

## Parent Outline: K – 2

## Water Creatures

**Welcome/** Staff/Volunteer Names  
**Introduction:** **Today's Topic-Water Creatures** **Question:** What creatures do we find in wetlands?

**Icebreaker:** **Globe Toss Name Game**-most of our planet is covered with water!

**Background/** **Water is important**-Trace the path of a raindrop on the water cycle poster.

**Exploration:** **Water is life-giving**, everything needs it; but it can also be dangerous, like during floods. Water is used by plants, animals, and people. It also affects the environment-soil erosion. We will learn about water habitats or wetlands and creatures that live there

**What is a wetland? An area that is wet** at least sometimes and has **special soil** and **plants**.

Wetlands are marshes, swamps, forests along streams or rivers, & bogs.

**Loss of Wetlands**-Iowa has lost wetlands to farming & building, we need to save the rest!

**Activity:** **Wetland Metaphors**-Why are wetlands important? Discuss reasons wetlands are good. (absorb/hold water, bird resting place, adds oxygen/nutrients to water, nursery for fish/wildlife, strains out silt/debris, filters out impurities, neutralizes toxins, provides food, cleans water)  
**FOOD** from wetlands includes: fish & shellfish, rice, seaweed (carrageenan)

**Activity:** What **animals** live in and around wetlands? Near the water? IN the water? Show pictures. Dress up like a **beaver** (also otter, muskrats, mink; ducks, fish, frogs, crayfish, insects...).

**Adaptations**-How do animals live in or swim in water? What do they eat?

Smaller water creatures/insects are called **INVERTEBRATES**.

**Wetland layers**-Bottom, middle, top layers, & shallows have different plants and creatures.

**Invertebrates:** Collectors (caddis fly), Grazers (snail, larvae), Predators (beetles, dragonfly), & Shredders (stonefly-detritus). Adapted to live in slower pools or faster **riffles**.

**FISH**-Adaptations/life cycle. Eggs, nest, nursery/shallows, big water, eat/grow, back to spawn. How do **plants** live in and around the water? Wetland plants and their adaptations (briefly).

**Prepare to go Outside:** Restroom break. Rules of the trail. Look at **WETLAND EXHIBIT**

**OUTDOOR EXPLORATION:** Walk down to large wetland ponds. Look across Indian Creek for erosion e.g.s. Look and listen for wetland creatures at around creek & pond. Notice the **FLOODPLAIN**. Describe wetland plants and animals on deck, trail, and smaller pond.

**Activity:** **Creature collection**-Use dip nets & yogurt cups to get creatures to observe. Talk about their adaptations. Walk back to the Nature Center.

**Send Off:** Goodbye! **Take Home:** Background references  
Marsh puzzle picture

### References

- A Stream Watcher's Stream Guide*. Save Our Streams. Isaak Walton League, Arlington, VA.  
Dewey, Jennifer Owings. 1987. *At the Edge of the Pond*. Little, Brown, and Company, Boston.  
Griffin, Steven A. and E. May Griffin. 1993. *Fishing For Kids: A Family Fishing Guide*. North Word Press, Inc., Minocqua, WI.

*Iowa's Biological Communities*. 1993. Iowa Association of Naturalists Booklet Series. ISU Press, Ames, IA.  
*Biological Communities, Woodlands, Prairies, Wetlands, Waterways* (IAN-201--205).  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/wi.htm> Also *Iowa Wildlife*