



PROGRAM GUIDE

Free activities for all ages

Presented by [The Children of Indiana Nature Park](#)
Summer 2021



Table of Contents

This guide includes activities for you to create your own tales using inspiration from our natural world and animals with tails that live in it.

Activity Idea #1 Backyard Tails: Make your own bird treats!

Activity Idea #2 Word Scramble: Can you name these animals with tails?

Activity Idea #3 Spot the animals!

Activity Idea #4 Tails on the Prairies and Plains: Learn about a reintroduction story

Activity Idea #5 Glowing Tails: Help the firefly find her way!



Make your own bird treats!

(15 - 20 minutes)

**TAILS
AND
TALES**

Supplies:

- ½ cup bird seed*
- ½ cup uncooked oatmeal
- ¼ cup flour (any type)
- 3 tablespoon water
- ¼ cup (peanut butter, or coconut oil, or vegetable shortening)
- Baking tray
- Parchment paper or non-stick cooking spray
- Needle or skewer
- Jute twine or strong thread



** If you do not have bird seed and don't want to purchase it, you can substitute it for the same amount of uncooked quinoa, or crushed and unsalted mixed nuts, or dry muesli, or crushed plain breakfast cereal. (It is important to ensure that none of the substitutes have added sugars, flavorings or salt.)*

Instructions:

1. Add the measured amounts of bird seed, uncooked oatmeal and flour into a medium-sized bowl. Then add 3 tablespoons of water.
2. Stir the mixture with a spoon or a spatula until all the water has been absorbed by the dry ingredients.
3. Add the measured amount of peanut butter (or its listed substitutes) and mix it well until everything has combined into a sticky dough. You can add water, peanut butter, and flour one tablespoon at a time if the mixture does not look or feel sticky enough for you.



Make your own bird treats!

(15 - 20 minutes)

**TAILS
AND
TALES**

©2021 CSIP

4. Grab a baking tray or pan and put some baking paper on it, or spray it with non-stick cooking spray.
5. Now with your hands, roll or shape the mixture into balls or whatever shape and size you would like. You can even use cookie cutters and molds to shape them. *Just make sure to firmly shape it into a ball or your preferred shape, or push them tightly into cookie cutters and molds so they hold their shape!*



Tip: You can poke a hole (with a needle or skewer) near the top of each treat. Use a strong thread or jute twine to thread a knot through the hole to hang them on branches or outside your window. You can also make another hole towards the bottom of the treat and put a skewer or twig through it so birds can perch on it and nibble away! You should make these holes before you bake your treats.

6. Bake your treats at 350°F (180°C) for 15 to 20 minutes. Let them cool for a while and you can even put them in the fridge or the freezer to store them or to make them hold their shape better (especially on a hot summer day).



Make your own bird treats!

(15 - 20 minutes)

TAILS AND TALES

©2011 CSIP

You are definitely going to attract some birds and other wildlife to your backyard and surroundings with these treats. Let's get to know some of them so you can spot them:

1. **Northern Cardinal:** This brightly colored red bird with a black mask, is the state bird of Indiana. Their numbers are the largest in Central Indiana but are commonly found throughout the state. The males are bright red in color whereas the females are tan or beige in color. Male cardinals mostly use their tail feathers to talk to each other and to attract females as part of their mating dance.
2. **American Robin:** Just like the cardinal, you can find this bird year-round in Indiana. Their backs and feathers are grey-brown, and their heads are black while their belly and neck is a warm orange color. You can also notice a white patch under their tail feathers if you look closely.
3. **Mourning dove:** They are very common throughout Indiana and mostly eat seeds. Their body is a pale-brown color, while their wings are darker and their long and pointed tail has white edges on the side.
4. **Fox squirrel:** They are found throughout Indiana and are very common to parks, your backyards and other wooded areas. They can jump quite high and climb trees very well. Their tail helps to balance their body weight and makes jumping, resting and moving on a branch, and climbing up trees easier. They are known to feed on these treats so watch out!



All the animals and birds in your backyard help spread different tree and plant seeds, as they eat them and leave them in their droppings. Some seeds stick to their body and fall off as the animals move around. This helps to pollinate and spread the seeds, which is good for all of us and nature.



Word Jumble: Who am I?

(20 minutes)



Look carefully at the jumbled words and, using the hints, try to rearrange them into the names of animals. All of the jumbled words are animals found in Indiana!

