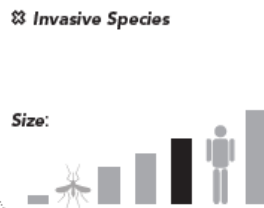
Feeding:
➤ **Who eats me?** mammals, insects, and birds eat the nuts in autumn
➤ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: nuts (acorns) mature in 2-3 years after tree is 20 years old

Bighead Carp*

Scientific Name:
Hypophthalmichthys nobilis

who?
description

Type: fish
Length: 76 – 102 cm / 30-40 in (as big as 4 ft)
Weight: up to 50 kg / 110 lbs
Coloring: silvery white abdomen, black dorsal and upper lateral sections, black spots on the side of their bodies, fins are a shade of grey



where?
environment

Habitat: lakes, rivers and reservoirs
Origin: China

Interesting Fact *
Bighead carp eat up to 20% of their body weight per day. Carp are currently in waterways connected to the Great Lakes and humans are trying to ensure that the fish do not establish a permanent presence in this ecosystem.

what?
characteristics

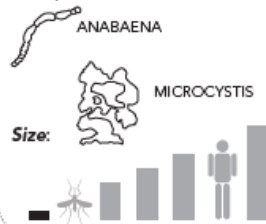
Feeding:
➤ **Who eats me?** humans
➤ **What do I eat?** zooplankton, algae
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: lay semi-buoyant eggs in warm, current-driven water during the summer
Grouping: travel alone or in small groups
Activity: more active in warmer waters

Blue-Green Algae (cyanobacteria)*

Scientific Name:
Anabaena, Microcystis

who?
description

Type: bacteria
Size: microscopic
Color: some, but not all are blue-green; can be yellow-green, green, grey-green, grey-black, and even red
Other: microcystis colonies look like tiny grey-green clumps



where?
environment

Sunlight: varies - direct and dim sunlight
Habitat: water; attach to surface of rocks, stones and plants in water, or on the bottom sediment of lakes

Interesting Fact *
Blue-green algae movements can be seen under a microscope as they glide, rotate and jerk. Their fossils have been identified as over three billion years old!

what?
characteristics

Feeding:
➤ **Who eats me?** daphnia, copepod
➤ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: can grow individually as single cells or in colonies; when algae reproduces quickly it is called a "bloom"

Bloodworm*

Scientific Name:
Family: *Chironomidae*

who?
description

Type: insect (in larval stage)
Length: 2.5-3.8 cm / 1-1.5 in
Coloring: red
Body Features: distinct head, segmented abdomen, prolegs (leg-like projections), and gills



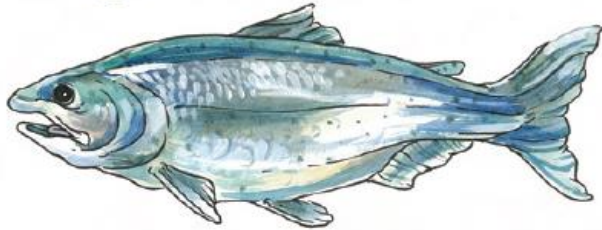
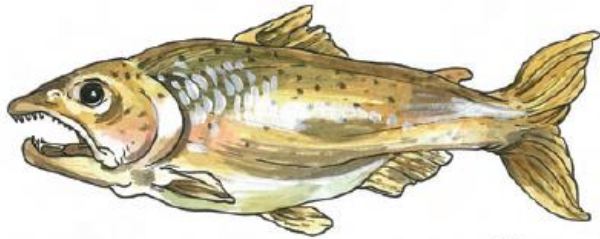
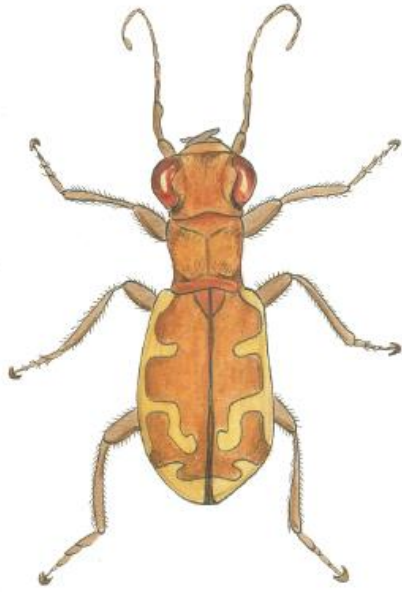
where?
environment

Habitat: muddy, bottom areas of ponds, lakes and rivers; the worms build tubes of mud around themselves that are attached to objects in the water

Interesting Fact *
A bloodworm is in the larval stage of its lifecycle. When it becomes an adult, it turns into a midge, an insect that looks like a mosquito. Freshwater bloodworms and humans both have hemoglobin which allows red blood cells to carry oxygen.

what?
characteristics

Feeding:
➤ **Who eats me?** fish, aquatic insects
➤ **What do I eat?** phytoplankton, detritus
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs as adults
Grouping: often found in groups
Activity: mainly nocturnal



Canada Goose*

Scientific Name:
Branta canadensis

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 63.5-114 cm / 25-45 in
Weight: 1-8 kg / 2-17 lbs
Coloring: black head and neck, white cheek patches, mottled grey-brown body
Body Features: brown webbed feet



where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, freshwater lakes, wetlands, ponds; builds a nest on the ground, near water



Interesting Fact *

Canada geese fly in a "V" formation during migration. They use their large, strong wings as weapons when protecting their young.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** coyotes eat geese; eggs are eaten by fox, raccoons and coyotes
☞ **What do I eat?** Plants and insects
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: lays 5-7 eggs
Grouping: pairs and flocks
Activity: diurnal, migrate south in the winter

Bronze Tiger Beetle

Scientific Name:
Cicindela repanda

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 10-13 mm / .4-.5 in
Coloring: brown with copper and red; other types can be black or green
Body Features: long legs and antennae



where? environment

Habitat: beaches, foredune, sand dunes, open woods, near water; live in burrows



Interesting Fact *

Larvae build tunnels in the ground and wait on top for passing insects to eat. The bronze tiger beetle is frequently found on beaches.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** birds, spiders, wasps
☞ **What do I eat?** insects, including ants
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: life cycle is egg, larva, pupa and adult, has 2 year life
Activity: diurnal

Common Loon*

Scientific Name:
Gavia immer

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 91 cm / 3 ft
Weight: 3-6 kg / 6-13 lbs
Coloring: black and white checkered body, black head, white belly and underwing, white collar
Body Features: large webbed feet



where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, sleep on deep water areas away from land; nest on small islands



Interesting Fact *

Many bones of the loon's body are solid, rather than hollow like those of other birds. These heavy bones help loons dive for food.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** large fish, snapping turtles, gulls, eagles, crows
☞ **What do I eat?** fish, crayfish, frogs, snails, salamanders, leeches
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: 2 eggs in summer
Grouping: pairs
Activity: diurnal

Chinook Salmon*

Scientific Name:
Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 50 – 90 cm / 20-35 in
Weight: 6.8 – 13.6 kg / 15-30 lbs
Coloring: green/blue-green on back, silver sides and white/silver underneath; reddish color during spawning

☞ Introduced Species



where? environment

Habitat: lakes, rivers, oceans and estuaries
Origin: Pacific Ocean – from Asia to North America and the Arctic

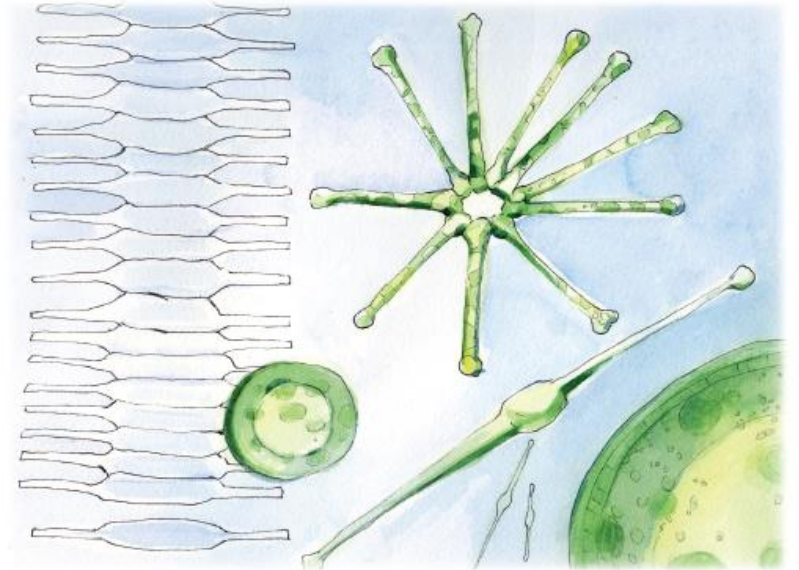
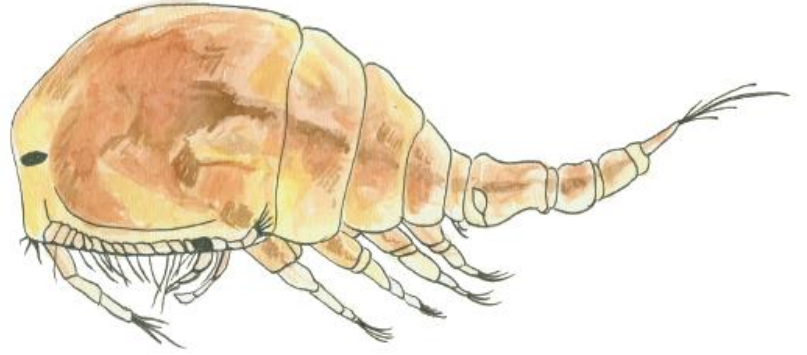
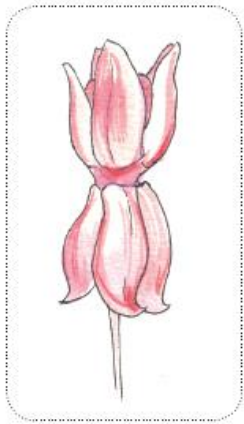


