iNaturalist Scavenger Hunt

Introduction:

For those of you beginning to safely explore more with iNaturalist, we invite you to participate in a scavenger hunt! Not only could this be a fun challenge, but it also helps us contribute to citizen science. Citizen science refers to research partnerships between scientists and volunteers, particularly to expand opportunities for data collection and to provide access to scientific information. We use iNaturalist as a citizen science project and online social network of naturalists, biologists, and citizen scientists. As a result, we map and share observations of biodiversity across the globe.

Instructions:

Use the scavenger hunt below with the iNaturalist app. Focus on finding birds, mammals, amphibians, insects, arachnids, plants, fungi and lichens. Try your best to find some of these organisms, but feel free to post similar ones. Safely get outdoors whether in your backyard, on your block, or a local nature preserve, including the Rye Nature Center. Check the iNaturalist Map (linked in the article) to discover where iNaturalist has recently been used near you!

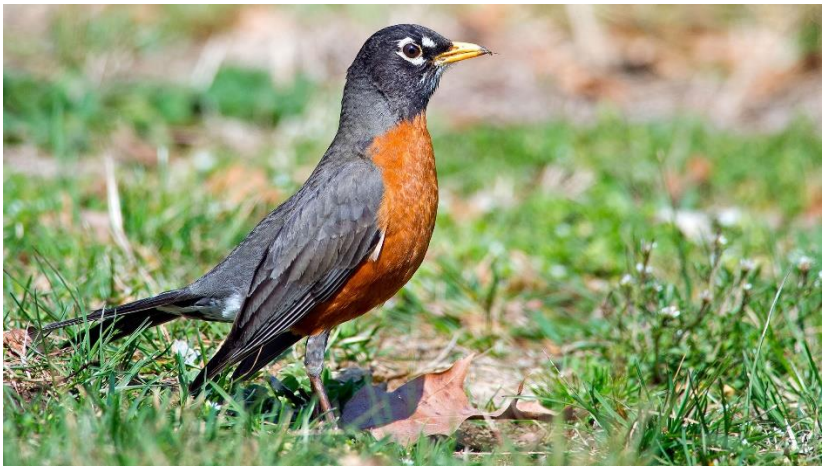
Note:

Be sure to use safety guidelines of social distancing of at least six feet, face coverings, hand washing, and sterilizing your phone after exploring. Only observe the wildlife and take photos of it. Do not touch or disturb the organisms. But most of all have some fun!

Can You Find…?

Birds, Amphibians, Mammals, Fish, Reptiles, Other Animals

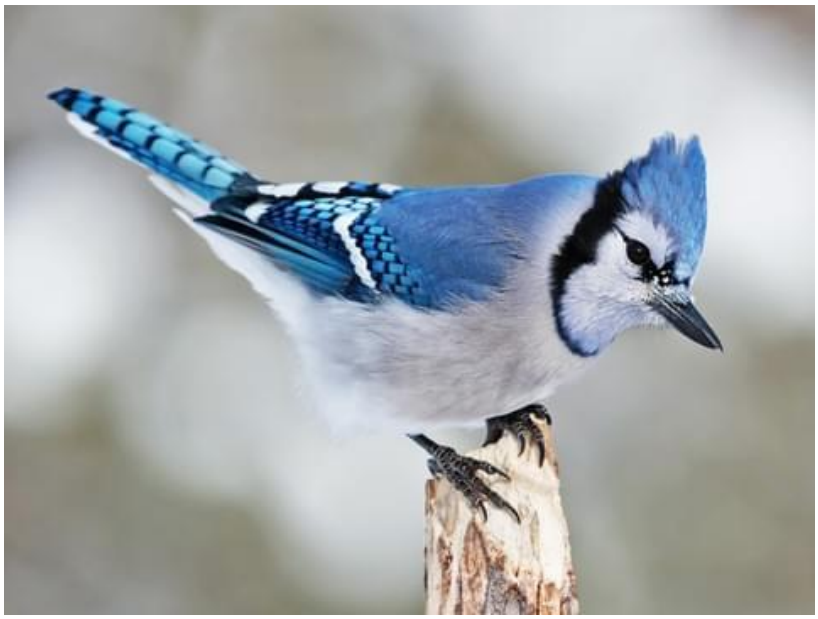
American Robin



Source: Audubon

Fun Fact: The male American Robin is often one of the last birds heard singing at sunset.