1. **ORCOANC**
(Hint: I have a bushy tail with black and tan stripes and a black mask around my eyes)
2. **UMPSOSO**
(Hint: I am the only marsupial in North America and I like to be out at night)
3. **OYTOEC**
(Hint: I am smaller than a wolf, but still howl. I also have a bushy tail)
4. **TKAEASNETLR**
(Hint: I shake the tip of my tail and make a buzzing sound to warn predators)
5. **POKREEDCWO**
(Hint: My tail feathers have sharp spines that help me brace on trees while I drill and peck for food)
6. **UHMIRMIBGIDN**
(Hint: I am quite small. With my narrow beak, I feed on nectar from flowers)
7. **ERVBEA**
(Hint: I have a scaly, paddle-like tail and I am known for building dams)
8. **UTETRL**
(Hint: My hard shell protects my body and my tail helps me swim and move across slippery surfaces)



**Spot the animals from the previous activity!
(10 - 15 minutes)**

**TAILS
AND
TALES**

©2021 CSIP

Can you name some of the animals in the picture below? You have already come across and learned about them in previous activities!



Become a wildlife spotter!

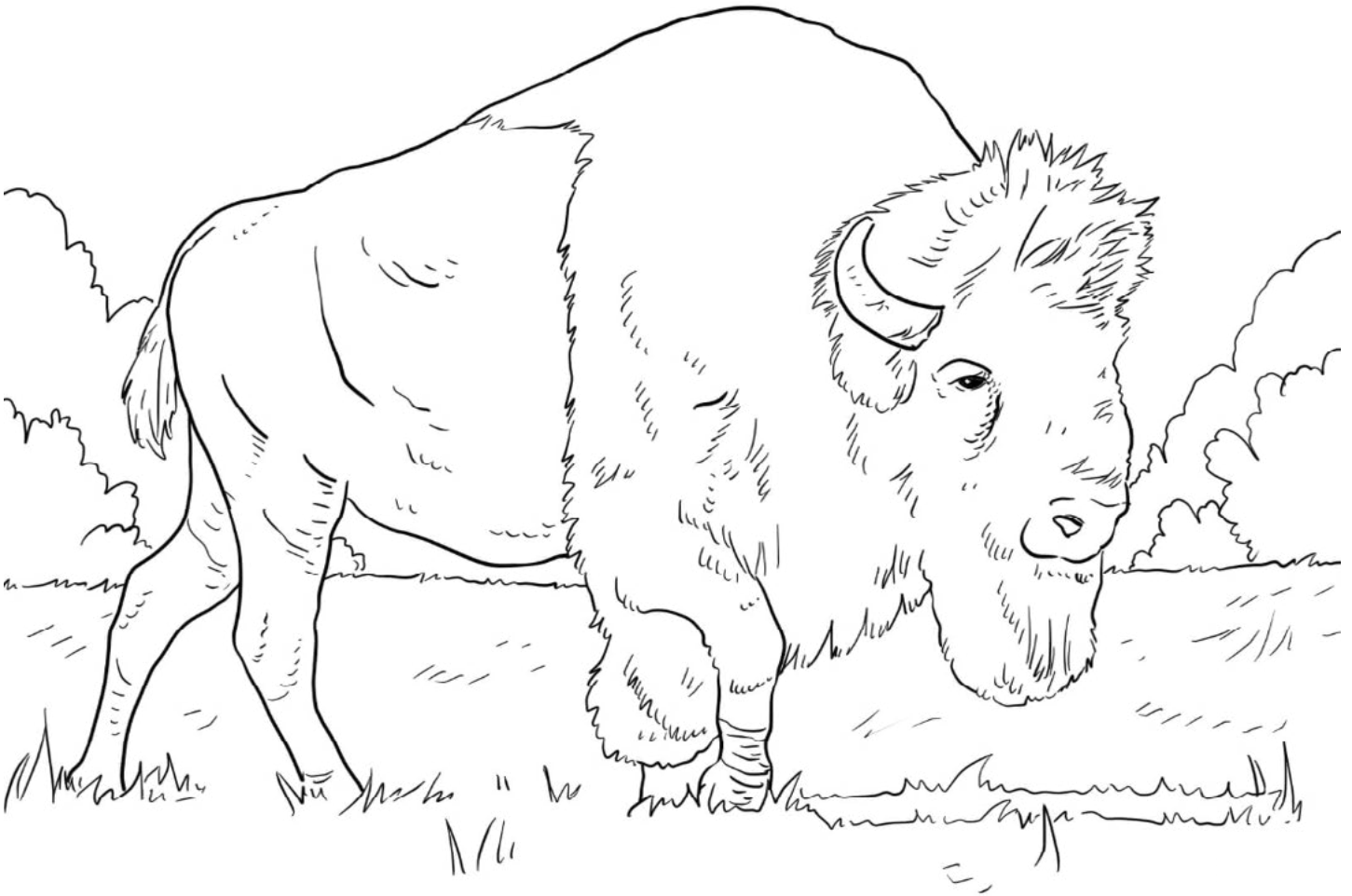
Grab a pair of binoculars! From your home or library window, look out into your surrounding areas and trees. What do you see? Do you see any of the birds and animals from the pictures and activities? How many are there? What are they doing? Do you think they are looking for food, a place to rest, or for some shelter? Are they using their tail in any way to do things? Keep a nature journal, noting the species you see, the date you see them and their behaviors.