Interesting Fact *

Chinook Salmon were introduced into Lake Michigan on purpose, to control alewife populations and to be part of the sport fishing economy.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** humans and sea lamprey
☞ **What do I eat?** alewives, smelt, bloaters
Role: consumer
Reproduction: spawn eggs once in a lifetime in freshwater during summer/fall in a nest called a redd, usually located on a rocky bottom
Grouping: solitary



Copepod (cyclops)*

Scientific Name:
Cyclops strenuus

who? description

Type: zooplankton, crustacean
Length: 2-3 mm / .08-.1 in
Coloring: clear, tan
Body Features: single eyespot and curved body

where? environment

Habitat: quiet waters of ponds, lakes, and rivers

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** insects and small fish
↳ **What do I eat?** algae, bacteria, dead plant and animal matter
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: females carry twin egg sacs



Interesting Fact ★

Copepods are difficult for scientists to catch to study because they dart so quickly! It is sometimes called a cyclops because the single eyespot reminds people of the one-eyed monster in Greek mythology.

Size:

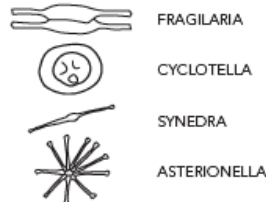


Diatoms*

Scientific Name:
Asterionella, Cyclotella, Fragilaria, Synedra

who? description

Type: phytoplankton
Height: microscopic – less than 1 mm / .04 in
Color: golden brown
Other: no leaves or flowers; single-celled organism



Size:



where? environment

Sunlight: direct sunlight
Habitat: freshwater lakes and pond, and on the surface of oceans

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** zooplankton, water fleas, copepods, snails, mollusks, fish
↳ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: divide in half (cell division)



Interesting Fact ★

More than 8000 kinds of diatoms exist. They are a major food source for fish. Diatoms have a shell or cell wall that has a pattern that lets scientists know what type of diatom it is.

Common Milkweed

Scientific Name:
Asclepias syriaca

who? description

Type: plant
Height: 60-80 cm / 2-6 ft
Leaves: opposite, oval shaped, hairy
Flowers: pink to lavender, clusters at top of stems

Size:



where? environment

Sunlight: full sun to light shade
Habitat: foredune, grasslands and open areas in rich sandy or gravelly soil



Interesting Fact ★

The milkweed has poisonous sap. When the caterpillar that becomes the monarch butterfly eats the sap, it is unharmed but becomes poisonous to other animals. It remains poisonous as a butterfly.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** monarch butterflies and caterpillars
↳ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: flowers in summer, seeds in fall, warty seed pods that burst in fall are filled with seeds with downy parachutes; spread by wind

Daphnia*

Scientific Name:
Daphnia pulex

who? description

Type: zooplankton, crustacean
Length: less than 3 mm / .1 in
Coloring: clear body tissue shows organs inside
Body Features: 5 pairs of legs used to capture food, large antennae are pushed downward for swimming

Size:



where? environment

Habitat: near the surface of lakes, ponds, and quiet streams

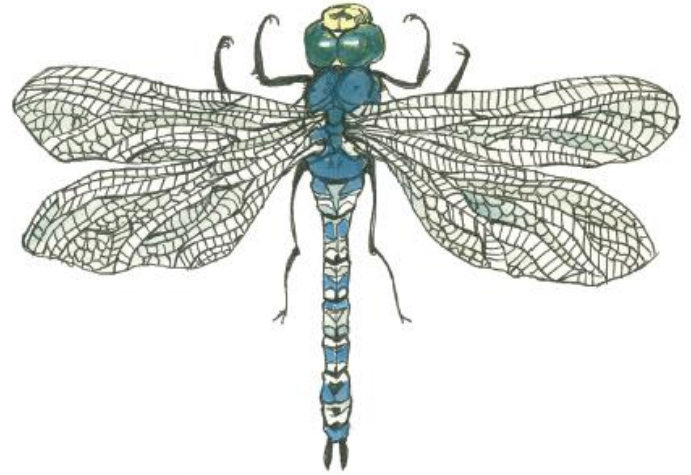
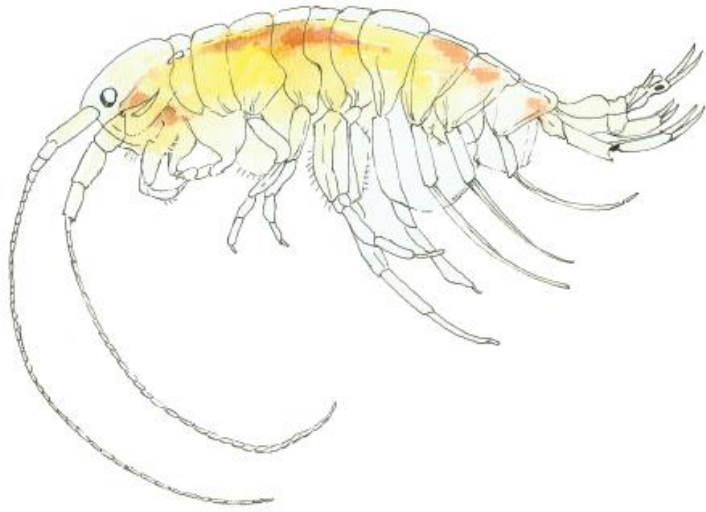


Interesting Fact ★

Dozens of daphnia can fit on a single fingernail.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** fish
↳ **What do I eat?** phytoplankton
Role: consumer, herbivore
Reproduction: lays eggs in lake bottom sand, young hatch in spring



Dragonfly (blue damer)*

Scientific Name:
Aeschna constricta

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 5-8 cm / 2-3 in wing-span
Coloring: primarily blue and green
Body Features: four wings operate independently

where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, in and around wetlands; under-water for first stage of life

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** fish
↳ **What do I eat?** mosquitoes, midges and other small, flying insects
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs in water; first stage of life under-water; adult stage on land and in flight
Grouping: solitary
Activity: diurnal



Interesting Fact ★

Dragonflies are a living fossil; they have not changed for over 300 million years. They can hover, fly backwards, loop, and speed up to 56 km / 35 mi per hour.



Diporeia*

Scientific Name:
Diporeia hoyi

who? description

Type: crustacean
Length: 1.27 cm / .5 in
Weight: .1 oz / 2.8 g
Coloring: clear, yellow
Body Features: 5 pairs of legs

where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, spends time in the water column, lives in mud on lake bottom

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** whitefish, chub, sculpin
↳ **What do I eat?** algae and bacteria
Role: consumer, herbivore
Reproduction: lay eggs
Grouping: colonies
Activity: nocturnal



Interesting Fact ★

Diporeia is a very important food source for forage fish. Even though they are small, they are high in fat and calories when eaten by fish.



Eastern Gray Squirrel

Scientific Name:
Sciurus carolinensis

who? description

Type: mammal
Length: 38-52.5 cm / 16-20 in, tail length ranges from 15-25 cm / 6-10 in
Weight: 340-630 g / .75-1.5 lbs.
Coloring: dark to pale gray, may have red or brown tones, tail is light gray
Body Features: belly is white or light grayish, white ring around eye and hair on tail is tipped with white

where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, areas with trees; live in trees (mainly oak), have 2 types of homes, a hole in tree trunk and a nest of leaves and twigs on a tree branch above the ground

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** mink, weasel, red fox, fisher, lynx, bobcat, and wolf; young eaten by raccoons, snakes, hawks, red squirrels
↳ **What do I eat?** nuts, seeds, fungi, plants, insects, bird eggs
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: 2-4 young born in the spring, may have 2 litters each year
Grouping: may share tree dens
Activity: when warm: active after sunrise and before sunset, when cold: active mid-day



Interesting Fact ★

Eastern gray squirrels can swim. They bury food during the winter, and then relocate these hiding places using their sense of smell.



Eastern Box Turtle

Scientific Name:
Terrapene carolina

who? description

Type: reptile
Length: 12-15 cm / 5-6 in
Coloring: black with yellow and orange spots and stripes
Body Features: high, domed shell with hinged bottom

where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, wooded dunes and moist fields and forests; lives in mud and leaves

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** raccoons, foxes
↳ **What do I eat?** berries, mushrooms, earthworms, slugs, snails, and insects
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: eggs; 3-6 in the summer, laid on land and covered in dirt
Grouping: solitary
Activity: diurnal; spring and summer



Interesting Fact ★

When box turtles are 4-5 years old, they can pull in their legs and head to completely close their shell for protection. Some box turtles grow to be over 100 years old.





