

# Wildlife Field Methods I

November Homeschool Class at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve

Wild animals are notoriously challenging to observe directly, and when we DO see them in their natural habitats, our presence often changes their behavior. How do ecologists cope with this? Come learn about the wildlife research taking place on the property, and practice the techniques employed by our scientists! Maybe we'll get lucky and be able to see some wild animals as well!

Cedar Creek is home to more than 50 mammal species and at least 243 bird species, including unusual and charismatic ones like the red-headed woodpecker, gray wolf and several kinds of weasels. Our insect collection is one of the most complete site-specific collections in the world. Radio telemetry was invented here, and modern research employs cutting-edge techniques like satellite trackers and remote sensing. Today's class will include a mix of indoor instruction, outdoor investigation, exposure to long-term experiments and science games.

Come prepared to learn lots and have a great time!



By the end of the day, students will be able to:

- Describe the challenges and opportunities associated with studying wildlife in the field and in captive settings.
- Explain how scientists measure animal tracks and gait.
- Identify a variety of wildlife using track and sign.
- Describe the history and development of radio telemetry in Minnesota, including how this technology is used elsewhere.
- Work as a team to quickly locate and retrieve a hidden transmitter on the landscape.
- Identify animals from skull morphology and articulate how their teeth and muscle structure provide clues to foraging/food acquisition adaptations.