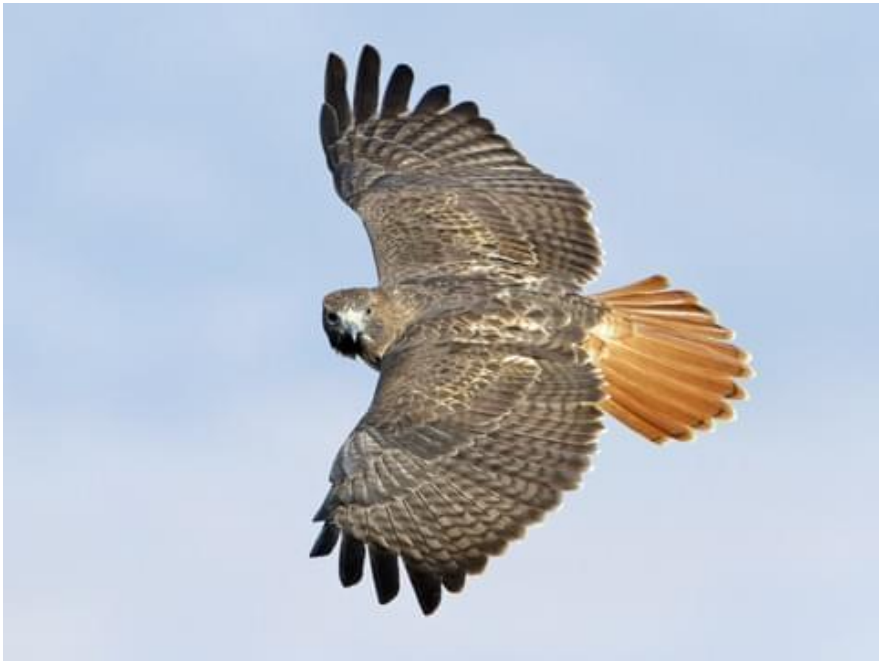
Blue Jay



Source: Audubon

Fun Fact: A blue jay can fly at speeds of 20-25 miles per hour.

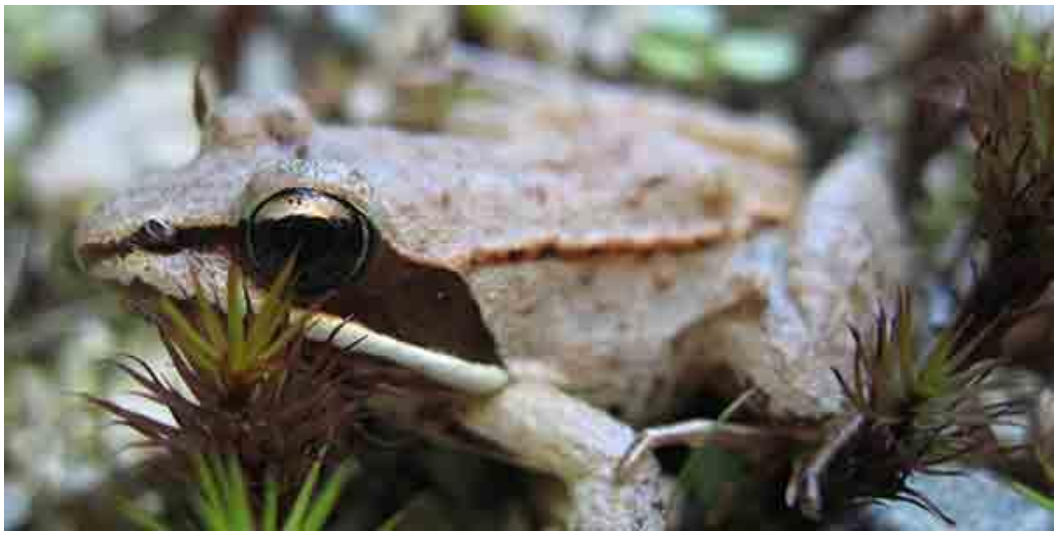
Red-tailed Hawk



Source: AllaboutBirds

Fun Fact: Red-tailed hawk's diet consists mainly of small mammals and rodents like squirrels and mice.