Eurasian Milfoil*

Scientific Name:
Myriophyllum spicatum

who? description

Type: plant
Height: up to 91 cm / 3 ft
Leaves: 1.5-4 cm / .6-1.5 in long, have a feather-like outline, in groups of 4; stem is leafless towards the base, but branches out, the top often turns red
Flowers: lower ones are female, upper ones are male

☞ Invasive Species



where? environment

Sunlight: moderate
Habitat: lives in water from 1-3 m / 3-9 ft deep



Interesting Fact ★

Eurasian milfoil is an invasive species brought to North America from Europe in the 1940's. It competes with native plants and can impair water quality.

what? habits

Feeding:
☞ *Who eats me?* water birds
☛ *What do I use to make food?* sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: stems release fragments that develop roots, new stems and leaves, then sink and grow from the bottom; can also be pollinated

Eastern Hognose Snake

Scientific Name:
Heterodon platirhinos

who? description

Type: reptile
Length: 51-84 cm / 20-33 in
Coloring: Can be tan, yellow, brown, and olive. Large dark blotches behind the head.
Body Features: uses upturned nose a shovel for burrowing and foraging for food



where? environment

Habitat: foredune, in sand dunes, lives in burrows in sandy areas



Interesting Fact ★

This harmless snake defends itself by flattening its head and neck, then hissing and striking with a closed mouth. If this does not repel the threat, the snake goes into convulsions, opens its mouth, rolls over and "plays dead."

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ *Who eats me?* raccoons, hawks
☛ *What do I eat?* toads, frogs, mice, and insects
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: female lays eggs in burrow, and they hatch in August and September
Grouping: solitary
Activity: diurnal, most active in spring and summer

Fowler's Toad

Scientific Name:
Bufo fowleri

who? description

Type: amphibian
Length: 4-7 cm / 2-3 in
Coloring: cream colored front; green-grey back with dark brown spots; males have dark vocal pouches during breeding season
Body Features: each dark spot contains 3-4 warts



where? environment

Habitat: foredune, lives in sand dunes and lakeshore; uses shallow water for breeding, burrows in sand, debris, or leaf litter



Interesting Fact ★

This toad secretes a toxin from the glands on the sides of the neck to protect itself from predators.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ *Who eats me?* eastern hognose snake, raccoons, skunks.
☛ *What do I eat?* insects
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: female lays 7000 eggs in shallow water; tadpole-frog life cycle takes 1-2 months
Grouping: gathers in April-June for breeding, otherwise solitary
Activity: juveniles are diurnal; adults are nocturnal

Fingernail Clam*

Scientific Name:
Sphaeriidae

who? description

Type: mollusk
Length: 1.3 cm / .5 in
Coloring: cream, orange, white
Body Features: fine rows of concentric, raised lines



where? environment

Habitat: sandy bottom of freshwater lakes and streams

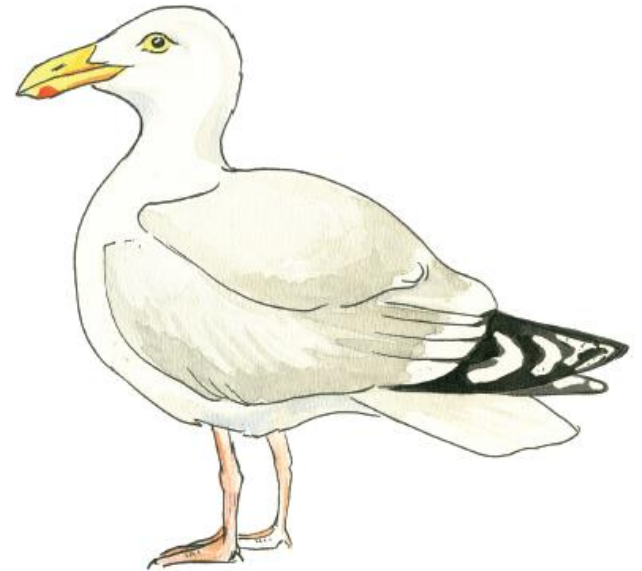
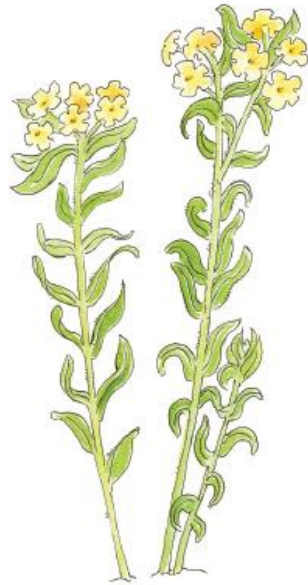
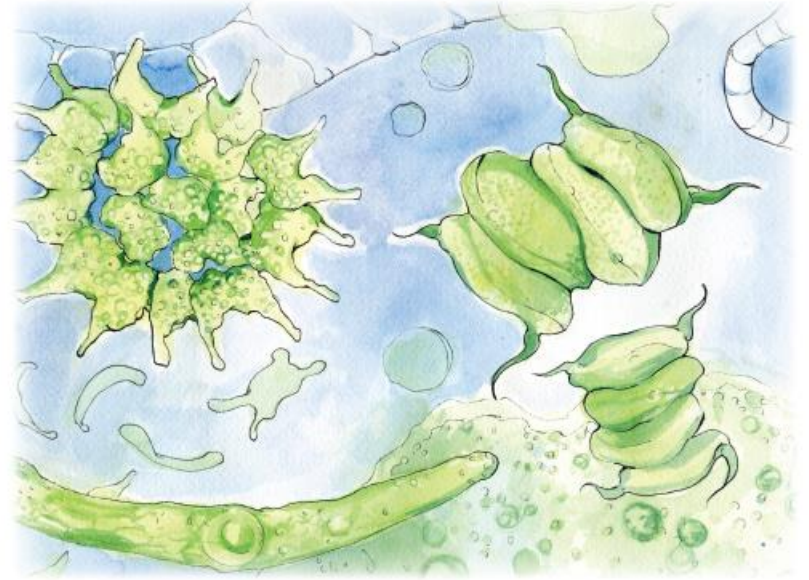


Interesting Fact ★

Fingernail clams do not have eyes, a nose, or antennae, but they do have a foot they push out of the shell to help them to move.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ *Who eats me?* bottom feeding fish
☛ *What do I eat?* plankton, bacteria
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: young emerge from parents in adult form
Activity: year-round

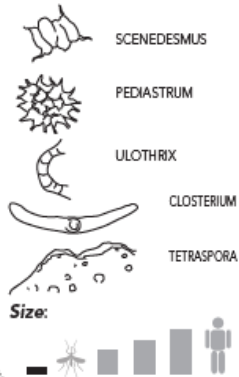


Green Algae*

Scientific Name:
Closterium, Pediastrum, Scenedesmus, Tetraspora, Ulothrix

who? description

Type: phytoplankton
Size: microscopic - 1000 could fit on the head of a pin



where? environment

Sunlight: direct sunlight
Habitat: mostly freshwater, found in all 5 Great Lakes



Interesting Fact ★

Algae is the base of the lake food web. It produces more oxygen than all of the plants on Earth combined. Of the more than 7,000 types of green algae in the world, *Cladophora* is one type found in clumps along Great Lakes beaches.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** water fleas, copepods, snails, mollusks, fish
☛ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight

Role: producer

Reproduction: can grow individually as single cells or in colonies; some have spores; when algae reproduce quickly, this is called a "bloom"

Great Blue Heron

Scientific Name:
Ardea herodias

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 1.2 m / 4 ft tall, wingspan is 2.4 m / 7 ft
Coloring: head white with black stripe, back grey-blue, breast white
Body Features: long, yellow bill



where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, wetlands and lakes, nests in tree-tops made of dry branches, nests are 30 cm / 1 ft deep and 91 cm / 3 ft wide



Interesting Fact ★

The great blue heron is the largest heron, and the second largest bird (by height) in the Great Lakes. The largest bird by height is the sandhill crane.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** eggs eaten by crows, ravens, gulls, raccoons

☛ **What do I eat?** small fish, shell fish, frogs, rodents, reptiles, small birds

Role: consumer, carnivore

Reproduction: 3-5 eggs; nest in woodlands in spring

Grouping: colonies

Activity: female is diurnal, male is nocturnal; migrate south for winter

Herring Gull*

Scientific Name:
Larus argentatus

who? description

Type: bird
Length: up to 61 cm / 24 in
Weight: 1.1 kg / 2.5 lb average
Coloring: white, grey wing backs, yellow bill with red spot
Body Features: pink legs

Note: The ring-billed gull is also commonly found in the Great Lakes region. It has a black line around its beak and has similar characteristics to the herring gull.



where? environment

Habitat: beach, lakeshore and seacoast, grass nests on flat ground



Interesting Fact ★

Herring gulls will travel up to 40 miles from home for food.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** other gulls, eagles eat young
☛ **What do I eat?** clams, small fish, small mammals, garbage, birds, dead animals

Role: consumer, omnivore, scavenger

Reproduction: 3 eggs in spring

Grouping: colonies

Activity: diurnal

Hairy Puccoon

Scientific Name:
Lithospermum carolinense

who? description

Type: plant
Height: 45 cm / 18 in
Leaves: alternate, narrow, hairy with smooth edges
Flowers: 5 parts, orange and yellow
Stem: multiple, hairy stems



where? environment

Sunlight: moderate
Habitat: foredune, dry open woods, thickets, dry grasslands, rocky soils



Interesting Fact ★

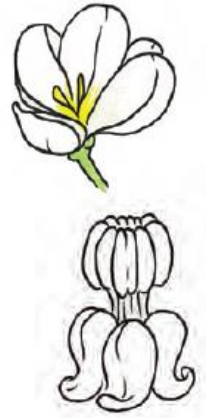
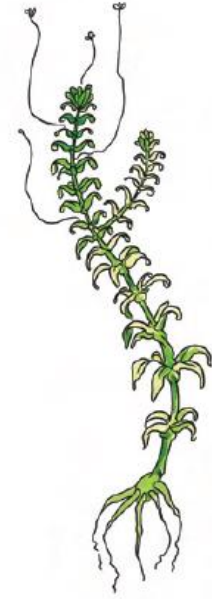
'Puccoon' is a Native American term applied to plants used to make red pigment.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** deer, butterflies eat nectar
☛ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight

