

# Ponder A Pond

## Pre-visit Activities

### K-3rd Grade

The activities included in this pre-visit packet have been designed to help you and your students prepare for your upcoming program at St. Joseph County Parks. The purpose of the pre-visit packet is to help students learn about general characteristics of a pond and the importance of this habitat not only for humans, but also for the plants and animals that make a pond their home. By familiarizing your students with this information, they will have a better understanding of the activities that we will conduct with them at the park.

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**How does a duck spend his day in the wetland? Finish the poem to find out.  
Then draw a picture that tells the duck's story.**



I see a little duck and he's looking for a treat.

He's swimming through the water...kick, kick, kick go his \_\_\_\_\_.

Tell me now, Mr. Mallard, do you like your duckweed snack?

How does a duck say "Yes, I do!" He makes a noisy \_\_\_\_\_!

The little duck shakes out his wings, I think he's going to fly.

Away he goes, he's off to join his friends up in the \_\_\_\_\_!

Activity Adapted from: *Wetland Wild Activity Book from Ducks Unlimited*



**Muskrat**



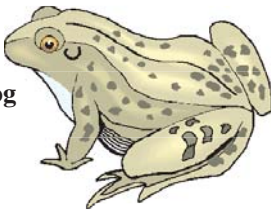
*HINT: Likes to eat plants.*

**Dragonfly**



*HINT: Likes to eat an insect we think is a pest.*

**Frog**



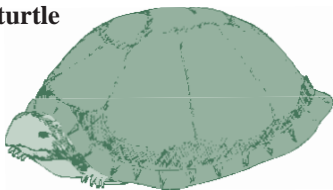
*HINT: Will catch this large flying insect with its tongue.*

**Great blue heron**



*HINT: Will hunt its food as it slithers through the wetland grasses at the edge of the pond.*