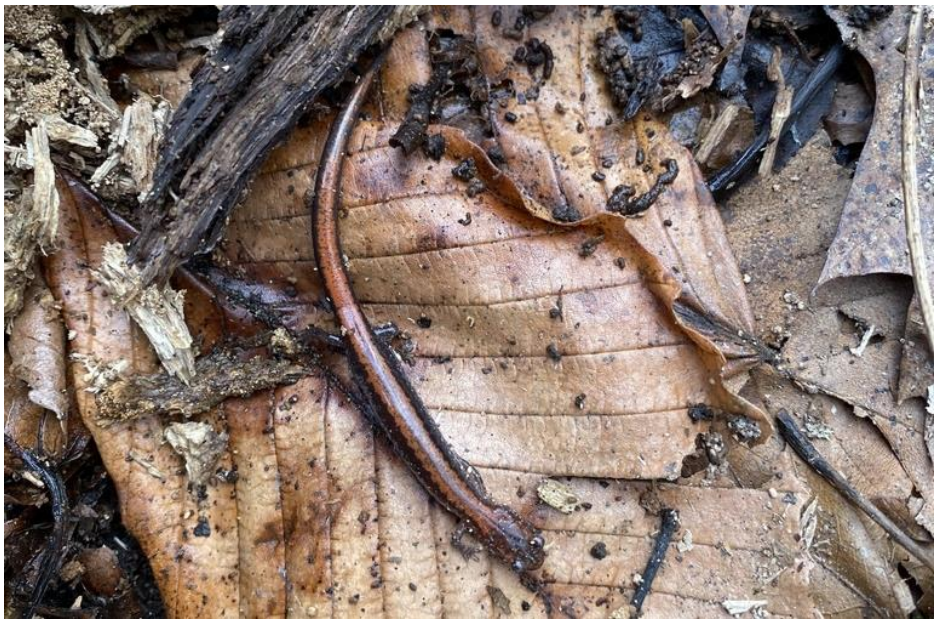
Wood Frog



Source: National Wildlife Federation

Fun Fact: Frogs absorb water through their skin, so they do not require to drink water.

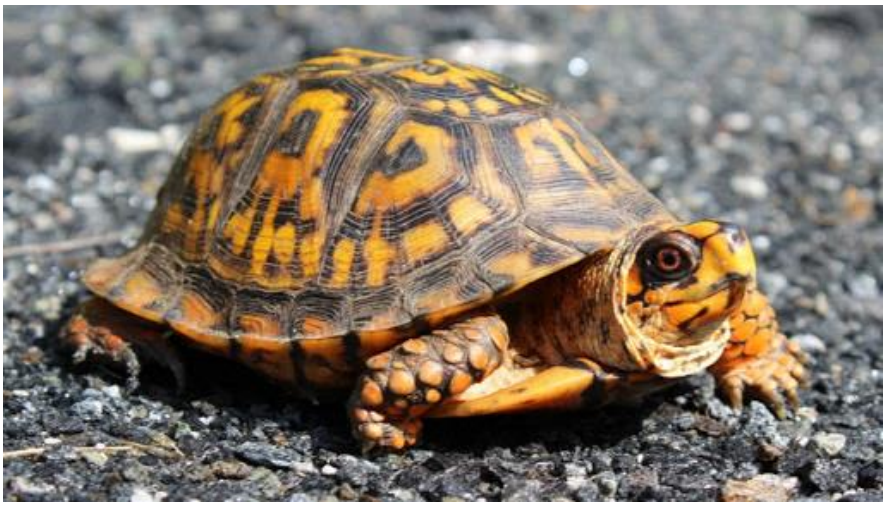
Eastern Red-backed Salamander



Source: FRNC iNaturalist Project

Fun Fact: Salamanders are ectothermic (cold-blooded) and require external heat to help regulate their body temperatures.

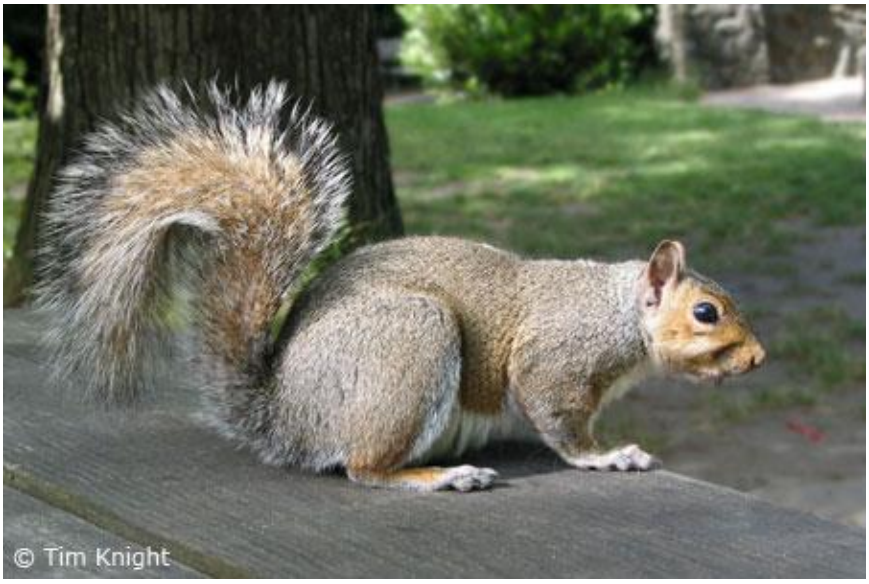
Box Turtle



Source: Reptiles Magazine

Fun Fact: Turtle's hard protective shells are made up of an upper shell called a carapace and a lower shell called a plastron.