Role: producer

Reproduction: perennial, 4 nutlets from each flower



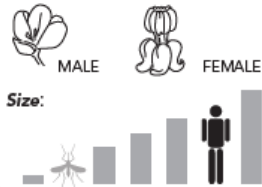
Hydrilla*

Scientific Name:
Hydrilla verticillata

who? description

Type: plant
Height: up to 8 m / 25 ft
Leaves: green with red ribbing, saw-toothed, four to eight around the stem
Flowers: transparent or white (female) or green (male), with three petals and three sepals

⌘ Invasive Species



where? environment

Sunlight: require less than 1% of full sunlight or less
Habitat: any partially submerged body of water with a salinity level of less than 7%
Origin: Africa

! Interesting Fact ★

Hydrilla, not yet in the Great Lakes, is anticipated to "invade" the system due to its presence in nearby aquatic ecosystems. It is made up of nearly 95% water, which allows for rapid growth.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** coots and other bird species
☛ **What do I use to make food?** oxygen and sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: re-growth of stem fragments and by auxiliary buds (tubers) that can each produce up to 6,000 new plants in 4 years
Other: male and female flowers produced separately on a single plant

Human*

Scientific Name:
Homo sapien

who? description

Type: mammal
Length: adults average 152-182 cm / 5-6 ft
Weight: adults average 50-91 kg / 110-200 lbs
Coloring: skin shades range including, white, pink, beige, tan, light-dark brown
Body Features: 2 arms, 2 legs, 10 digits on hands and feet
Note: rely on sense organs (eyes, ears, mouth, nose) and opposable thumb
Size:



! Interesting Fact ★

Humans do not have natural predators and are able to live in many different types of environments.

where? environment

Habitat: homes in a variety of ecosystems, rural-urban; homes vary in shape, size, and material depending on culture and location

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** not a primary food source for animals, but may be eaten by large carnivores
☛ **What do I eat?** depends on culture - various vegetables, fruits, nuts, fish (including lake trout and yellow perch), cows, pigs, chickens
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: live young which is generally raised by both parents

Lake Huron Locust

Scientific Name:
Trimerotropis huroniana

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 2-4 cm / 1-1.6 in
Coloring: silver to ash gray with darker brown and white markings
Body Features: males have noisier flight and smaller body size than females

⌘ Endangered species in Wisconsin



where? environment

Habitat: foredune, Great Lakes sand dunes, will not live near human developed areas

! Interesting Fact ★

Lake Huron locust is a member of the grasshopper family. During courtship dances, males try to get the female's attention with the cracking noise made when they snap their wings together.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** birds
☛ **What do I eat?** marram grass, Pitcher's thistle, wormwood, dead insects
Role: consumer, herbivore
Reproduction: mid-summer females lay their eggs in sand, where they remain over winter; nymphs hatch in late spring.
Activity: diurnal

Ladybug (convergent ladybird beetle)

Scientific Name:
Hippodamia convergens

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 4-8 mm / .15-.30 in
Weight: 68 g / .15 lbs
Coloring: bright red with black spots
Body Features: round body shaped like a half pea, 6 pairs of jointed legs
Note: Asian lady beetles are an invasive species that look just like ladybugs, but are more orange in color. They are often found along shorelines.



! Interesting Fact ★

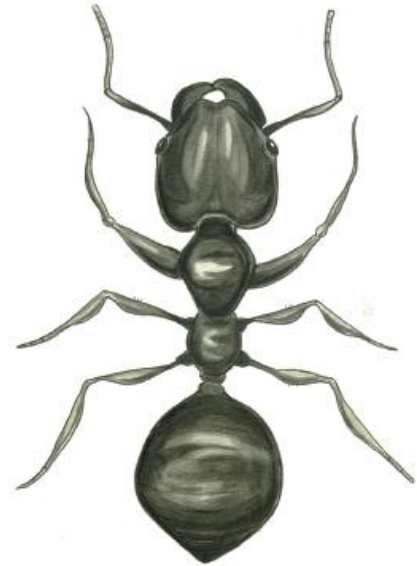
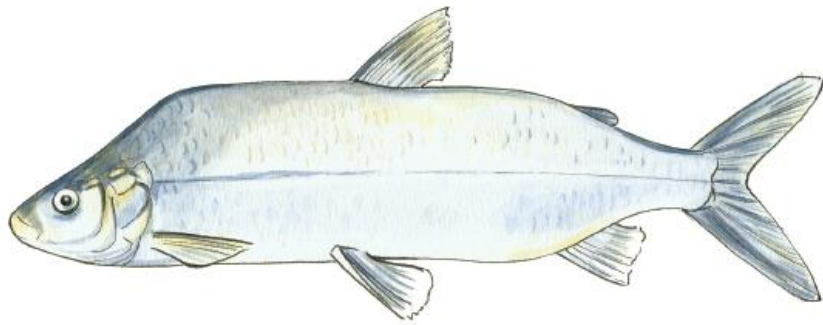
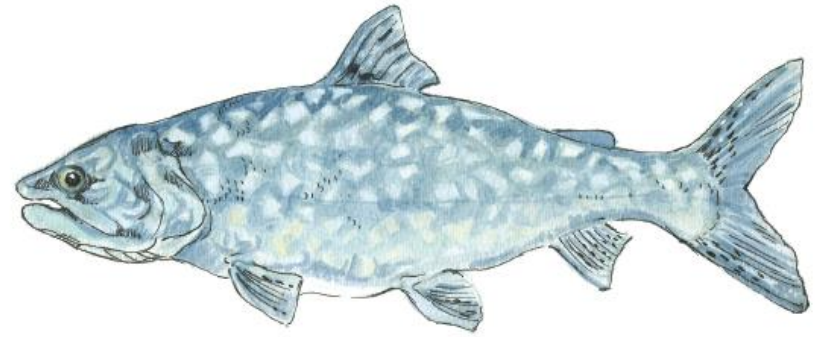
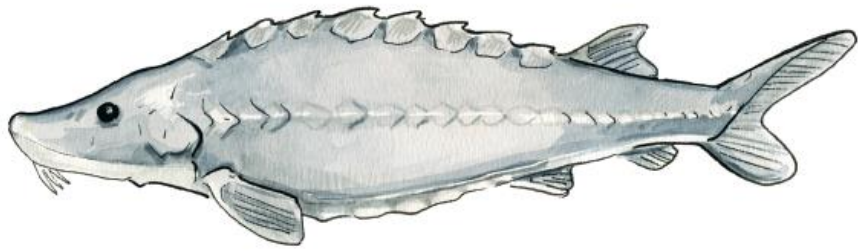
A ladybug beats its wings 85 times per second when flying. There are nearly 5,000 kinds of ladybugs in the world.

where? environment

Habitat: beach, fields, sand dunes, forests, grasslands, and gardens

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** birds
☛ **What do I eat?** small insects, including aphids
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lays a group of small yellow eggs
Grouping: alone or in a group

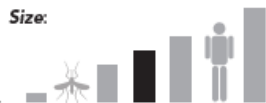


Lake Trout*

Scientific Name:
Salvelinus namaycush

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 43-69 cm / 17-27 in
Weight: 1344-4032 g / 3-9 lbs
Coloring: light spots on dark background, color can vary greatly from fish to fish



where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, in cold, clear, deep water



Interesting Fact ★

Lake trout are a popular food for humans and the invasive sea lamprey. This has caused overfishing and reduced fish population. The United States and Canada worked together to reduce lamprey numbers. Namaycush is a Native American word that means "dweller of the deep."

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** sea lamprey, humans
☞ **What do I eat?** chub, sculpin, smelt, alewives
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: female lays up to 15,000 eggs; spawns in shallow areas
Activity: year-round

Lake Sturgeon*

Scientific Name:
Acipenser fulvescens

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 91-183 cm / 3-6 ft
Weight: 4-91 kg / 10-200 lbs
Coloring: olive brown to grey, white belly
Body Features: long, pointed snout with four barbels, or feelers, under the front of the snout

☞ **Endangered in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan**



where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, lives on lake bottom



Interesting Fact ★

The female sturgeon takes 20 years to mature and can live for 100 years. The sturgeon uses its barbels to find food on the lake bottom.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** humans and other fish eat eggs
☞ **What do I eat?** crustaceans, mollusks, insects
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: eggs; spawns every 4-6 years in swift water
Grouping: solitary
Activity: diurnal

Little Black Ant

Scientific Name:
Monomorium minimum

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 2 mm / .25 in; the queen is twice as long
Coloring: black, queen is dark brown or black
Body Features: large jaw, bent antennae, queen and fertile ants have 4 wings



where? environment

Habitat: foredune, underground in most North American terrestrial habitats



Interesting Fact ★

The little black ant is the most abundant life form in the ecosystems surrounding the Great Lakes

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** birds, spiders, raccoons, woodchucks
☞ **What do I eat?** flower nectar, sap, small insects
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: queen ants mate once, then produce eggs for the rest of their life
Grouping: colonies
Activity: diurnal; spring and summer

