

DEREK RAMSEY



**Eastern Tiger Swallowtail**  
*Papilio glaucus*  
6 in.  
Large butterfly, commonly seen in the summer.

DEREK RAMSEY



**Black Swallowtail**  
*Papilio polyxenes*  
3 in.  
Have larger orange spots on underside of wings. Caterpillars like to eat garden herbs, like dill and parsley.

DICK MUDDÉ



**Cabbage White**  
*Pieris rapae*  
2 in.  
One of the most common butterflies in N. America.

LAURA PERLICK



**Common Sulphur**  
*Colias philodice*  
2 in.  
Similar size to the cabbage white, both of these species of butterfly are often mistaken for moths. A way to tell them apart: butterflies rest with their wings closed, moths rest with wings open.

DEREK RAMSEY



**Monarch**  
*Danaus plexippus*  
4 in.  
Caterpillars eat milkweed plants, which makes them taste bad and prevents predators from eating them. Migrates to the U.S. and Canada from Mexico in the spring.

MATTNAD



**Red Admiral**  
*Vanessa atalanta*  
2.5 in.  
Migrates from South Texas in the spring. Seen in damp wooded areas, open fields, parks and yards.

KATJA SCHULZ



**Green Darner**  
*Anax junius*  
3 in.  
Large dragonfly. Rests with wings open.

JAMES ST. JOHN



**Black-winged Damselfly**  
*Calopteryx maculata*  
1.5 in.  
Rests with wings closed. Eats insects, such as aphids.

RYAN HODNETT



**Migratory Grasshopper**  
*Melanoplus* spp.  
1.5 in.  
Swarms can cause serious damage to crops.

MADISON MCFADDEN



**Banded Forest Snail**  
*Monadenia fidelis*  
1.5 in.  
Black, reddish, and/or yellow stripes on shell. Found in forests and woodlands. Individuals of this species have both male and female reproductive organs.

SAFETY TIPS

1. WALK WITH A FRIEND, AND LET OTHERS KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.
2. TAKE A CHARGED CELLPHONE.
3. STAY ON MARKED PATHS.
4. HIKE SOMETIME BETWEEN DAWN AND DUSK (DON'T GO ON THE TRAILS AT NIGHT).
5. DON'T EAT ANY PLANTS OR BERRIES.
6. WATCH OUT FOR POISON IVY AND POISON OAK.
7. CHECK FOR TICKS WHEN YOU GET BACK (LONG PANTS RECOMMENDED).



## AMPHIBIANS

MELISSA McMASTERS



### Spring Peeper

*Pseudacris crucifer*

1.5 in.

Tiny, with X-shape on back. Males make loud peeping calls in the spring to find mates. Nocturnal.

CARL D. HOWE



### Bullfrog

*Lithobates catesbeianus*

Up to 8 in.

Like other amphibians, frogs should not be picked up by humans. The natural oils on our hands can be harmful to their sensitive skin.

CAYLEE BESAW



### Blue-spotted Salamander

*Ambystoma laterale*

Up to 6 in.

Males are smaller than females. Likes to live in similar places to the yellow-spotted salamander. Often hides under wet logs or leaves.

D. GORDON E. ROBERTSON



### Snapping Turtle

*Chelydra serpentina*

Up to 1.5 ft.

Long tail, massive head. Young have bumpy shell. Will bite! Carnivorous. They eat anything they can catch, even other small turtles.

EVI LI



### Red-eared Slider

*Trachemys scripta elegans*

Up to 11 in.

Yellow striped throat and red lines on sides of head. Not a native animal to WNY, but seen in ponds and streams due to people releasing these turtles that have been pets. Releasing pets to the wild can have a negative impact on local species and habitat.

JESSICA BOLSER



### Common Garter Snake

*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*

Up to 4 ft.

Green or brown with yellow stripes on back. Seen in tall grass and open fields. Not harmful to humans.

LILYANN THOMPSON



### Northern Leopard Frog

*Lithobates pipens*

Up to 5 in.

Long, powerful legs. Commonly used for dissection. Legs are eaten by humans.

GUNTHERCX



### Yellow-spotted Salamander

*Ambystoma maculatum*

Up to 9 in.

