

Ballard Nature Center
Homeschooling 2026-2027 Curriculum for students ages 5-10.
A separate form is available for students ages 11-14.

Classes are held in a classroom setting/structure.

Parents attend with children. Feel free to bring younger siblings, but if babies/toddlers get fussy or are distracting to the class, please take them away from the class until they are calm.

We will have a mix of lessons, games, hands-on activities, trail walks, & crafts. We try to include outside time with each class, so dress appropriately. Class size will be 15 kids or less.

Cost is \$30 per child. Fee covers the year (6 classes).

Registration begins August 1.

Unit 1: Prairies

September 16 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or September 17 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

The study of prairie habitats and the plants and animals that call them home.

Unit 2: Vertebrate vs Invertebrate

October 21 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or October 22 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

Backbones, some have 'em and some don't. We will compare and contrast these animals.

Unit 3: Winged Things

November 18 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or November 19 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

All about birds, bats, and insects.

Unit 4: Winter Survival

January 20 - 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or January 21 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

Animals have lots of different strategies to survive the cold winter weather.

Unit 5: Reptiles

February 17 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or February 18 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

Turtles, lizards, and snakes make up this group. Learn about their special characteristics.

Unit 6: Pond Animals

March 17 - 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or March 18 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

We will learn about the life in a pond, big and small.

If class is cancelled due to winter weather, we will reschedule.

Registration begins AUG 1st Please register by Sept. 5

Sign-Up Sheet for Homeschooling at Ballard Nature Center

Parents Name: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address : _____

(*We send reminders and class cancellations via email.*)

Names and Ages of children 5 yrs and older : _____

Names & ages of children under 5 years:

Any Special Needs or Allergies: _____

Wednesdays at 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or Thursdays at 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

First choice day and time _____

Second choice day and time _____

We will try to get you in your first choice, but it's not guaranteed.

***Please send form and payment to Ballard Nature Center, 5253 E US Hwy 40 Altamont, IL 62411. Any questions, call 618-483-6856, e-mail ballardnc@frontiernet.net, or Facebook message us.**

Ballard Nature Center
Homeschooling 2026-2027 Curriculum: Ages 11-14
Separate form is available for students ages 5-10

New this year, Ballard Nature Center will offer homeschool classes for older, middle school students **aged 11-14**. Through outdoor investigations, hands-on activities, and interactive games, students will explore various nature-related topics. Each class encourages critical thinking as students ask questions, solve real-world environmental problems, and think like scientists. Most of these classes will take place outside, weather permitting. *Please dress appropriately for being outdoors.*

Classes are held in a classroom setting/structure. Parents may attend with children or stay with siblings in the younger class. Feel free to bring young siblings, but if babies/toddlers get fussy or are distracting to the class, please take them away from the class until they are calm. Class size will not exceed 15 students.

Cost is \$30 per child. Fee covers the year (6 classes). Registration begins August 1.
If class is cancelled due to winter weather, we will reschedule.

Unit 1: Forest for the Trees

September 16 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or September 17 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

How do organisms interact in a forest ecosystem? What other factors play a part in a healthy forest? Learn about the interconnectedness of everything in a forest.

Unit 2: The World Beneath Our Feet

October 21 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or October 22 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

There's more to "dirt" than meets the eye. We'll take a look at the living world of soil.

Unit 3: The Science of Survival

November 18 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or November 19 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

In nature, survival isn't easy! Learn what it takes to survive for different species. We'll take a special look at endangered and invasive species in Illinois.

Unit 4: Wild Illinois History

January 20 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or January 21 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

Learn about the importance of Illinois plants & animals to Native Americans & early French settlers. We'll compare past practices to those used today.

Unit 5: Stewards of the Wild

February 17 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or February 18 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

How do our choices affect the natural world? Learn how to be responsible in nature and about real-world problems.

Unit 6: Nature Detectives

March 17 –10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or March 18 – 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

All about wildlife technologies and how we identify them by signs they leave behind.

Registration begins AUG 1st Please register by Sept. 5

Sign-Up Sheet for Homeschooling at Ballard Nature Center

Parent Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address : _____

(*We send reminders and class cancellations via email.*)

Names and Ages of children attending class: _____

Any Special Needs or Allergies: _____

Wednesdays at 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm or Thursdays at 10-11:30am or 1-2:30pm

First choice day and time _____

Second choice day and time _____

We will try to get you in your first choice, but it's not guaranteed. Your second choice may be used to create a reasonable class size.

Will you have kids enrolling in our homeschool program for ages 5-10: Y or N

***Please send form and payment to Ballard Nature Center, 5253 E US Hwy 40 Altamont, IL 62411. Any questions, call 618-483-6856, e-mail ballardnc@frontiernet.net, or Facebook message us.**