Lake Whitefish*

Scientific Name:
Coregonus clupeaformis

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 43-56 cm / 17-22 in
Coloring: silver sides, greenish brown back
Body Features: two clear fins on the back and a blunt nose



where? environment

Habitat: found in all five Great Lakes; prefer deep waters of up to 61 m / 200 ft, deeper in hot weather

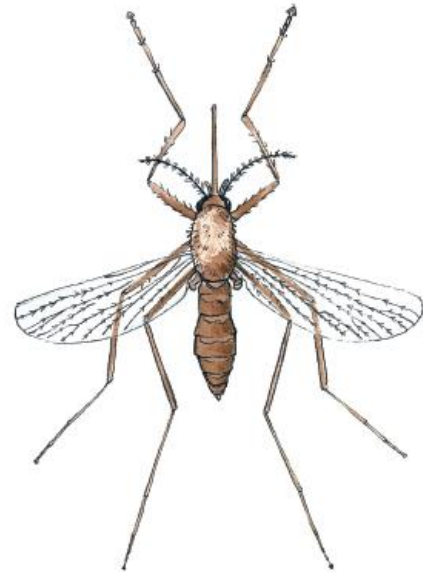
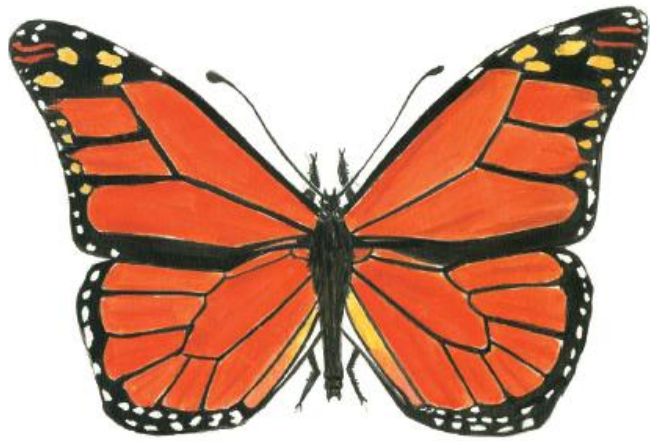
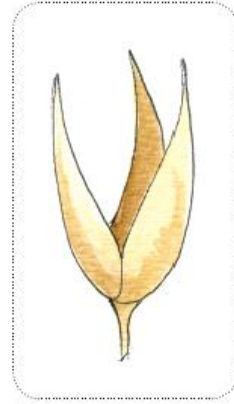
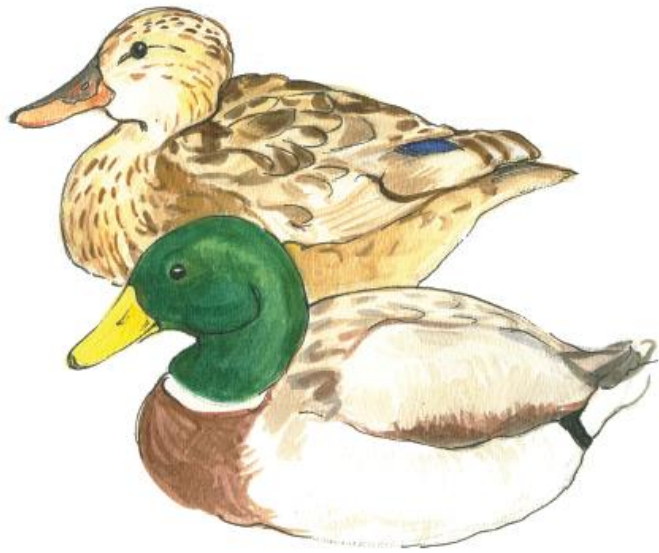


Interesting Fact ★

The whitefish population seems to be making a comeback after years of over-fishing and bad environmental conditions had reduced their population.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** lake trout, walleye, pike, humans; eggs eaten by other fish
☞ **What do I eat?** diporeia, insects, freshwater shrimp, small fish, fish eggs
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: eggs laid in early winter in shallow sandy or rocky water 7 m / 25 ft deep; young hatch in spring
Grouping: swims in schools



Marram Grass

Scientific Name:
Ammophila breviligulata

who? description

Type: plant
Height: up to 1 m / 3 ft
Leaves: narrow, spike-like
Other: scaly underground stems extend 10-12 m / 30-45 ft, forms an underground web with its roots



where? environment

Sunlight: full sun
Habitat: foredune, in sand dunes



Interesting Fact ★

Marram grass uses its roots to stabilize the soil for its own survival. This also enables other vegetation to take hold in the dunes.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** fungi and nematodes
☞ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: perennial, new shoots grow from spreading roots

Mallard Duck*

Scientific Name:
Anas platyrhynchos

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 50-60 cm / 19-23 in
Weight: 1.24 kg / 3 lbs
Coloring: male-green head, white neck ring, brown breast, yellow bill; female-all brown/ white mottled, greenish bill, white patch around wing
Body Features: orange webbed feet



Interesting Fact ★

The mallard is the most commonly recognized wild duck in the world.

where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, freshwater lakes, ponds, swamps, grass nest on the ground

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** muskellunge, humans, coyotes, snapping turtle
☞ **What do I eat?** emergent weeds, small invertebrates, larval insects, grains
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: 8-12 eggs in spring
Grouping: pairs or flocks
Activity: diurnal

Mosquito

Scientific Name:
Aedes stimulans

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 6.4-12.7 mm / .125-.5 in
Coloring: brown
Body Features: 6 long legs



where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, lake or pond, anywhere with standing water



Interesting Fact ★

Mosquitoes can travel up to one mile from their breeding spot to find a meal. The adult female (only!) seeks a blood meal so she can produce a new patch of eggs.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** fish, birds, frogs, other insects
☞ **What do I eat?** organic matter in water, human and animal blood
Role: consumer, omnivore, parasite
Reproduction: females lay 50-500 eggs
Grouping: singly or in swarms
Activity: most active at dawn and dusk

Monarch Butterfly

Scientific Name:
Danaus plexippus

who? description

Type: insect
Length: wingspan is 8.6 - 12.4 cm / 3.5- 4.9 in; caterpillars are 5 cm / 2 in long
Coloring: orange wings with black veins and black margin with small white spots on each wing
Body Features: 6 legs and 4 wings
Note: Females have larger veins and males have a dark spot on the hindwing.



Interesting Fact ★

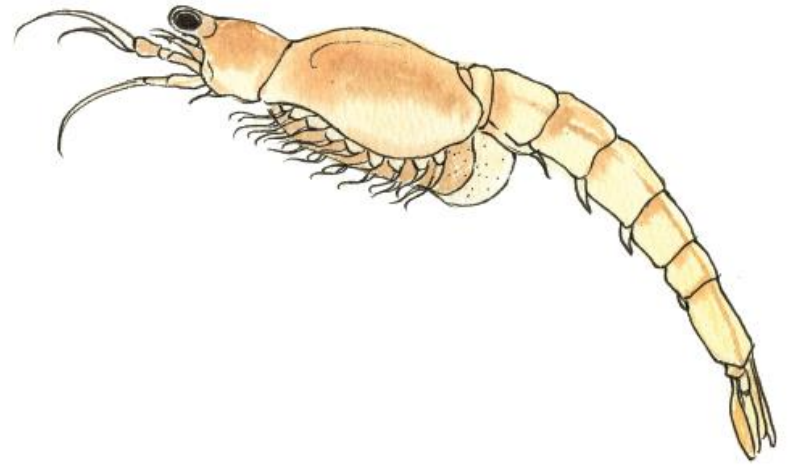
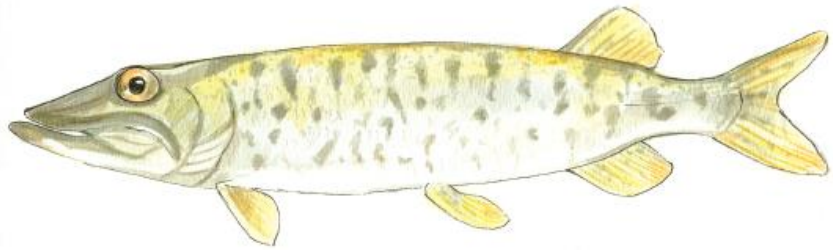
A monarch butterfly is a poisonous snack. The toxins from the monarch's milkweed diet make the caterpillar and butterfly stages poisonous to predators.

where? environment

Habitat: foredune, fields where common milkweed grows

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** eggs eaten by insects, spiders, birds, mice; some insects eat adults
☞ **What do I eat?** caterpillars eat common milkweed, adults eat nectar of milkweed and other plants
Role: consumer, herbivore
Reproduction: life cycle is: caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly; lay eggs on the bottom of milkweed leaves.
Grouping: migrate in groups
Activity: migrate to Mexico each year



Opossum Shrimp*

Scientific Name:
Mysis relicta

who? description

Type: crustacean
Length: 2-3 cm / .8-1 in
Coloring: clear, beige
Body Features: 10 pairs of jointed legs

where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, deep cold water

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** lake trout, alewife
↳ **What do I eat?** Phytoplankton, zooplankton, copepods, detritus
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: female carries eggs in a pouch
Activity: diurnal movement and nocturnal feeding



Interesting Fact ★

Opossum shrimp look like a miniature crayfish. They are not actually shrimp.