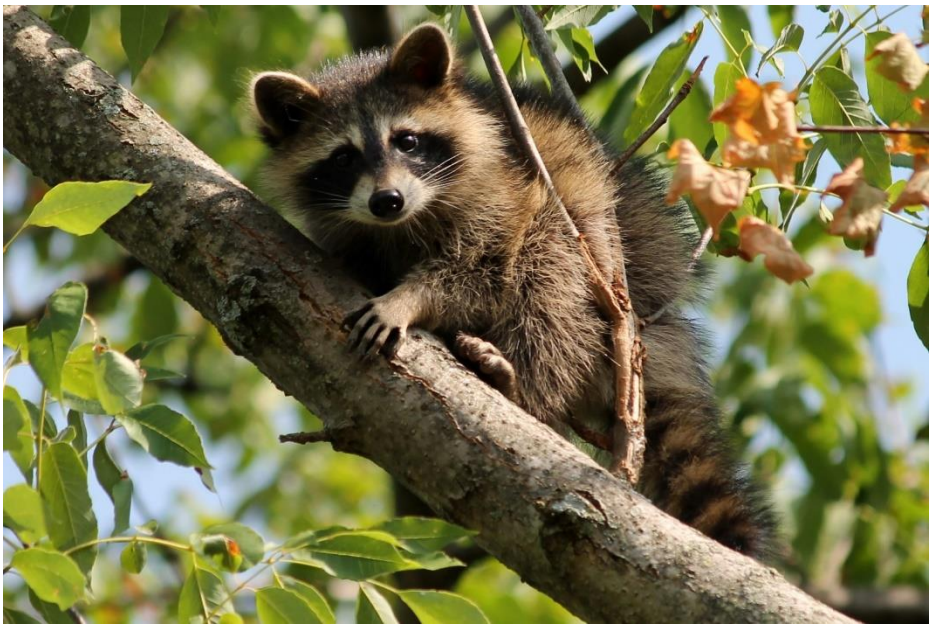
Eastern Grey Squirrel



Source: Tim Knight and Nature Mapping Foundation

Fun Fact: The eastern gray squirrel is one of more than 200 species of squirrels living around the world.

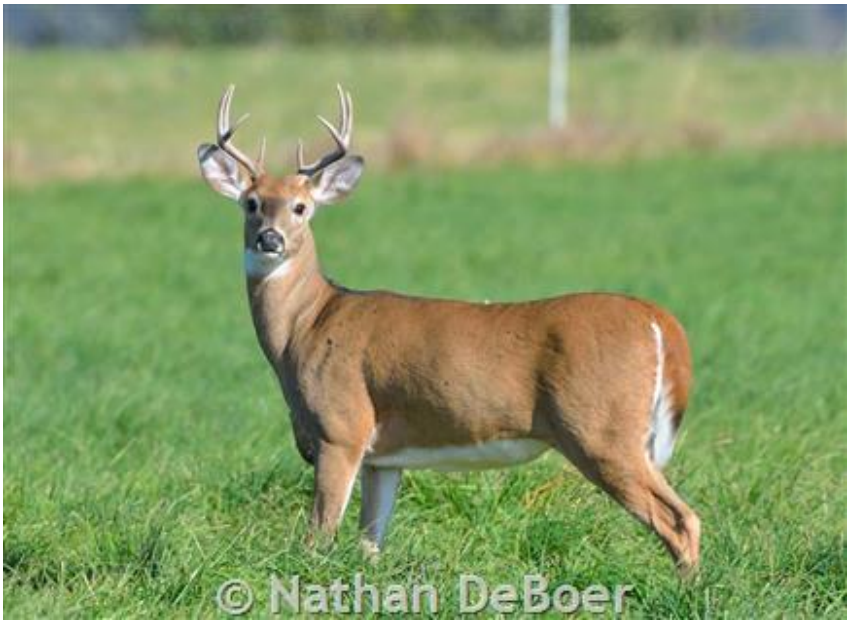
Eastern Racoon



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Fun Fact: The most important sense for racoons is their sense of touch.

