

Wetlands are amazing ecosystems and can be found all over the United States. They occur along the boundaries of streams, lakes, ponds or even in large shallow holes that fill up with rainwater. In order to have a wetland, you need to have some low-lying land, add water, then mix in lots of plants that love having wet "feet" (roots) and finally add some animals. There are many kinds of wetlands: marshes, bogs, swamps, fens, and prairie potholes to name a few. These places can look very different, but because they are all areas with wet soil, or where water covers the soil, they are considered wetlands.

What type of wetlands are near you?

Every critter plays an important part in a healthy wetland. From primary producers, on up the food chain of consumers to decomposers, everything is connected.

Draw a line from the terms below to the plants or animals you see on this page that fit that level of the food chain!

primary producer

primary consumer

secondary consumer

tertiary consumer

decomposer

Cut out the squares below and place them over parts of the picture that serve the described function of a wetland.



flip this page over for definitions of the food chain terms and instructions to make your own lotus flower!

Habitat



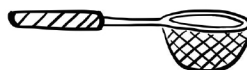
More than 1/3 of endangered and threatened animals and plants in the United States depend on wetlands in some way.

Food



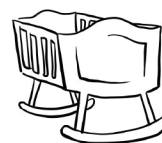
Wetlands are very productive because of all of plants they contain. These help form the base of the food chain.

Filtration



Wetlands are great at filtering water coming off the land, reducing pollution in run-off before it gets into open water.

Nursery



Wetlands provide nursery habitat for most of the juvenile (young) fish and shellfish that we eat.

Flood Control



By slowing the water during floods, wetlands reduce flood damage in areas downstream and around them.

Food chain vocabulary words:

primary producer - (plants, algae) uses the sun to provide its own nutrients

primary consumer - (bugs, herbivores, small fish) gets nutrients by eating the primary producers

secondary consumer - (small animals, amphibians, small birds) gets nutrients by eating the primary consumers

tertiary consumer - (larger animals, humans) gets nutrients by eating the secondary or primary consumers

decomposer - (bacteria, fungi) breaks down all natural material into microscopic pieces to be absorbed back into the earth

Directions for making your Lotus:

Materials needed:

1 square sheet of paper (preferably pink)
1 green pipe cleaner
1 green (or clear) straw

1 square piece of wax paper (preferably green)
scissors
pencil

Using the square sheet of paper, make the lotus flower following the directions below.

Cut the corners off of the square wax paper to make it into a circle. This will be your waterproof lotus leaf.

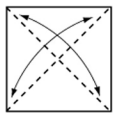
Slide the pipe cleaner into the straw. This will be your plant stem.

Fold the pipe cleaner at the bottom to keep the straw from sliding off.

Using a pencil, make a small hole in the middle of the leaf and flower.

Slide the leaf onto the stem, followed by the flower.

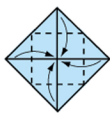
Make a small "T" with the pipe cleaner on top to keep the flower from sliding off.



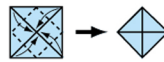
1. Fold diagonally both ways and open.



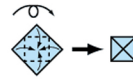
2. Fold each corner into the center.



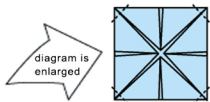
3. Fold each corner into the center once again.



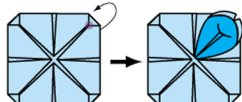
4. For a third time, fold each corner into the center.



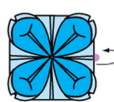
5. Turn model over and fold each corner into the center.



6. Fold each corner inwards a small amount.



7. To form the petals, press down on the point shown, while slowly pulling the petal from behind, to the front. It's almost like turning the corner "inside out". Repeat on all corners.



8. The second set of petals are formed the same way, but the corner from the point shown.



9. The third set doesn't need to be turned "inside out", just folded normally from below the first set.



Finished Lotus.

Learn more and find other fun
Activity Guides at

NEEFusa.org

If you've enjoyed finding wetland animals on this Activity Guide, join
Project Noah to photograph and share more animals in real life!

visit ProjectNoah.org

project
noah

Sources:

National Environmental
Education Foundation
Kenilworth Park & Aquatic
Gardens National Park
Origami-fun