Piping Plover

Scientific Name:
Charadrius melodus

who? description

Type: bird
Height: 14 cm / 5.5 in
Coloring: sandy grey with dark bands across head and breast, orange legs
Body Features: short bill

where? environment

Habitat: beach, sand and gravel shores of rivers and lakes, sand bars

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** coyotes and crows
↳ **What do I eat?** insects, crustaceans, mollusks
Role: carnivore
Reproduction: 2-4 eggs laid in sand in May, both parents care for young
Grouping: pairs and groups
Activity: migrate yearly to Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean



Interesting Fact ★

The piping plover is a threatened species in the United States and an endangered species in Canada, which means it is protected because there are not many left.



⚠ **Endangered species in the Great Lakes**

Muskellunge*

Scientific Name:
Esox masquinongy

who? description

Type: fish
Length: up to 152 cm / 5 ft
Weight: 18-31 kg / 40-70 lbs
Coloring: silver green to light brown with dark bars, cream belly with small brown spots
Body Features: long head and snout, and a large mouth

where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, near weed beds and shore

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** humans
↳ **What do I eat?** other fish, ducklings, frogs, rodents
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs in shallow water
Grouping: solitary
Activity: most active in warm weather



Interesting Fact ★

Muskies were often caught by fishermen as prize fish, but now fishing of muskies is regulated to protect the population.



Pileated Woodpecker

Scientific Name:
Dryocopus pileatus

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 40-48 cm / 16-19 in
Coloring: black body with white neck stripes, white wing lining
Body Features: red crest on top of the head, chisel-shaped bill, male has red mustache

where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, mature forests; create holes in already hollow trees

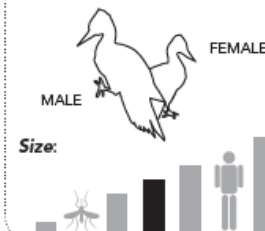
what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** snakes eat eggs, hawks
↳ **What do I eat?** ants and other insects living in wood, berries, and nuts
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: 3-8 white eggs in a tree cavity. Both parents incubate eggs
Grouping: can live in groups
Activity: diurnal, strong flyer, climbs on trees; hops on the ground, sleeps in tree at night

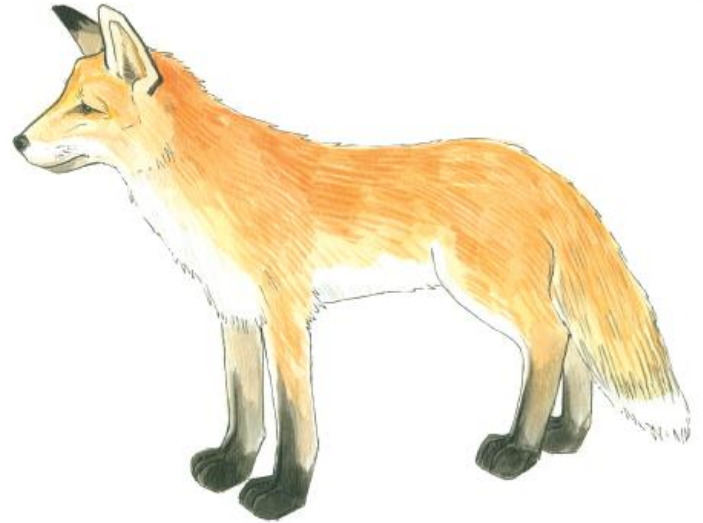
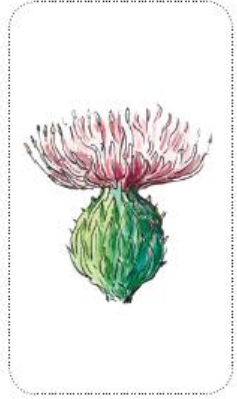


Interesting Fact ★

The pileated woodpecker uses its long, pointed, sticky tongue to eat ants from their tunnels. This woodpecker has a loud, ringing call. They will make up to 16 holes in a tree which allow them to escape from predators.



MALE FEMALE



Poison Ivy

Scientific Name:
Toxicodendron radicans

who? description

Type: plant
Height: can grow to 3 m / 10 ft or more
Leaves: clusters of 3 asymmetrical leaves
Flowers: greenish-white
Other: yellowish-white berries; plant can be a small shrub or a vine



where? environment

Sunlight: partial sun
Habitat: forested backdune, forest floor, climbing on trees

Interesting Fact ★
Poison ivy can cause an itchy allergic reaction on the skin if it comes in contact with the plant. If there is contact, as quickly as possible, wash with cold water and soap.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☉ **Who eats me?** birds eat the berries
☾ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: seeds in berries

Pitcher's Thistle

Scientific Name:
Cirsium pitcheri

who? description

Type: plant
Height: up to 91 cm / 3 ft
Leaves: finely and deeply lobed and can be up to 30 cm / 1 ft long
Flowers: cream or pink flowers - when not in flower, it is a cluster of silvery leaves
Other: stem and leaves covered with fine white hairs

Threatened species in the Great Lakes
Size:

where? environment

Sunlight: full sunlight
Habitat: foredune, open sand dunes and low beach ridges and often found near shore

Interesting Fact ★
The fine white hairs on the thistle help the plant retain water and reflect the sun's strong rays. The taproot can be 6 feet long. Shoreline development destroys this plant and its habitat.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☉ **Who eats me?** butterflies and bees eat nectar
☾ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: grows 5-8 years before flowering; pollinated by insects, mainly bees, seeds are spread by wind

Red Fox

Scientific Name:
Vulpes vulpes

who? description

Type: mammal
Length: 94-97 cm / 37-38 in
Weight: 4-5 kg / 10-15 lbs
Coloring: usually red / yellow or red / brown yellow, white underside, tail has white or black tip
Body Features: feet and legs are black



where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, forest, prairie, farmland, and sometimes in suburbs, live in dens in the ground

Interesting Fact ★
The red fox usually has two entrances to a den and other dens nearby. This allows them to move to safety when needed. A red fox can jump as high as 2 meters / 6.5 feet.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☉ **Who eats me?** bobcats, eagles eat pups
☾ **What do I eat?** rodents, rabbits, insects, birds, turtles, berries, fruit, and dead animals
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: one litter per year, 4-9 young born in a den, usually in the ground
Grouping: solitary, except when raising a litter and mating
Activity: nocturnal, active at dusk

Quagga Mussel*

Scientific Name:
Dreissena rostriformis bugensis

who? description

Type: mollusk
Length: 28 mm / 1+ in
Coloring: tan and blackish pattern to all black depending on location
Body Features: a connecting tissue holds the two shell halves together, often with the animal inbetween, this tissue helps connect to hard surfaces and other mussels

Invasive Species
Size:

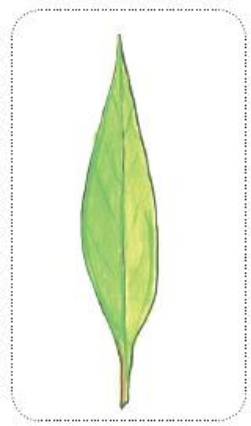
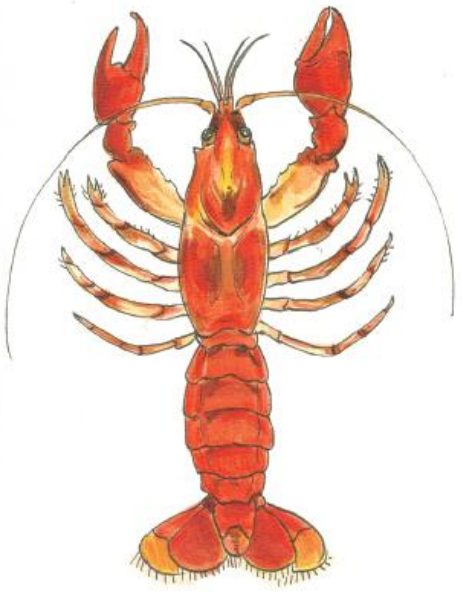
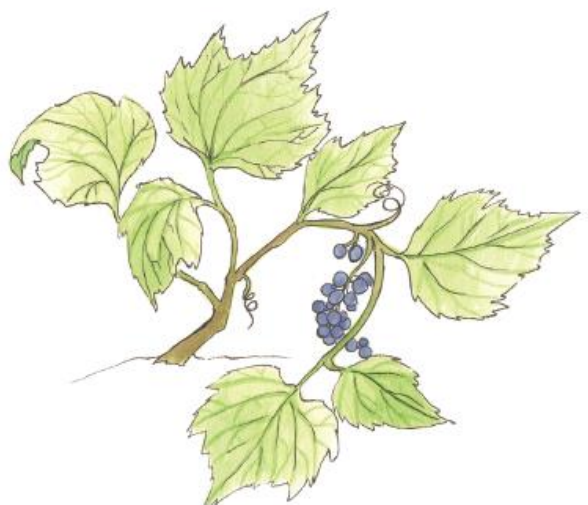
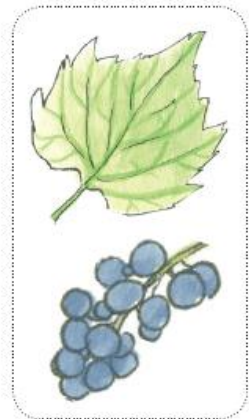
where? environment

Habitat: freshwater
Origin: Eastern Europe

Interesting Fact ★
The quagga mussel can live at any depth as long as oxygen is present, while the zebra mussel, a relative, can only survive at depths less than 12 meters.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☉ **Who eats me?** ducks, crayfish and lake whitefish, gobies, sculpins
☾ **What do I eat?** phytoplankton, diatoms
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: up to one million eggs per year expelled by females and fertilized outside of the body by males in spring / summer
Grouping: singly or in colonies