Mostly black with yellow spots. Seen in forests where soil is moist. Extremely sensitive to environmental changes. Salamanders and other amphibians absorb oxygen and other substances through their skin, therefore they are easily harmed by pollution such as run-off and fertilizer.

MONGO



### Painted Turtle

*Chrysemys picta*

Up to 10 in.

Red marks on edge of shell. Green striped head. Seen near or in ponds. Hibernate at the bottom of ponds during winter and can survive without oxygen for a long time. While hibernating, they can also absorb oxygen from the water through other body areas, most commonly their butt.

EMILIE DEMPSEY



### DID YOU KNOW?

Amphibians, such as frogs and salamanders, are quite sensitive to pollution. Thus, if you see any around, it's a sign that you are in a healthy environment!

## A CONSERVATION MESSAGE FROM VALLEY STUDENTS

Leaving litter or trash in nature can be dangerous for both humans and wildlife. Animals may eat litter, which can hurt or kill them. Garbage and run-off can enter our waterways, and pollution can get into the air we breathe. Trash in the environment also makes the trails less pretty and enjoyable for everyone. One thing you can do is to carry out anything you bring into nature. You could also join a beach or shoreline cleanup to help even more!



WATER AND SHOREBIRDS

BERT DE TILLY



**Common Loon**

*Gavia immer*

3 ft.

Found on freshwater lakes and ponds. Need water that is clean and full of small fish, so if you see one around, it's a good sign that the water is healthy.

KATJA SCHULZ



**Canada Goose**

*Branta canadensis*

3.5 ft.

Their sound is a loud "honk". Some populations no longer migrate south for the winter because they are able to feed on grains in farm fields. For efficient flying, often fly in a V-shape.

DICK DANIELS



**American Black Duck**

*Anas rubripes*

2 ft.

Dark brown body with slightly lighter head. A type of "dabbling duck", meaning they dip their heads underwater to catch food such as aquatic plants and insects.

KATJA SCHULZ



**Mallard**

*Anas platyrhynchos*

2 ft.

Male: green head. Female: brown all over. Most widespread duck species, but also the most hunted. Seen in and around ponds and lakes.

MELISSA MCMASTERS



**Double-crested Cormorant**

*Phalacrocorax auritus*

3 ft.

Orange patch around beak. Known as a "diving bird" because it dives to catch fish underwater. Can be seen standing on land with wings stretched out to dry them in the sun.

MONGO



**Green Heron**

*Butorides virescens*

Up to 2 ft.

Hunts for fish and other animals along edges of ponds and streams.

MONGO



**Great Blue Heron**

*Ardea herodias*

4.5 ft.

Tall with long, thin legs. Wades in shallow ponds and streams. Waits quietly until fish become accustomed to its presence, then quickly stab prey with its sharp bill.

DICK DANIELS



**Great Egret**

*Ardea alba*

2 ft.

Seen in our area in the summers before migrating south. Like the herons, this is a "wading bird", which means it stands quietly in or near the water waiting for fish and other prey to swim by.

ALAN D. WILSON



**Larus smithsonianus**

2 ft.

Soar in groups looking for prey or food sources. Larger than some other gulls, they have a red dot on the bottom of their bill or beak.

MDF



**Ring-billed Gull**

*Larus delawarensis*

1.5 ft.

Can survive on pretty much any type of food, including garbage at open landfills.

RHOODENDRITES



**Common Tern**

*Sterna hirundo*

15 in.

Sharp, forked tail. Most likely seen over rivers and lakes while migrating in the spring and fall.

KATE PEREZ



**Belted Kingfisher**

*Megaceryle alcyon*

1 ft.

Like to eat crayfish. Spikey crest feathers on head. Males have one blue stripe of feathers across chest, but females have a blue and a brown stripe.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many seagull populations almost went extinct in the late 1800's due to people killing them for eggs or for feathers to use as hat decorations.



BIRDS OF PREY

MONGO



**Turkey Vulture**

*Cathartes aura*

2.5 ft.  
Black and brown with red head. Circle in the air around prey with wings in V-shape. Have a good sense of smell to locate dead animals to eat.

