



Starved Rock Saplings

Thank you for your interest in Starved Rock State Park. The following Starved Rock Sapling seasonal program is to help engage children and families in nature; at home, in their neighborhood, or at Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks.

Each packet will be posted to the Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Park Facebook page every October, January, April, and July. Packets can also be downloaded from the IDNR website at www2.illinois.gov/dnr/parks/pages/StarvedRock.aspx under the Interpretive tab.

Packets will include the following:

DISCOVER:

fun facts and information about the natural world.

CONNECT:

nature activities, storybook suggestions, games, and crafts .

EXPLORE:

ideas for getting outdoors and exploring the natural world in your backyard, neighborhood, or community parks.



Spring Edition

Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks

www2.illinois.gov/dnr



Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks

By Lisa Sons, Natural Resource Coordinator



DISCOVER

BIRD IDENTIFICATION FLASHCARDS



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

Great Horned Owl

- Stands up to 24" tall, one of the largest owls in North America.
- Will sometimes nest in cavities but will also use abandoned nests of other birds such as hawks, crows, etc.
- Call is series of "who, who" calls mainly at dusk, sometimes throughout night.

2

Eastern Bluebird

- Live in woodland edges, prairies, and meadows.
- Male is more brightly colored than the female.
- Need nesting boxes, or holes in old trees or fence posts.

1

Baltimore Oriole

- Call is similar to a American Robins "cheerio, cheery up, cheery me" but more garbled.
- Will make a hanging nest in the shape of a bag with opening at top.

4

Great Blue Heron

- Fish for frogs, fish, snakes, snails, and crayfish in ponds, streams, lakes, and marshes. They use their sharp pointy beak as a skewer.
- Call is similar to a squawk or dog bark.
- Will nest in colonies high in tree tops.

3

Wood Duck

- Very secretive or shy birds that live in or nearby streams, lakes, and ponds.
- If disturbed or startled will take flight and make a high-pitched whistle like call.
- Nest in cavities of old trees or wood duck boxes.

6

Sharp Shinned Hawk

- Woodland hawk with a blunt or squared off tail with several dark lines. Coopers hawk has a curved tail.
- Small compact body and wings help it maneuver through trees and branches.

5

Black Capped Chickadee

- Call is just like its name "chickadee dee dee".
- Make a small compact nest in cavities or nest boxes of moss, lichen, animal hair, and lined with feathers.
- Small white eggs with speckles.

8

Wild Turkey

- Hens/females will lay eggs in spring virtually anywhere on the ground. Just a scratch in the dirt as a nest.
- Male turkeys or Toms have nothing to do with the babies.
- Turkeys can fly short distances and will roost in trees.

7

CONNECT

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



Prime the Pump

Did you ever notice that birds have different types of beaks (bills) that allow them to eat different kinds of food? Some eat bugs while others eat fish or plants according to the shape and size of their bill. Let's play a game called "Fill the Bill" where we will learn about these amazing adaptations. First, let's look at the following pictures of birds that live right here in Illinois. How many can you name? Now let's visit the "Fill the Bill" stations and try out our own utensils that act like bird beaks to see which food they can catch best.

Set Up

Set up 7 stations with 1 food at each station. Prepare a container of utensils to move from station to station with the children. Let them use the utensils to figure out which utensil is best to grab or handle the food. Rotate through the stations once for testing and then a second time to attempt to match each food with its ideal utensil.

Materials

1. Container with oatmeal floating in water
2. Colored water in small vase (could have a flower around the vase)
3. Sunflower seeds
4. Gummy worms
5. Rice as bugs in container of flour as soil
6. Popcorn popped
7. Cut out of attached fish picture

Utensils

- Small strainer
- Pipette
- Pliers or nutcrackers
- Tweezers
- Chopsticks
- Scissors



Review

Now that you have gone through each of the stations which utensils worked best with which food station? Go over the bird pictures once again with the children and help them pick out the right utensil. Ask them why that utensil worked the best.

Mallard duck – oatmeal in water with strainer.

Ruby Throated Hummingbird – water in cup or vase with pipette or straw.