Round Goby*

Scientific Name:
Neogobius melanostomus

who? description

Type: fish
Length: under 18 cm / 7 in
Coloring: slate gray or black body with black or brown spots
Body Features: raised, frog-like eyes; have thick lips, front fin has a black spot, body is covered with fine scales

🦟 Invasive Species



where? environment

Habitat: lake bottom, found in all the Great Lakes and some nearby lakes



Interesting Fact ★

The round goby has a very active sensory system which allows it to find prey and also avoid becoming prey. They have become too numerous to bring under control.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** bass, pike, walleye
☞ **What do I eat?** small fish, zebra mussels, and fish eggs
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: spawns up to five times per mating season; builds nests in rocky areas for eggs
Grouping: found in dense populations
Activity: diurnal

Riverbank Grape

Scientific Name:
Vitis riparia

who? description

Type: plant
Height: rises up to 61 cm / 2 ft off the ground, but can have vines up to 15 m / 50 ft long
Leaves: green
Flowers: green
Other: produces grapes



Interesting Fact ★

Birds use the bark of the riverbank grape to make nests.

where? environment

Sunlight: full sun
Habitat: foredune, along lakeshores, in sand forests, sand dunes

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** pileated woodpecker and other birds, deer, fox, squirrel eat fruit, insects seek pollen
☞ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: seeds in grapes

Sand Cherry

Scientific Name:
Prunus pumila

who? description

Type: shrub
Height: 1.8 m / 6 ft
Leaves: silvery green
Flowers: white flowers and purple – black fruits



Interesting Fact ★

The sand cherry helps to stabilize sand dunes with its root system.

where? environment

Sunlight: full sun
Habitat: beach, coastal dunes, typically in the foredune

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** birds
☞ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: seeds in cherries

Rusty Crayfish*

Scientific Name:
Orconectes rusticus

who? description

Type: crustacean
Height: 8-10 cm / 3-4 in
Coloring: red / brown color
Body Features: large claws and rusty colored spots on each side of the main body section

🦟 Invasive Species



Interesting Fact ★

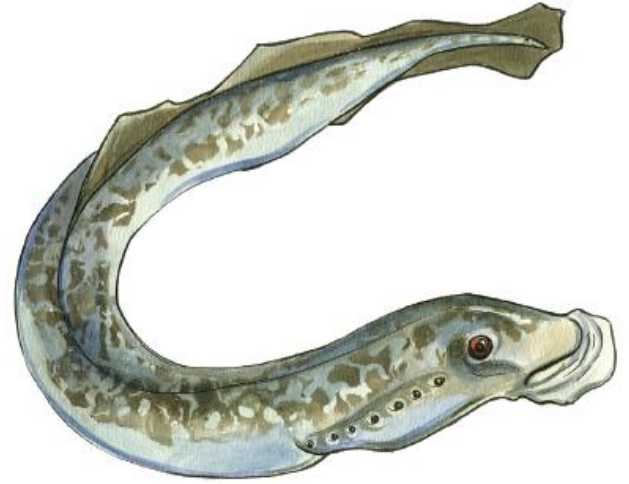
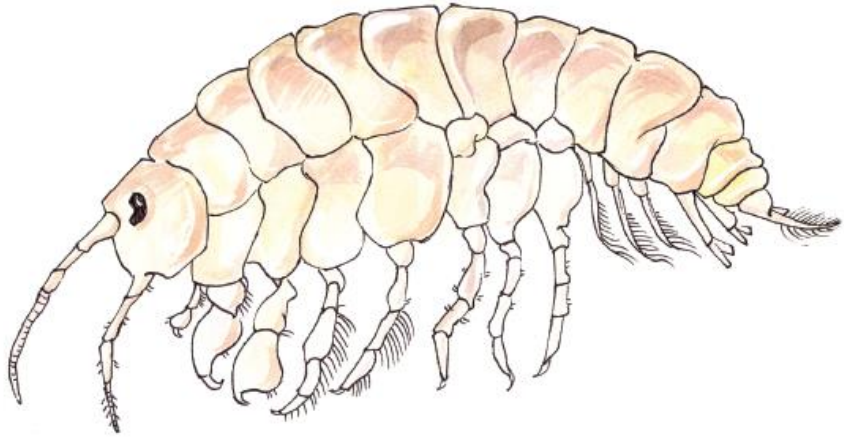
Rusty crayfish are an invasive species that have been spread when used for bait by fishermen. They have also been spread by science classes who have released them after being classroom pets.

where? environment

Habitat: lakes, ponds, and streams in areas where there is debris on the bottom

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** predator fish, birds, raccoons
☞ **What do I eat?** aquatic plants and insects, fish eggs and small fish
Role: consumer, omnivore and scavenger
Reproduction: eggs are usually laid in the spring by the female
Grouping: young crayfish stay with their mother for several weeks. After, they tend to live independently
Activity: nocturnal



Sea Lamprey*

Scientific Name:
Petromyzon marinus

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 30-50 cm / 12-20 in
Weight: 226-363 g / .5-8 lbs
Coloring: grey-blue, metallic purple, and silver
Body Features: long, slender body, mouth with sharp teeth enables it to suck out the fluid and tissue of fish, especially the lake trout

🦋 Invasive Species



where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes and oceans

⚠️ Interesting Fact ★

Sea lampreys naturally live in saltwater, but came into the Great Lakes through canals. There are efforts to control the lamprey population because they do not have natural predators in the Great Lakes.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** none in Great Lakes
☞ **What do I eat?** fish, including lake trout
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs
Grouping: solitary
Activity: year-round

Scud*

Scientific Name:
Gammarus

who? description

Type: crustacean
Length: 2.54 cm / 1 in
Coloring: most are gray and tan; some are shades of green, blue, orange, and purple
Body Features: shrimp-like with an arched, flat body; two pair of antennae and nineteen paired legs



where? environment

Habitat: shallow water in lakes, ponds, and slow moving rivers with abundant vegetation and debris on the bottom

⚠️ Interesting Fact ★

Scud populations may be declining because of competition with the zebra mussel for phytoplankton.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** insects, amphibians, shore birds and fish like sculpin, smelt and chub
☞ **What do I eat?** algae, dead plants and animals
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: reproduces after 5-8 years
Grouping: colonies
Activity: mainly nocturnal

Song Sparrow

Scientific Name:
Melospiza melodia

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 12-18 cm / 5-7 in
Coloring: brown streaked, under parts are whitish with dark streaks, spot in the center of the breast
Body Features: long tail that is pumped up and down to help with flying



where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, thickets, pastures, undergrowth in gardens, city parks, make nests on the ground, a later nest is made in a tree or shrub, nests are used more than once

⚠️ Interesting Fact ★

Song sparrows sing throughout the year, although much less in winter. Each male sings between 6 and 24 different songs. Some song sparrows do not migrate during the winter.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** hawks, owls, snakes, cats, some turtles
☞ **What do I eat?** beetles, flies, caterpillars, seeds, grains, berries
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: Nests in a cup of grass, 3 broods per season
Grouping: pairs remain mates through years, both parents feed young
Activity: most migrate in winter

Sea Rocket

Scientific Name:
Cakile edentula

who? description

Type: plant
Height: 15-50 cm / 6-20 in
Leaves: thick and fleshy
Flowers: white - lavender