TOM KOERNER



**Red-tailed Hawk**

*Buteo jamaicensis*

Up to 2 ft.  
Most common hawk in N. America. Can be seen perching on tops of trees or telephone poles. When courting a mate, male and female birds will soar together in circles, sometimes diving towards the ground while holding each other's claws or talons.

DOMINIC SHERONY



**American Kestrel**

*Falco sparverius*

1 ft.  
Seen in open meadows, parks, and grassy areas. Eat small animals and insects. They are the smallest falcon in N. America.

WOLFGANG WANDER



**Eastern Screech-Owl**

*Megascops asio*

9 in.  
Small owl that likes to hide in holes in tree trunks. Eats many kinds of small animals, and sometimes stores food in its burrow.

ERIC KILBY



**Great Horned Owl**

*Bubo virginianus*

2 ft.  
Call is a low "hoo hoo". Nocturnal, and most active at dawn and dusk.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Eastern screech-owls live in holes and crevices in trees, but they do not make these holes themselves. They rely on other animals like squirrels and woodpeckers to make them, or they need the tree to rot. This is a good example of different species depending on each other to survive.

PERCHING BIRDS

JACK WOLF



**American Crow**

*Corvus brachyrhynchos*

2 ft.  
Distinct "caw"-sounding call. Eat a variety of foods: seeds, nuts, fruit, and small animals. Crows are very intelligent animals and have been known to make and use tools to catch their food.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

A group of crows is called a "murder".

**NATURE WALK TIPS**

1. WILD ANIMALS ARE OFTEN SKITTISH AROUND HUMANS. TRY TO STAY QUIET AND PATIENT, AND YOU'LL HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF SEEING THEM!
2. DON'T FEED OR TOUCH ANIMALS.
3. CLEAN UP AFTER PETS, AND KEEP THEM ON A LEASH.
4. KEEP NATURE BEAUTIFUL FOR EVERYONE! PICK UP TRASH THAT YOU BRING WITH YOU (AND IF YOU CAN, PICK UP ANY THAT SOMEONE ELSE MAY HAVE LEFT TOO).
5. DRESS FOR THE WEATHER.
6. BRING A WATER BOTTLE FOR LONG HIKES, AND TAKE TIME TO REST IF NEEDED.



**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR**



Blue Fund



PERCHING BIRDS

ISABELLA SMITH



**Red-winged Blackbird**

*Agelaius phoeniceus*  
9 in.

Only males have red wing patch. Females brownish all over. Seen year-round in open areas and open woods.

HANNAH MCCARTHY-SZEZITKA



**Blue Jay**

*Cyanocitta cristata*  
1 ft.

Very loud bird with lots of different calls. Have been known to eat the eggs and baby birds of other species.

MDF



**Barn Swallow**

*Hirundo rustica*  
7 in.

Sharp V-shaped tail. Can be seen soaring and swooping low over open fields to catch bugs in the air.

WOLFGANG WANDER



**Gray Catbird**

*Dumetella carolinensis*  
9 in.

Has a longer tail, black cap on head, and brownish-red feathers under its tail. Can be seen in dense thickets and bushes during the summer.

RYAN HODNETT



**American Robin**

*Turdus migratorius*  
11 in.

These birds like to dig in the ground for worms and other grubs. They are at risk of being poisoned by pesticides because they do a lot of eating on people's lawns.

NOAH PORTER



**Black-capped Chickadee**

*Poecile atricapillus*  
6 in.

Has a black top on its head and black chin. Curious birds that like to visit bird feeders. They have elaborate calls that can communicate warnings to each other and even other small bird species if a predator is in the area.

DICK DANIELS



**White-breasted Nuthatch**

*Sitta carolinensis*  
5.5 in.

They are often seen climbing down a tree trunk, head first. Also likes to visit bird feeders.

BRIAN DEMPSEY



**Eastern Bluebird**

*Sialia sialis*  
7 in.

State bird of NY. Males have bright blue head and back with rust colored chest. Females more muted colors. Likes to spend time in open areas hunting for insects.