Bison coloring page (10 - 15 minutes)



Color: Reddish brown, lighter above; darker brown below (or any other colors that inspire you!)



Bison in Indiana



The reintroduction of the Bison in Indiana

In 2016, 23 bison were brought to Kankakee Sands Nature Preserve in Newton County, Indiana. Since then, the free-roaming herd has grown to 70 bison and given birth to calves while helping restore Indiana grasslands and prairies.

Historically, bison roamed freely from Canada to Mexico and were found throughout Indiana as well. Today, with efforts by The Nature Conservancy, the reintroduction of bison was successful, and the herd is doing well.



Similarly, Ouabache State park in Wells County, Indiana also has a bison herd. Both locations have bison viewing areas for visitors to enjoy these gentle and magnificent creatures once again in their native prairies here in Indiana.

Bison feed and graze on grasses, helping to maintain the height and growth of the grasses. This grazing allows flowering plants to thrive, as well as the insects and animals that eat and live around them. This grazing also creates habitat for birds that prefer low vegetation and grasses.

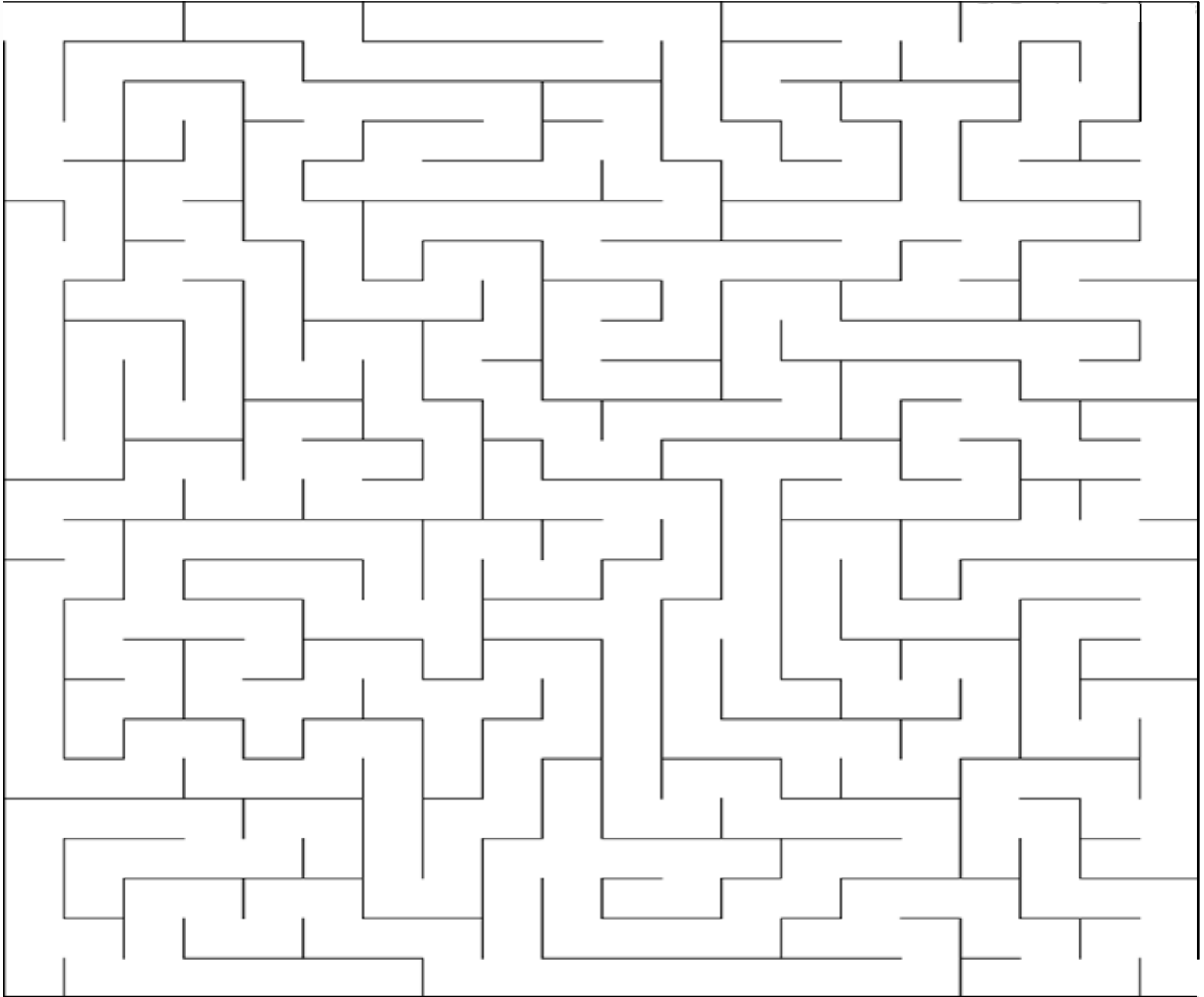
When bison roll around and lie on the ground, it creates small dents in the ground which fill with rainwater, creating homes for reptiles, amphibians, insects and plants.

