

Discovery Guide

Michigan Wildlife

Grades 6-8

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.

Questions?

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

Answer Guide

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1. These birds eat crops and seeds. They are considered pests on farms, especially out West. When the red-winged blackbird and the common grackle are present in large flocks, they can also make humans sick.

2. The upland sandpiper has many adaptations to help it live where it lives. Its **mottled feathers** are helpful for camouflage in mud and sand. Its **long beak** can search for and grab insects, and its **wings** are large and strong to help it fly against beach wind.

3. Eating different things helps to reduce competition between species for food so more species can live in the same area.

4. **Eastern Massasauga.** This snake has a dark and light phase according to the seasons and where it lives. During winter and part of spring it hibernates in marshy areas. During summer it moves to grassy areas. While the dark brown color of its dark phase is useful for camouflage in muddy areas, the patchy color of its light phase is useful for camouflage in grassy fields.

5. **False.** Many non-native species have little to no negative effects on its environment. Non-native species become invasive only when they have no natural predators to keep their numbers in check.

6. This is harmful because a non-native species can overpopulate a habitat and crowd out other plants and animals, which can have an effect on many parts of a food web. Overpopulation occurs because these non-native species have no natural predators.

7. **Answers will vary.** A plant should be in the left-most space and progress to a tertiary consumer. Arrows should point from left to right, as this represents not what the animal or plant is eating, but energy flow. Sample food chain:

Algae > Snail > Pumpkinseed > Great Blue Heron

8. **Answers will vary.** Possible ways in which humans can affect the food chain created include: dumping of waste water or raw sewage, over-fishing, pesticide run-off, making the pond part of a wildlife preserve, introducing non-native/invasive plant or animal species.

9. **Answers will vary.** Possible answers include: the wolf is a hunter but the squirrel is a scavenger, the wolf is bigger and more aggressive than the squirrel, the wolf relies on wooded areas for shelter while squirrels can adapt to areas with less trees by nesting in roofs.

10. **Common house flies; smell.** Fungi are decomposers, so they get their food from breaking down nutrients from dead things in the soil. The smelly stinkhorn fungus attracts houseflies to pollenate it. While the stinkhorn could survive without the housefly, it would have a much harder time reproducing.