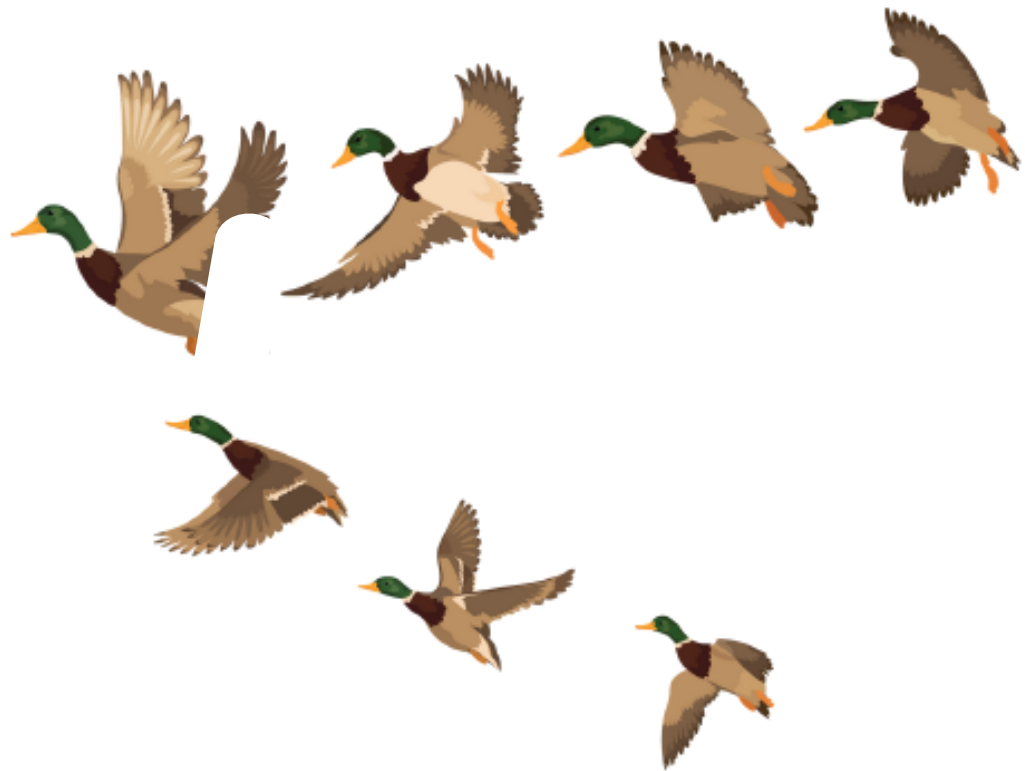
Northern Cardinal–sunflower seeds with small plyers or nutcracker.

American Robin –gummy worms with tweezers.

Woodcock – rice as bugs hidden in flour as soil with chopsticks.

Rough Legged Swallow-popcorn as flying insects you toss in the air and cups as the beak to catch the insects.

Bald Eagle-cutout the attached page of a shad (fish) and use scissors with one hand to cut off pieces like you are shredding the fish with your beak.



CONNECT

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



Mallard Duck



Ruby Throated Hummingbird



Northern Cardinal



American Robin



American Woodcock



Rough Legged Swallow



Bald Eagle

CONNECT

MAKE AN EDIBLE BIRD NEST SNACK

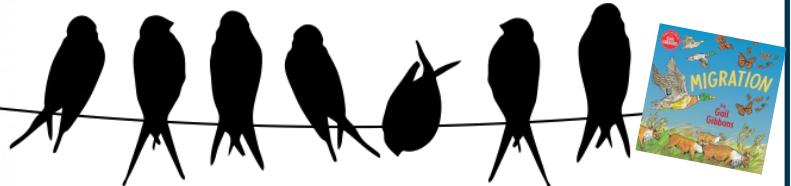
Edible Bird Nests

Ingredients

- 5 large Shredded Wheat biscuits
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup chunky peanut butter
- jelly beans

Directions

1. Crush biscuits with your hands in a large bowl.
2. Microwave chocolate chips for one minute and stir until smooth.
3. Stir in peanut butter until combined well.
4. Pour over biscuits and mix well.
5. Place biscuits into a nonstick muffin pan (or coat with nonstick cooking spray) and press firmly. Create a divot in the center of the nest with the back of a spoon.
6. Refrigerate for two hours. Use a knife to pop them out of the pan by sliding it down the side and lifting up.
7. Fill with jelly beans and enjoy!



