

Discovery Guide

Michigan Wildlife

Grades 3-5



Welcome to the University of Michigan Museum of Natural History!

These guides are intended to focus student attention and start conversations about topics in natural history.

Pre-visit tips

Please make copies of this guide for your students before coming to the museum. This will ensure that the proper number of guides are available for your group.

Bring pencils and clip boards or notebooks to write on.

Please divide your students into groups of about 5 to 10 students.

Provide the chaperones with a copy of the answer guide(s).

While Visiting

Encourage questions! If you cannot find the answer, ask the student host.

Encourage touch! Children learn best when as many senses as possible are engaged in the learning process. Please look at, listen to, and even touch items that are not behind barriers.

Encourage discovery! Remind students that it is not a race but an adventure of discovery.

In the Classroom

The following questions and prompts are designed to promote in-classroom discussion and writing across the curriculum.

1. Have your students create a KWL chart. Have students list what animals they know live in Michigan and facts they know about them. Then have students list what they want to know about Michigan animals. After your visit, have your students list what they learned.
2. Identify the needs of wildlife in their habitat (food, water, shelter, space). Have the students draw a picture of a Michigan animal in their habitat. Then write a few sentences about these needs.

Questions?

Please visit our website at www.ummnh.org or call us at **734.764.0480**.

Answer Guide

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1. The **swan's foot** is best for living near **water**, since the foot is broad, flat and webbed. These characteristics mean the foot is good for swimming and paddling. The **hawk's foot** is best for grabbing **big prey** because the foot is big and has long and sharp talons that let it hold its prey tightly.
2. **Snapping turtle** and the **tadpole**. An invasive species is an animal that has no natural predators where it is living. Because it has no enemies, the species can invade, or take over, habitats. This leaves other species with no space or food!
3. The **gray wolf**. The vole lives in wet areas like bogs, and the rest are aquatic animals that need to live in or around water to survive.
4. The **mute swan** and the **European starling**.
5. **Turkey Vulture**. Turkey Vultures eat mostly carrion, or animals that are already dead. They are scavengers, and are very protective of their territory. They live in dry areas.
6. **Skunk**. Skunks protect themselves using their smelly scent to spray any attackers or trespassers. Skunks are useful because they eat many animals that humans think are pests.
7. **Gray Wolf**. The gray wolf was once Michigan's most numerous large predator, but as human population increased, the gray wolf population decreased. The gray wolf lives in forests and prefers to stay away from people.

8. **Eastern Massasauga**. The Eastern Massasauga is Michigan's only venomous snake. It is shy and usually will not attack unless threatened. It lives in Michigan's Lower Peninsula and eats mainly frogs and rodents.
9. **Wolverine**. Even though Michigan is called the Wolverine State, the wolverine does not live in Michigan but farther north, in Canada.
10. **Common house flies; smell**. Flies help the stinkhorn fungus to spread its spores. This behavior is similar to bees pollinating flowers. Flowers and the stinkhorn fungus attract their animal helpers in similar ways: through smell. But as its name suggests, the stinkhorn does not smell as nice as flowers.
11. **Petosky Stone**. Petosky Stones are fossilized pieces of **coral** that used to live in Michigan when warm ancient seas covered it 375 million years ago. The coral type is Hexagonaria, and we have a to-scale model on the second floor of the museum, in our Life through the Ages alcove.
12. Possible answers:
Protective body covering: **porcupine, zebra mussel, snapping turtle**

Camouflage: **Northern Brownsnake, snowy owl, black duck, grey wolf**

Claws: **wolverine, skunk, bobcat**