**Aquatic turtle**



*HINT: Their food can not live outside of the water.*

**Draw a line from each wetland animal to the food that it eats.**

*(Use the clues provided if you need help!)*

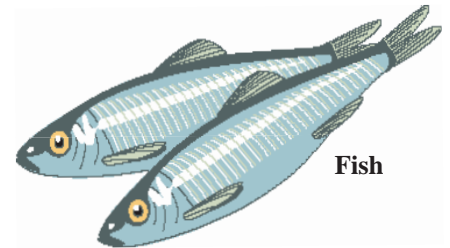
# Food in the Wetland



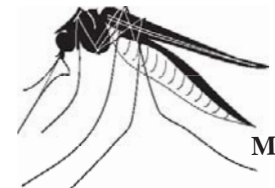
**Snake**



**Cattails**



**Fish**



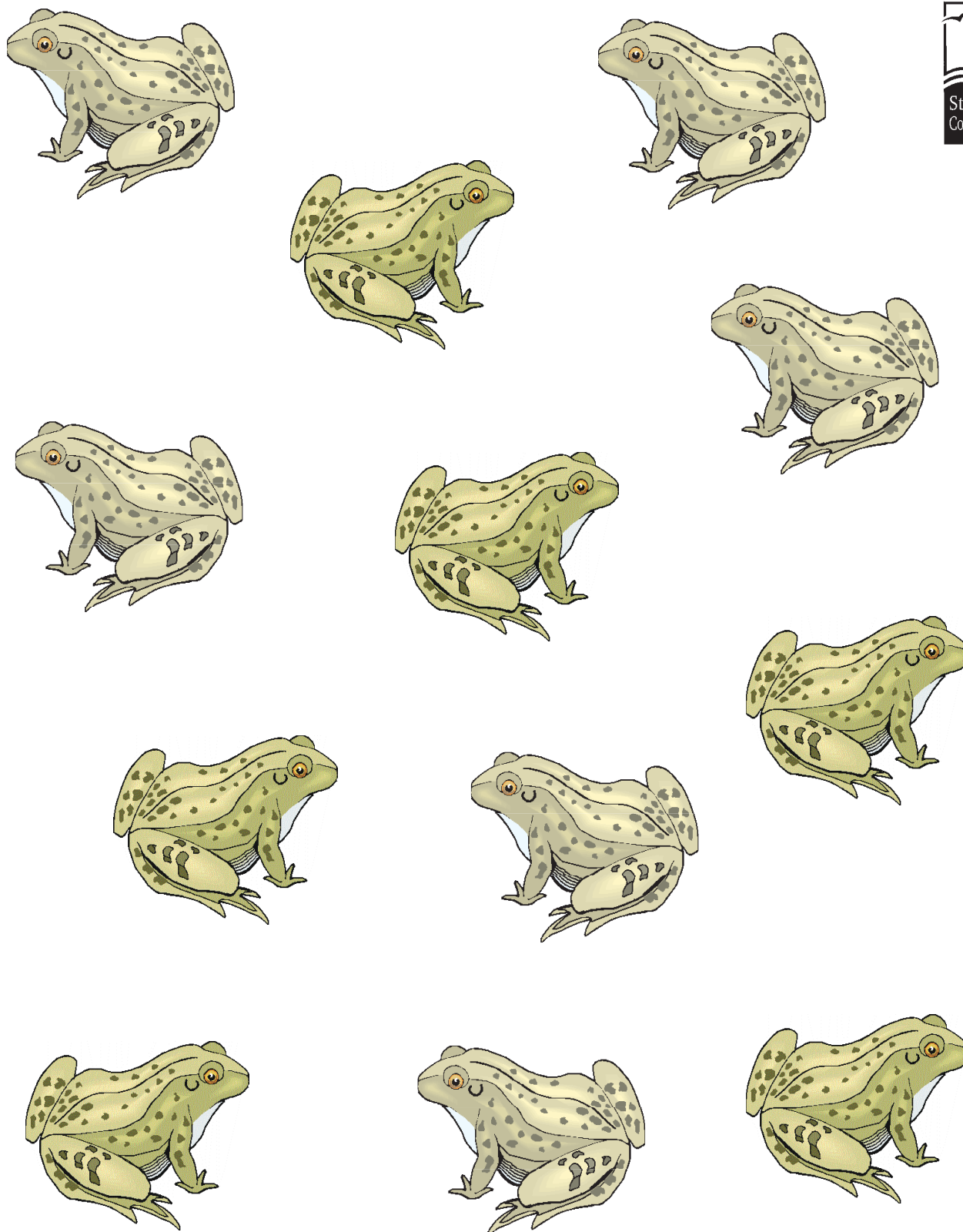
**Mosquito**



**Dragonfly**



# Count the Frogs



How many frogs are looking left? \_\_\_\_\_ How many frogs are looking right? \_\_\_\_\_  
Left facing frogs \_\_\_\_\_ + right facing frogs \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_ total frogs.

# Crafty Cattails



Cattails are emergent plants. This means that they extend above the water's surface, growing in water up to 6 1/2 feet deep. Air spaces in the plants' structure transport oxygen from above-water portions of the plant to their root systems. Thick stands of cattails offer nesting sites, camouflage and are an important food source for many wetland animals.

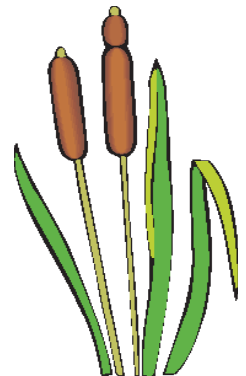
**Have the students make their own stands of cattails to display on a classroom bulletin board.**

*Optional:* Once the cattail stand has been made, you can add "water", wetland insects and animals to make the bulletin board habitat complete.

## ***Materials Needed:***

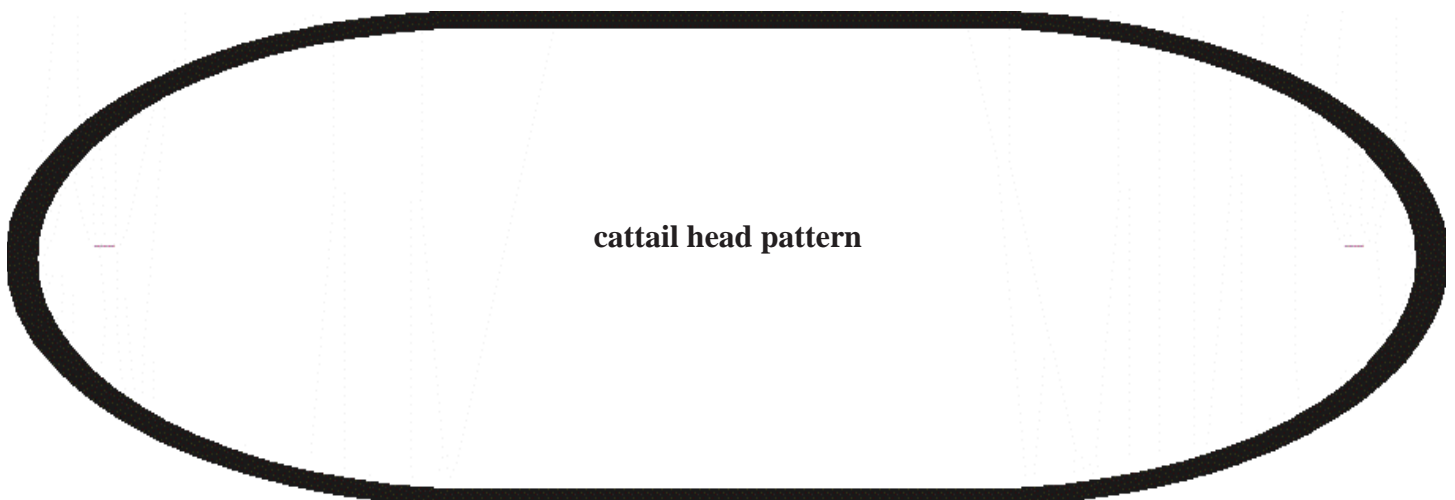
- brown felt
- long pipe cleaners
- green construction paper
- glue
- scissors
- tape
- cattail "head" pattern

1. Trace the pattern (shown below) onto brown felt, make sure each student traces two.
2. Cut out the pieces from the felt.
3. Put glue on one side of a felt piece, making sure you spread it evenly and fairly thick over the whole side.
4. Lay a pipe cleaner lengthwise along the middle of the glue-covered felt, leaving about one inch sticking over the top edge.
5. Lay the other felt piece on top.
6. Press the two pieces together firmly and let them dry.
7. Cut long, tapering leaves out of green construction paper. (Two or three leaves are enough for one cattail.)
8. Fold the bottom of each leaf around the pipe cleaner stem, then tape them in place.



**Your cattail is complete!**

Activity adapted from: *Nature Scope: Wading into Wetlands*



# CURIOUS...

**about what your students will discover in the pond?**

Enjoy a look at some of the pond critters that your students may see up close when they scoop in the pond. Many of the creatures the students will find are the young (baby or teenage phase) of an aquatic insect.



**Dragonfly (nymph) (teenage):**

They are predators (eat other animals) and will especially eat other insects in the water.



**Damselfly (nymph) (teenage):**

It has three leaf-shaped gills at the tip of its abdomen (end of its body.)



**Tadpole:**

It will change into an adult from anywhere between 12 days to 3 years. (Depending on the kind of frog or toad the tadpole is determines how long it stays a tadpole.)



**Predaceous Diving Beetle (adult):**

Its shiny, flattened, oval shaped body is generally black to brownish black.



**Mayfly (nymph) (teenage):**

It has three, featherlike tail flaps on its abdomen or the end of its body.



**Giant water bug (adult):**

It uses its first pair of legs for grabbing prey.



# Answer Sheet

for

## Ponder A Pond

### Pre-visit Activities

K-3rd Grade

#### **Food in the Wetland**

- Muskrat/Cattails
- Dragonfly/Mosquito
- Frog/Dragonfly
- Great blue heron/Snake
- Aquatic turtle/Fish

*Although some of these animals will eat the same things, these answers reflect what the animal will more commonly feed on.*

#### **Count the Frogs**

- Left facing frogs = 6
- Right facing frogs = 6
- Total frogs = 12