SARAH LEE KENNEDY

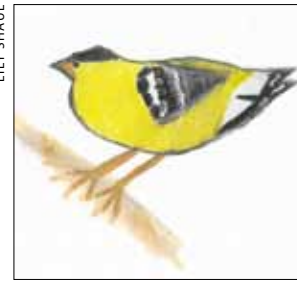


**Yellow Warbler**

*Setophaga petechia*  
5 in.

Mostly yellow with a little black on the wings. Common sitting at the top of shrubs.

LILY SHAUL



**American Goldfinch**

*Spinus tristis*  
5 in.

Males bright yellow with dark wings during the summer. Females and winter males are duller in color. Fly in a swooping, bouncy manner and eat mostly seeds.

DID YOU KNOW?

The yellow warbler migrates over the Gulf of Mexico in one single, non-stop trip.

OWAKSIMENKO



**House Finch**

*Haemorrhous mexicanus*  
6 in.

Males have reddish chest and head, while females are all brownish-gray. The red color on males comes from their food, and females prefer to mate with the reddest males. They eat mostly seeds and fruits.



PERCHING BIRDS

CHEEPSHOT



**American Tree Sparrow**  
*Spizelloides arborea*  
7 in.  
Rusty-colored cap on head, with small, dark spot on chest. Chubby, hardy little bird. Seen in our area in winter and then migrates north into Northern Canada and Alaska for the summer.

MATHIAS APPEL



**House Sparrow**  
*Passer domesticus*  
6 in.  
Black throat patch on males. Very connected to humans and prefer to nest in houses, barns, and other manmade buildings.

MDF



**Song Sparrow**  
*Melospiza melodia*  
6 in.  
Similar in color to the American tree sparrow, but with brown stripes on chest instead of a solitary dark spot. Can be seen in our area year-round. Happy to live in a lot of different habitats.

RYAN HODNETT



**Dark-eyed Junco**  
*Junco hyemalis*  
6 in.  
Seen year-round in WNY. A type of sparrow that is common at bird feeders.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Both male and female cardinals will aggressively defend their territory. They can spend hours attacking their own reflection in a mirror or window, thinking it's another bird.

SOPHIA BENSCHE



**Northern Cardinal**  
*Cardinalis cardinalis*  
9 in.  
Males bright red with a little black on face. Females light brown with traces of red and red beak. Mated pairs occasionally stay together the following year.

WOLFGANG WANDER



**Downy Woodpecker**  
*Picoides pubescens*  
6.5 in.  
Small woodpecker with red patch on head. The smallest woodpecker in N. America.

CHEEPSHOT



**Hairy Woodpecker**  
*Dryobates villosus*  
9 in.  
Very similar-looking to the downy woodpecker, but larger and with a longer beak.

DOMINIC SHERONY



**Northern Flicker**  
*Colaptes auratus*  
1 ft.  
A unique-looking woodpecker with spots and a black "bib" on its chest. They do feed in trees but often prefer to look on the ground for ants.

MANJITHKAINI



**Red-bellied Woodpecker**  
*Melanerpes carolinus*  
11 in.  
Light reddish color on belly and bright red head. Can be seen year-round, and hops up tree trunks to look for insects or nuts and seeds to eat.

JUDY GALLAGHER



**Mourning Dove**  
*Zenaida macroura*  
1 ft.  
Present all across N. America. A common bird for hunters to target. This bird makes a distinct, sad-sounding "coo" song.

JOE SCHNEID



**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**  
*Archilochus colubris*  
3.5 in.  
Hummingbirds help pollinate plants when feeding on the nectar of different flowers. Females of this species do not have the characteristic red throat patch. They enjoy the nectar of red and orange flowers the most, but sometimes will eat insects, even catching them out of the air while flying.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
The ruby-throated hummingbird can beat its wings 53 times per second!

This Field Guide was created by the 6th-8th graders of the Valley Community Association's "Striving for Excellence" Youth Program. We explored the nearby nature trails, researched local species, and contributed some of the images via photography and illustration. We hope you enjoy your time on the trail!



GARETH RASBERRY



**Eastern Cottontail**

*Sylvilagus floridanus*

Up to 1.5 ft.

Can be seen year-round. Only a small number of cottontail babies survive their first year, so rabbits are known to reproduce several times during a single year.

