

What Went By? (*Wild, Wonderful Wetlands*)

Grades: 2nd and 3rd

Team Size: 1-2 participants

Duration: 35 minutes

Supervisor(s): Margret Chriscinske

Activity Summary:

Wetlands are important components of ecosystems, yet they often go unnoticed by casual passers-by. In preparing for this event, students will learn about types of wetlands and gain an understanding of their functions. They will also learn about some of the plants and animals that call them home.

During the fast-paced event, teams of students will rotate among 8 activity stations where they will look for contextual clues in their field notebook and/or in the materials provided at the stations. Combining this information with what they learned over the course of preparing for the event, they will complete their field notebooks and turn them in to be graded.

Changes from last year:

This event is new for the 2026 Olympiad.

Concepts covered:

Each team should have knowledge of wetlands, and the plants and animals found in them. More specifically:

- Wetlands
 - What makes a wetland a wetland?
 - Main types of wetlands (classification types – listed in the study guide)
 - Wetland functions and benefits
- Wetland plants
 - Typical species (listed in the study guide)
 - Identification through visual characteristics
 - Native or Invasive
- Wetland animals
 - Typical species (listed in the study guide)
 - Identification through visual characteristics, auditory clues, tracks, droppings, habitat

Rules/Competition Format:

A team of two students will be given a field notebook containing the activity's test questions. There will be 8 activity stations with a corresponding page in the field notebook. At each station, the students will open their notebook to the appropriate page and use the clues there, as well as those provided at the station, to answer the questions. The point value for each station is identified in the notebook.

Students should carefully read the information provided in their field notebook. In some cases, it will provide clues. In others, it will provide instructions for how to complete the station's activity. For each station, the team should decide which student will be the writer/drawer.

Teams will be given approximately 3 minutes at each station. If a team completes the questions at a station before the timer goes off, they may flip back to other pages in their notebook and continue working on those. Students may not physically return to stations that they already visited.

There should be approximately 5 minutes remaining after the teams have rotated through all 8 stations. Teams will be allowed to sit at desks in the room and complete anything they have not finished in their notebook without returning to the stations.

Scoring:

Highest score wins. Points are awarded for accuracy of responses. Correct spelling is not required as long as words are phonetically recognizable. For the illustration station, including the requested features and labels in the team's drawing will count for more points, while drawing skill will contribute fewer.

Tie Breaker:

Students will answer two tie breaker questions. Each question will be worth two points. The tie breaker questions will be scored and added to the team's total ONLY if there is a tie.

Materials Distributed by WESO:

Prior to the event: (will be posted on the What Went By event page on the website)

- Study guide
- Lists of wetlands, plants, and animals covered
- Vocabulary page

At the event:

- Field notebook with test questions
- Pencils
- Colored pencils

Materials to Bring to the Competition:

Nothing

****No cell phones or smart watches are allowed in event rooms. Participants who bring these items will be asked to leave them with the event supervisor for the duration of the event. Participants observed using them during the event will be disqualified.****

Local Resources Useful for Practice and Learning:

- Matthaei Botanical Gardens - [Home | Matthaei Botanical Gardens & Nichols Arboretum](#)

Additional Resources/References:

- Wetland Community Types in Michigan - [Wetland Community Types in Michigan](#)
- National Association of Wetland Managers - [About Wetlands](#)
- USGS – Wetlands: Water, Wildlife, Plants, & People poster - [Wetlands](#)
- Cornell Lab – All About Birds - [Online bird guide, bird ID help, life history, bird sounds from Cornell | All About Birds](#)
- Friends of the Rouge – Frog & Toad Species Descriptions and Calls - [Frog & Toad Species Descriptions and Calls - Friends of the Rouge](#)
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Frogs and Toads - [Frogs and toads](#)
- [Odonata Curriculum Guide](#)
 - - [Bing Videos](#)
- Video - [How Do Wetlands Help the Environment?](#)
- Video - [10 Fascinating Facts About Wetlands](#)
- Video - [What Makes a Wetland a Wetland?](#)

Event Questions

Please go to <https://wesoscience.org/events/> for information on how to submit questions about this event.