Birds by Carme Lemniscates
The Little Book of Backyard Bird Sounds by Andrea Pinnington and Caz Buckingham
Migration by Gail Gibbons
Birds Nests and Eggs by Mel Boring

Don't forget you can rent the BIRD Trunk for FREE from the IDNR EDUCATIONAL TRUNKS on hand at the park. Just ask by emailing DNR.StarvedRock@illinois.gov.
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/education.html>



WEBSITES FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG NATURALISTS!

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/education.html>

<https://www.brightpips.com/lets-learn-about-birds/>



EXPLORE

NATURE HIKE

- Explore your backyard, neighborhood, community parks, or Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks with a fun scavenger hunt this fall. Don't forget to "LEAVE NO TRACE" by leaving only footprints and taking only memories when visiting a park.

Spring Scavenger Hunt

What to LISTEN for....



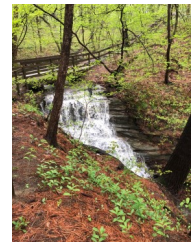
Birds chirping or singing



Wind in the trees



Frogs and Toads calling



Trickling waterfalls

What to SMELL.....



Spring wildflowers



sandstone



Campfire



Fallen log or cut tree

What to FEEL.....



Tree bark



Tree buds and new leaves



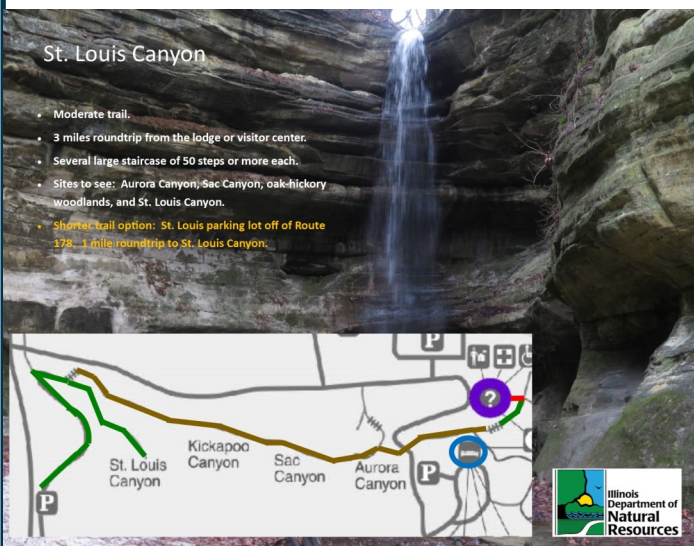
Mud



Spring rain puddles

EXPLORE YOUR STATE PARKS!

Visit www2.illinois.gov/dnr to view state parks by region under the Parks and Recreation tab. What state parks are close to your home? Help your family plan a visit by exploring the parks webpage. What does your local state park have to offer; hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, skiing, or boating? Read over the trail maps, trail suggestions, rules and regulations (stay on marked trails), and head out to explore. Here are some recommended trails for families at Starved Rock State Park. Happy Hikers=Happy Trails!



Great trek for families with little ones if you park off of route 178 at the St. Louis parking lot just south of the park's west entrance and hike into St. Louis Canyon.

The most convenient hike at the park starting from the main parking lot by the river and visitor center leading to the park's namesake Starved Rock and French Canyon. French Canyon is not recommended for children under age 5 or anyone in winter when the ground is snow and ice covered.



The eastern canyons of Illinois, Ottawa, and Kaskaskia are great for families due to their length and proximity to parking lots. Just one mile roundtrip hikes into the canyons. Be aware the trails are not paved and you will have a few small creek crossings in spring and early summer.