GILLES GONTHIER



**Eastern Chipmunk**

*Tamias striatus*

Up to 1 ft.

White stripes on sides. Commonly seen on forest ground.

D. GORDON E. ROBERTSON



**Common Raccoon**

*Procyon lotor*

Up to 3.5 ft.

Striped tail and black patches around eyes. They are advanced climbers, with excellent night vision and hearing. Also good swimmers.

WWW.BIRDPHOTOS.COM



**Striped Skunk**

*Mephitis mephitis*

Up to 3 ft.

Carnivores that eat insects, grubs, small rodents, frogs, birds, and eggs. Has stripes that go down its back. Keep your distance!

AMOS OLIVER DOYLE



**Red Fox**

*Vulpes vulpes*

Up to 3.5 ft.

White-tipped tail, which it can use to communicate with other foxes. Live in a variety of habitat, including human areas.

ERIN SILVERSMITH



**Woodchuck**

*Marmota mona*

Up to 2.5 ft.

Also called groundhogs. Hibernate through the winter. They live in elaborate underground burrows. You may see a burrow entrance if you come across a large hole with a small mound of dirt next to it.

RYAN HODNETT



**American Beaver**

*Castor canadensis*

Up to 4 ft.

State mammal of NY. Teeth will grow throughout their lives, so they need to chew on trees to keep the teeth from getting too long. Known for building dams. Often called “ecosystem engineers”, because they are one of the few animals that can change an environment.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Male white-tailed deer can weigh as much as 400 pounds!

GREG THOMPSON



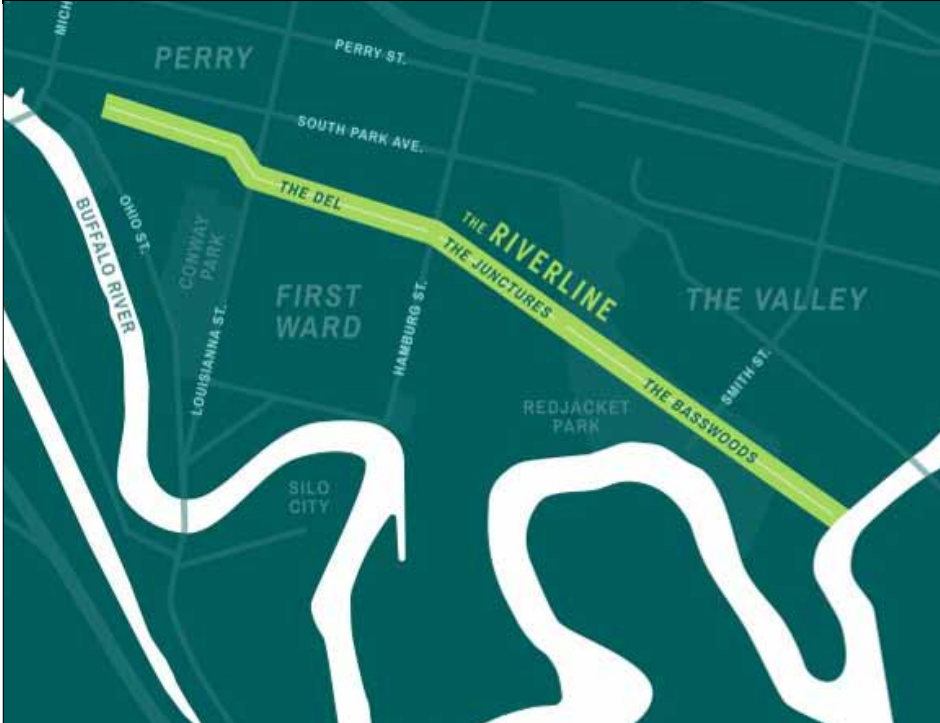
**White-tailed Deer**

*Odocoileus virginianus*

Up to 7 ft.

Winter coat grayish brown; summer coat reddish brown. Horns on adult males summer and fall. Can run up to 30 mph.

**THE RIVERLINE TRAIL**



Photos and images not created by VCA students are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International and previous versions (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>).

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The longest beaver dam in the world was discovered in Alberta, Canada, is a half mile long, and can be seen from space!

