

TEACHER GUIDE TO THE  
**ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER**



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*\*Copies of these documents will be printed for you and handed out at PRM.*

# HOW TO USE THIS TEACHER GUIDE

Please read through this document at least once before arriving at the museum for your field trip.

The information found in this guide (on page 3) is intended to provide you, the teacher, with background information and a general plan for your gallery experience.

We will provide you with a copy of this Teacher's Guide upon your arrival at the museum for use during your time in the gallery, so you don't need to bring your own copy.

You are encouraged to adjust or change the elements outlined in this guide to best suit your class' needs. The main objective of your time in the gallery is to reinforce your curriculum goals related to animal classifications.

Please **do not** plan on reading this guide aloud to your students verbatim, but rather, become comfortable with the material and then present it to your class at their learning level.

You will receive copies of the student worksheet (on page 5) upon arrival at the museum, so don't bring your own copies.

If you have questions, feel free to contact:

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# TEACHER GUIDE TO THE ILLINOIS RIVER ENCOUNTER

**Before walking in the Gallery, please remind your students of the following:**

How should we behave when we're inside the gallery?

1. Walk.
2. Use inside voices.
3. You are allowed to touch the exhibits in this gallery, but make sure that you are being gentle and respectful.

**As you enter the Illinois River Encounter gallery, begin a discussion with your students.** You could start by saying something similar to the following:

This exhibit is called the Illinois River Encounter. Can anyone guess what we will see inside this gallery?

*Answer: This gallery explores the relationship between people and the Illinois River. This museum actually sits on the banks of the river (you can see the Illinois River from the windows in the main lobby). Many people made their home by the river because it provided a source of food, water, protection, and trade. In the gallery, you will get to learn about the different types of people that have called this area their home throughout history, and about the animals that lived here as well. As we walk around, you should pay special attention to the animals and their habitats.*

Who can guess what kinds of plants and animals live around or in the river?

- *Fish: small/large mouth bass, red ear sunfish, pumpkin seed sunfish, blue gill, gar, catfish (You can see all of these species in our fish tank just inside the gallery.)*
- *Mammals: beavers, raccoons, fox*
- *Birds: eagles, ducks, geese, turkey, woodpeckers, vultures, hawks*
- *Amphibians: turtles, toads*
- *Reptiles: snakes*

What do plants and animals need to survive?\*

- *Food*
- *Clean air and water*
- *Shelter*

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**You may now guide your students through the exhibit, or allow them to move freely in their chaperone groups.** Your gallery walk (guided either by you and/or the chaperones) should take roughly 15 minutes to complete. At each stop, ask the kids to describe what they see, then share any label information that you find interesting. Short examples are given below; aim to spend 2-4 minutes at each spot.

## **Suggested stops in the gallery:**

- Fish tank

*All of the fish in this tank are native to Illinois, which means that they have always been here. There are some other kinds of fish that live in the river now, like Asian Carp, Round Goby, and Snakehead.*

- Kankakee Torrent (farm land connection—making such rich lands)

*The Kankakee Torrent was an enormous flood caused by melting glaciers that swept over the Central Illinois Valley, flattening much of the land and creating bodies of water like the Illinois River.*

- Animal Habitats

*The woodpecker is perched carefully on a branch above a tree. This bird needs access to a lot of trees filled with bugs for it to eat in order to survive.*

- Ducks

*Huge numbers of ducks live on the Illinois River, especially a type of duck called mallards. There are many other kinds of ducks that live in Illinois, and all of them migrate or move farther south where it is warmer during the winter time.*

- Emiquon Preserve

*Emiquon is one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the Midwest. It is the premiere demonstration site for The Nature Conservancy's work on the Illinois River and within the Upper Mississippi River system and ultimately will help guide large floodplain river restoration efforts around the world.*

**Most animals/habitats are found in one alcove of the gallery; this area can only hold 5-7 students at a time. Please help monitor this area and keep it from becoming overcrowded.**

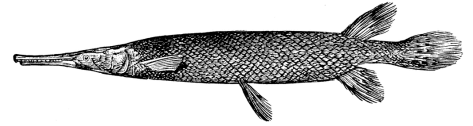
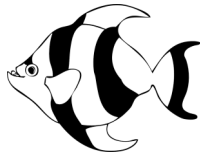
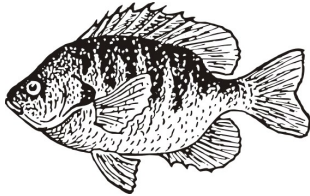
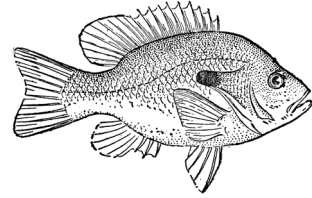
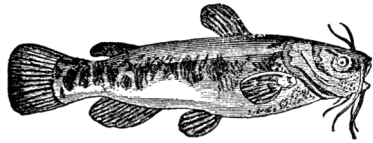
**The in-visit activity, "River Animals" will most likely take 10-15 minutes to complete.**

Students will need to circle the fish they see in the fish tank, and then will need to draw a river animal and its habitat in the frame on the worksheet. You may have the students do this during your gallery walk, or you can hand out the worksheet at the end of your gallery walk and have the students complete it before leaving the gallery.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# RIVER ANIMALS

Circle the fish you saw in the big fish tank:



Find your favorite river animal in the gallery and draw it's picture below:

