

**WE'RE NOT ALONE:**

**ANIMALS IN**

**100 ACRES**

**100** THE VIRGINIA B. FAIRBANKS  
**ACRES** ART & NATURE PARK  
**IMA**

### **On the Right Track**

Animals leave many kinds of signs to tell us they've been around. If you use your senses, you'll discover many clues to where an animal has been, and what they've been up to.

Close your eyes—do you **hear** animal sounds?

Breathe in deeply through your nose—what do you **smell**?

Look around you, both at things in the distance and up close to you. Do you **see** any signs of animals?

Keep your eyes open for nests, footprints, scat (feces), scratches or bite marks, feathers, clumps of fur or hair, ripples on the water or movement in the trees. What kinds of animals do you think are leaving these signs?



### **The Tangled Webs They Weave**

There are over 360 species of spiders that have been identified in Indiana, and play a very important role within the ecosystem. Many spiders spin beautiful and intricate designs and catch their prey using the sticky silken threads.

Look carefully around you as you walk through the Park. See if you can find any **spider webs** stretched between branches or twigs, or built low on the ground across blades of grass.

Look at (but don't touch!) the webs. What sorts of patterns do you notice? Do you see anything stuck in the web? Is the spider nearby?

## Biodiversity is Beautiful

Biodiversity is a term that refers to the **variety of living things** in an ecosystem. An ecosystem is made up of all the living and nonliving things that interact within an area. Measuring an area's biodiversity can often help determine how healthy an environment is. The more species there are, the more able that ecosystem is to support that variety.

As you're moving from place to place, take note of the different species you see. Do you tend to find the same plant species in the same areas, or are they more spread out?

What about animals? Try to find a bird, a mammal, a reptile, a fish, an amphibian and an insect. Do you notice animals in certain areas of the Park more than others? Why do you think that is?



## A Year in the Life

Many animals change their behaviors in order to adapt to the changing seasons. They may **migrate** (travel to another region in search of warmth and food), **hibernate** (go into a state of extended sleep with slowed heartbeat and breathing) or feed off of **stockpiled food** supplies.

As you observe different animals while you're visiting the Park, notice what they're doing. How does the season or time of year affect an animal's behavior? How might an animal's spring or summer behavior differ from what it does in the fall or winter? What do you see that makes you say that?