White-tailed Deer



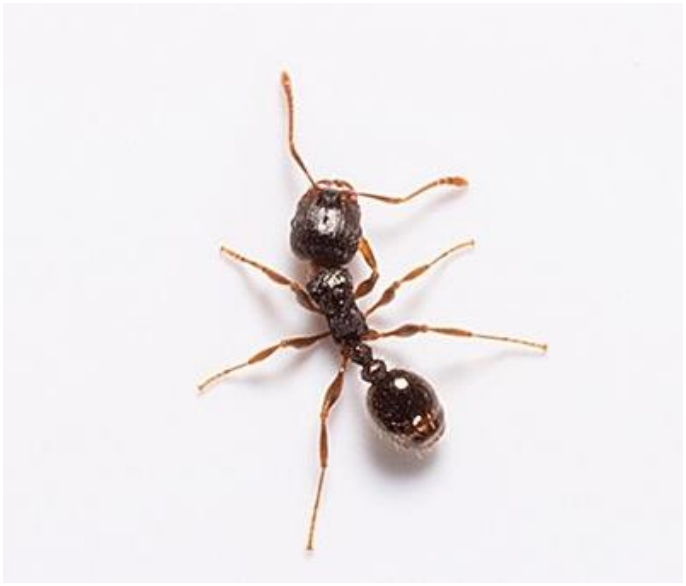
Source: Nathan Deboer and Montana Field Guide

Fun Fact: Deer have the same number as teeth as humans.

FRIENDS OF RYE NATURE CENTER

Insects, Arachnids and Mollusks

Pavement Ants



Source: Michigan State University

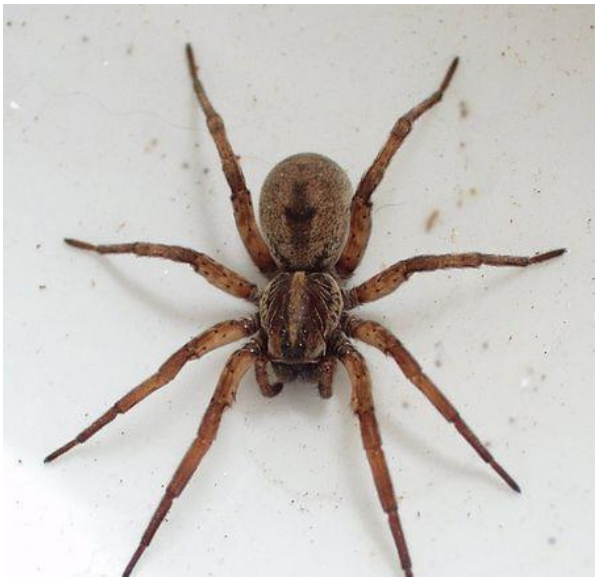
Fun Fact: These ants get their name because they are often found in nesting in cracks in pavement, but they are typically found in the eastern half of the US.

Common House Flies

Source: Public Radio International

Fun Fact: House flies can taste with their feet.

Wolf Spiders



Source: NewYorkUpstate.com

Fun Fact: Wolf spiders can be found in suburban backyards, grasslands, fields, wooded areas, wet coastal forests and moist habitats.

Plants

Red Oak Tree

Source: The Arbor Day Foundation

Fun Fact: Their acorns are eaten by blue jays, small mammals, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer and bears.

Lesser Celandine

Source: Conservation District

Fun Fact: This is an invasive plant that was introduced as a garden plant in the 1860s, and today it threatens native spring wildflowers.

Garlic Mustard

Source: King County Government

Fun Fact: Garlic mustard plays chemical warfare with other plants producing sulfur-containing compounds called glucosinolates.

FRIENDS OF RYE NATURE CENTER

Fungi and Lichen

Turkey-tail Fungi

Source: MushroomExpert.com

Fun Fact: This mushroom's surface is slightly fuzzy and can vary in color.

Ink Cap Fungi

Source: Woodland Trust

Fun Fact: Gills of mushrooms have the sole purpose of producing spores, which are the microscopic "seeds" of mushrooms.

Greenshield Lichen

Source: Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health

Fun Fact: Lichens are not one single organism but rather made up of fungus which lives in a symbiotic relationship with algae or cyanobacteria.

Remember, if you can't find these exact organisms, try to find something similar.

Good luck and enjoy exploring!