

FIFTEEN CHICAGO WILDERNESS FRIENDS DISCUSSION GUIDE

OBJECTIVES

—Use the appeal of art to introduce people to a variety of species that call Chicago Wilderness home.

—Have the appeal of these animals, plants, and insects generate interest in caring for them and their local habitats.

—Discuss *Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends to Get to Know* in a face-to-face setting to both motivate individuals and elicit action by groups.

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climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends to Get to Know was created to stand on its own as a creative resource to spark conversation and get people thinking about personal ways that they can connect to conservation efforts in Chicago Wilderness. Peggy McNamara's beautiful watercolors bring together a community of the region's most appealing species. Each species has a local story, and the flip side from the images presents a little bit of each of those stories that invites readers to become part of the story of local conservation. The discussion ideas below are offered as an aid to using the pictures and stories in face-to-face contexts to encourage involvement in local stewardship of nature.

POSSIBLE USES

1 AS A POSTER

Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends... is available as a high-resolution digital file at: xx
Print it large and hang it in your space (be it community center, classroom, public waiting area, home, or wherever). We recommend displaying both the front and back to show both the pictures and the stories.



2 TO GUIDE DISCUSSION



Use *Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends...* to begin conversations with people such as neighbors, friends, your classroom, scout troop, or church group. Use the **conversation** to explore people's points of connection to nature and possible entry points to their involvement in stewardship. Questions to consider:

- 1) Which species most appeals to you? (or) Do you have a favorite Chicago Wilderness species? If so, what is its appeal to you?
- 2) Does anyone have a personal story about your connection to one of these species? A different species? Is that connection important to you? Why or why not?
- 3) Are there plants or animals not shown that you think we should think of as local friends? Talk about that please.
- 4) Do any of the involvement ideas particularly appeal to you? Why do you think that is?
- 5) In what other ways might you help out one of these species? Are there local projects doing that?
- 6) Is anyone in the group involved in any of the action steps outlined on the back of the guide?
- 7) What role does art have in education or organizing people?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please see the resources referenced on the back of the Action Guide for *Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends*. Some of these will also offer ideas for engaging others in conversation and/or conservation.

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well, hello there neighbor!

Fifteen Chicago Wilderness Friends to Get to Know

monarch

Danaus plexippus

Among North America's most iconic species, their populations have declined by 90 percent over the last two decades. One of the primary threats = loss of milkweed, the key plant that monarch caterpillars need to survive. So go out and plant milkweed and more: monarchjointventure.org



eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly

Papilio glaucus

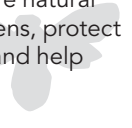
This gorgeous butterfly isn't just a thing of beauty. Together with bats, bees, and other insects it plays a critical role in pollinating, both food crops and native plants. Help monitor butterflies at www.bfly.org



bumblebee

Bombus spp.

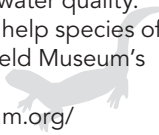
Pollinators are an indispensable part of a healthy environment and a secure food supply, yet are under especially severe threat. How can you help? Simple steps can make a difference: restore natural areas, create pollinator gardens, protect pollinators from pesticides, and help monitor at bumblebeewatch.org



blue spotted salamander

Ambystoma laterale

This beautiful creature is especially sensitive to changes in the environment and is an indicator of the health of our local woodlands, air, and water quality. Learn about how you can help species of concern by visiting The Field Museum's Restoring Earth exhibit: restoringearth.fieldmuseum.org/



ruby-throated hummingbird

Archilochus colubris

Flitting about local woodlands and backyard feeders for nectar, these tiny bundles of energy bring joy, help with pollination, and are an important component of our ecosystem. As with other species, planting healthy gardens helps provide food for these friends: climatechicago.fieldmuseum.org/gardens



blanding's turtle

Emydoidea blandingii

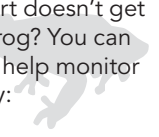
Especially vulnerable to habitat loss since they reproduce slowly and struggle to adapt to urban development, turtles need our help with thoughtful urban planning. See how people are working to help local species: chicagowilderness.org



Eastern gray tree frog

Hyla versicolor

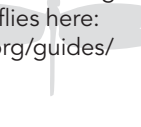
Healthy habitats for frogs and toads mean healthy places for people too. What child or child-at-heart doesn't get excited by the sight of a frog? You can contribute to science and help monitor local populations. It's easy: frogsurvey.org



Hine's emerald dragonfly

Somatochlora hineana

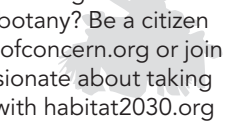
Masters of flight since before the dinosaurs, they now need our help more than ever. Learn 32 species of Chicago Wilderness region dragonflies here: fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/guides/guide/380



orange fringed orchid

Platanthera ciliaris

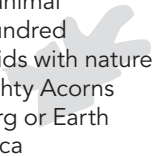
A beauty of our bogs and wetlands of August, this orchid is one of over 300 species of rare plants being monitored in the region. Love botany? Be a citizen scientist with plantsofconcern.org or join others who are passionate about taking care of nature, like with habitat2030.org



oak

Quercus spp.

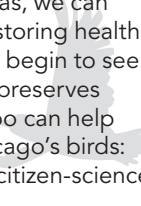
Iconic trees of our region, magnificent oaks have been providing food and shelter for rich plant and animal communities here for a hundred centuries. Help connect kids with nature through the powerful Mighty Acorns program: mightyacorns.org or Earth Force: fieldmuseum.org/yca



red headed woodpecker

Melanerpes erythrocephalus

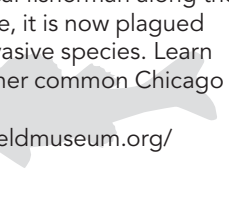
A bird of open oak savannas, we can measure our success at restoring health to those habitats when we begin to see these birds nesting in our preserves in greater numbers. You too can help monitor and preserve Chicago's birds: fieldmuseum.org/science/citizen-science



yellow perch

Perca flavescens

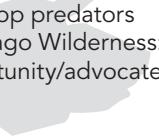
Long a staple of local fisherman along the Lake Michigan shore, it is now plagued by the effects of invasive species. Learn to identify some other common Chicago Lakefront fishes: <http://fieldguides.fieldmuseum.org/guides/guide/387>



cougar

Puma concolor

The return of this top predator to the Chicago region may be challenging to coexist with, but may also restore a much needed balance between deer and our local flora. Advocate for top predators and other friends of Chicago Wilderness: habitatproject.org/opportunity/advocate.html



little brown bat

Myotis lucifugus

Largely misunderstood, bats provide us with important environmental services, including consuming vast amounts of mosquitoes and other insects. Bat populations are declining around the globe largely due to human activity. Install a bat house or learn more: batcon.org



smooth greensnake

Opheodrys vernalis

Fragmented natural areas and roaming cats have been factors in the decline of reptiles and amphibians in our region. Borrow specimens like this and engage students using The Field Museum's educational tools right in your classroom: harris.fieldmuseum.org