where? environment

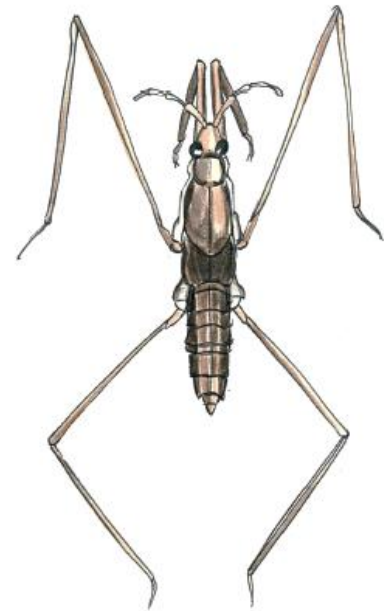
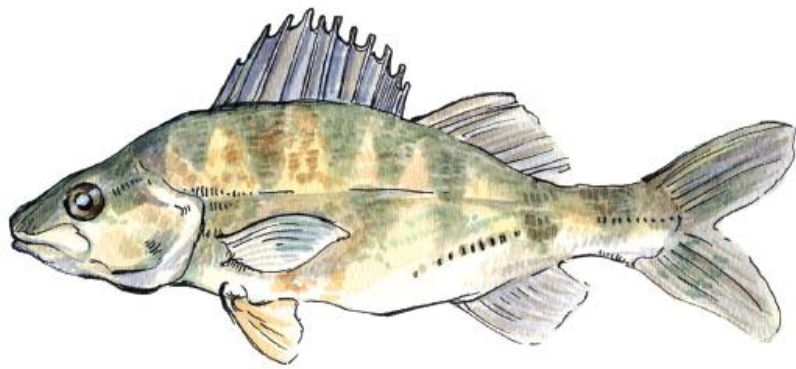
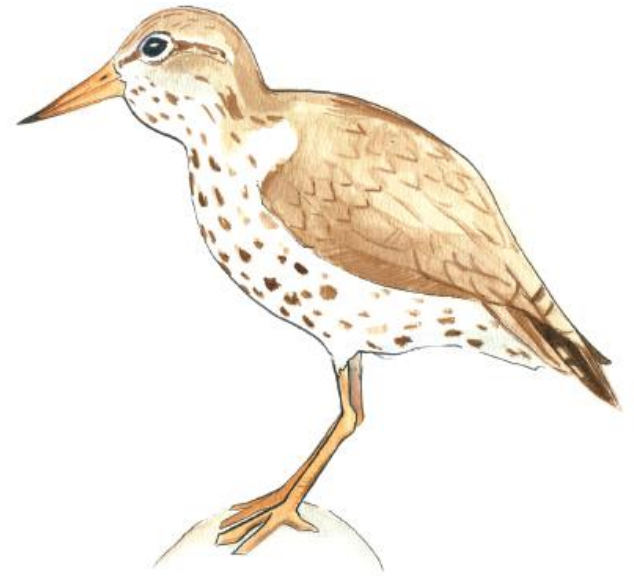
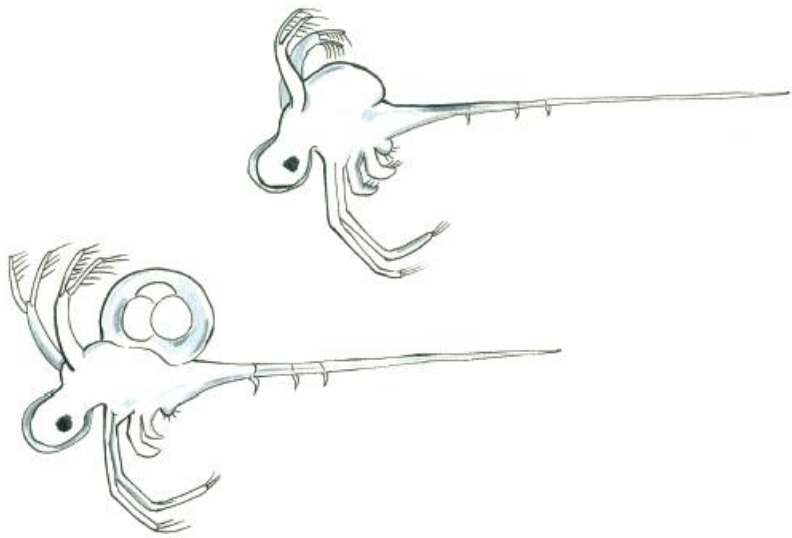
Sunlight: full sun
Habitat: foredune, sandy beaches, above the water line

⚠️ Interesting Fact ★

Sea rocket lives in areas of bare sand where other plants cannot survive. It has a long taproot to hold it in place and fleshy leaves which help it hold in moisture.

what? characteristics

Feeding:
☞ **Who eats me?** deer and mice
☞ **What do I use to make food?** sunlight
Role: producer
Reproduction: flowers are pollinated



Spotted Sandpiper

Scientific Name:
Actitis macularia

who? description

Type: bird
Length: 15 cm / 6 in
Coloring: brown-olive on top, white belly (sometimes with black spots), yellow or pink legs



where? environment

Habitat: beach, shorelines, grasslands, forests, near water

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** mice, blackbirds, otters, minks
↳ **What do I eat?** insects, worms, small fish, mollusks, crustaceans, spiders
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: 4 eggs in grass or moss nest, male cares for eggs and young, females mate with multiple males and defend territory
Grouping: family groups
Activity: migrates to Pacific coast in winter



Interesting Fact ★

The spotted sandpiper is aggressive about protecting their young and their territory. Males do most of the egg incubation.

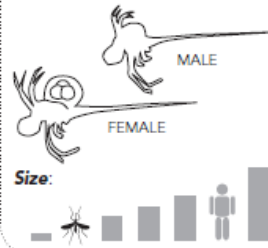
Spiny Water Flea*

Scientific Name:
Bythotrephes cederstroemi

who? description

Type: zooplankton, crustacean
Length: less than 1.3 cm / .5 in
Coloring: clear
Body Features: crustacean with long, sharp, barbed tail spine

⚠ Invasive Species



Interesting Fact ★

This creature is not a flea, but a crustacean. Only some larger fish can eat it because the sharp tail spine is hard for smaller fish to swallow. It competes with fish for plankton.

Water Strider*

Scientific Name:
Gerris remigis

who? description

Type: insect
Length: 1.2 cm / .5 in
Coloring: dark brown to black
Body Features: long legs, two legs can fold under front of body



where? environment

Habitat: interdunal pond, freshwater lakes and wetlands, live under leaves, spend time on surface of water

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** birds, fish, dragonflies
↳ **What do I eat?** insects from water and land, plants
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs at water's edge



Interesting Fact ★

Water striders communicate with each other through ripples on the surface of the water.

Walleye*

Scientific Name:
Stizostedion vitreum

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 33-63 cm / 13-25 in
Weight: .4-2 kg / 1-5 lbs
Coloring: brown to yellow
Body Features: The young usually have dark blotches across their backs and down their sides



where? environment

Habitat: freshwater lakes, lives in deep water, near the bottom of the lake in weeds or rocks

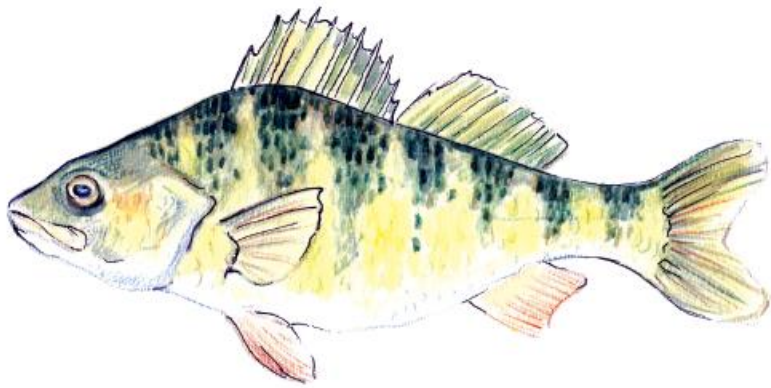
what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** humans, muskellunge, largemouth bass
↳ **What do I eat?** yellow perch, aquatic insects, crayfish
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: occurs in spring/early summer, females release up to 612,000 eggs
Grouping: loose but distinct schools
Activity: feeds at dusk



Interesting Fact ★

Walleyes have large, marble-like eyes that help them see well in dim light.



Wolf Spider

Scientific Name:
Pisaura mirabilis

who? description

Type: arachnid
Length: 1-8 cm / .4-3 in
Coloring: brown, grey, white, black
Body Features: eight eyes

where? environment

Habitat: foredune, wooded sand dunes and woodlands; lives in tunnels, under rocks, or in leaf litter

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** birds, small reptiles, toads
↳ **What do I eat?** flies, crickets, beetles, ants
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: 50-200 eggs; female carries egg sac on her back in summer; 40 offspring carried on back; 2-4 egg sacs in lifetime
Grouping: solitary hunters
Activity: diurnal



Interesting Fact ★

Wolf spiders can float on water. They often hunt their prey rather than spin webs to catch food.

Size:



White-Tailed Deer

Scientific Name:
Odocoileus virginianus

who? description

Type: mammal
Height: 1 m / 3-3.5 ft tall at shoulder
Coloring: red-brown in summer; gray-brown in winter
Body Features: "white-tailed deer" refers to the white underside of the tail, which is held up like a flag when deer is alarmed or running, male (buck) has antlers

where? environment

Habitat: forested backdune, open woodland, edges of a forest

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** coyotes, humans
↳ **What do I eat?** grass, herbs, leaves, bark, trees, shrubs, fungi and acorns
Role: consumer, herbivore
Reproduction: in May or June, 1-2 fawns born
Grouping: may travel in small herds
Activity: feed in early morning and again in early evening



Interesting Fact ★

Deer are able to run up to 64 km / 40 mi per hour, jump 3 m / 9 ft fences, and can swim well. Their fur has air spaces in the core which insulates them against the cold. Males lose their antlers and re-grow them each year.

Size:



Zebra Mussel*

Scientific Name:
Dreissena polymorpha

who? description

Type: mollusk
Length: up to 5 cm / .75 in
Coloring: tan and blackish stripes (like a zebra)
Body Features: two connected shells hold a small mussel between them, they attach to hard surfaces with byssal threads

where? environment

Habitat: freshwater, native to the Caspian and Black Sea, but now in all Great Lakes and some inland lakes; depths of 2-7 m / 6-23 ft

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** round goby
↳ **What do I eat?** algae
Role: consumer, omnivore
Reproduction: eggs expelled by females and fertilized outside of the body by males in spring / summer
Grouping: colonies



Interesting Fact ★

Zebra mussels are commonly found around the Great Lakes. They compete with native fish for plankton, which causes problems for the fish. Because they are filter feeders, zebra mussels can increase water clarity.

Size:



🚩 **Invasive Species**

Yellow Perch*

Scientific Name:
Perca flavescens

who? description

Type: fish
Length: 15-25 cm / 6-10 in
Weight: 168-448 g / 6-16 oz
Coloring: back is bright to olive green or golden brown, sides are yellow-green; grey to milk-white belly

where? environment

Habitat: lake bottom, less than 30 feet depth, feeds near the shore and rests on the bottom

what? characteristics

Feeding:
↳ **Who eats me?** alewife (feed on larva), humans
↳ **What do I eat?** minnows, insect larvae, plankton, worms
Role: consumer, carnivore
Reproduction: lay eggs April-May
Grouping: swims in schools
Activity: diurnal, year-round



Interesting Fact ★

Yellow perch are a popular food for humans, but have been overfished and the population has decreased. They lay their eggs in long, jelly-like ribbons.

Size:

