

Naturalist Lessons at Bengel Wildlife Center 2026-27

BOG EXPLORATION

- Wetlands are wild! Visit the Bengel Wildlife Center's East Bog and explore the unique plants and animals that live there. Students will learn about adaptations for living in wetlands and discover mosses, carnivorous plants, and tamaracks (conifers that lose their needles), and more.

AQUATIC BUG DISCOVERY

- Students will learn about the diverse insects and invertebrates that live in river systems in Michigan. Our naturalist will introduce dichotomous keys and students will learn to identify creatures that lurk beneath the water's surface.

NSI: NATURE SCENE INVESTIGATION

- Students are wildlife investigators! Learn how to track mammals and birds using common sign including scat, tracks, bones, feathers, dens, and other clues. What animals use habitats at Bengel and what are they up to?

NATIVE TREE IDENTIFICATION

- We have LOTS of different species of trees, but how can we tell them apart? Explore the differences between conifers and deciduous trees, look for clues like tree flowers and fruits, and explore common characteristics like opposite vs alternate leaves and branches. This lesson works all year-round, even in the winter!

HABITAT INVESTIGATION

- Explore the diverse habitats of the Bengel Wildlife Center and how to classify them. How is a forest different from a grassland? What makes a wetland wet? Talk about adaptations that animals and plants have for different habitats and what makes these places unique.

UNWANTED PLANTS

- Learn about invasive species, the bullies of the forest. Observe habitats that have lots of invasive shrubs and compare them to more diverse native habitats. Learn how to identify invasive species and what to do when you find them.

WHAT BIRDS TELL US

- Use our eyes and ears to find and identify birds and their habitats. What do different types of birds tell us about the habitats around the Bengel Wildlife Center? What are some adaptations birds have to living in forests, wetlands, or grasslands?

All of these lessons are offered year-round. Lessons aren't limited to this list- contact Drew to customize a lesson for your own class. We can also explore reptiles, amphibians, and much more!

Drew Monks

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