For more information about bison at Kankakee Sands, visit [The Nature Conservancy website](#).



Light the way: Help the firefly reach the forest!
(15 minutes)

**TAILS
AND
TALES**



Fireflies



Fireflies, also known as lightning bugs, are found throughout Indiana in the summer. Our state insect, fireflies are known to produce their own light from their tails. The chemical reaction in their bodies that they rely on to produce flashing patterns is called *bioluminescence*. This light allows them to talk to each other and find mates.

Recently, in Indiana and throughout USA, firefly numbers are decreasing due to an increase in artificial light and loss of their habitat. To help fireflies talk, play and grow their families again you can do a few easy things:

- **Turn off your porch or backyard light:** Fireflies get confused when they see bigger and brighter sources of lights. This makes it difficult for them to communicate and find each other.
- **Let the grass grow on one side of your lawn or backyard:** It can get annoying when you don't mow your grass for a while and it grows rapidly in the summer. However, leaving a little patch or side of a grass in your lawn and backyards can help fireflies as they prefer living in longer grass during the day.
- **Plant white pine and Virginia pine trees around your house, yards and gardens:** These two types of pine trees are native to Indiana and are great for providing the shade and low-light cover that fireflies need. The litter that pine trees leave on the ground are also great for fireflies to lay their eggs on and once hatched, the larvae can feed on smaller insects that might be attracted to the wood pile.
- **Only use natural fertilizers:** Weed killers, and chemical pesticides and fertilizers can poison fireflies and their larvae. Even if they might not have directly come in contact with the chemicals, the plants that have been sprayed can harm fireflies.



Did you know? The Indiana State Library Early Literacy Firefly Award for outstanding picture books is voted on by children ages 0-5! [Learn how young children can participate in this program.](#)



Finding Tales in Indiana

[Indiana State Library](#)

[Collaborative Summer Library Program](#)

[Indiana Early Literacy Firefly Award](#)

Finding Tails in Indiana

[The Nature Conservancy in Indiana](#)

[Children of Indiana Nature Park](#)

[Kankakee Sands Nature Preserve](#)

Photo credits

Cover

© Amy Nyberg

Page 3

© Robert Taylor, licensed with CC BY 2.0.

Page 4

© Wyldwest, licensed with CC BY 2.0.

Page 5

Cardinal © Matt Williams

Robin © TNC

Mourning dove © TNC

Squirrel © TNC

Page 7

Beaver © Stevehdc, licensed with CC BY-SA 2.0

Hummingbird © TNC

Possum © Life Lenses, licensed with CC BY-SA 2.0

Woodpecker © TNC

Raccoon © Eat_Crow, licensed with CC BY-ND 2.0

Cardinal © TNC

Turtle © Greg Schechter, licensed with CC BY 2.0

Rattlesnake © 2ndPeter, licensed with CC BY 2.0

Page 8

© Danmaxx, licensed with CC BY 2.0

Page 9

© Jason Whalen/Fauna Creative

Page 10

Firefly © Art farmer, licensed with CC BY-SA 2.0

Forest © Jiri Brozovsky, licensed with CC BY 2.0

