

# Conservation Corner

By Corinne Peterson  
Pocahontas County Naturalist



August 9, 2017

We had a great time at Jr. Naturalist Camp last week – time well spent as we listened and looked at the many Sights and Sounds of Wild Iowa! On Tuesday, the campers enjoyed creating their own animal tracks T-shirt and safari bandana and discovering sights and sounds of wildlife through a scavenger hunt in the park. We all learned more about the many colors & textures of the furs, feathers, skins, and scales of the mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles that live here in Iowa.

On Wednesday, we focused on Iowa fishes and bird sounds. Minnow races and practice casting were hits in the park, native fish jars and sun catchers were hits in the craft room, and Audubon bird calls were hits in story time. It sounded like a flock of noisy redwings had alighted in the Nature Center!

The highlight of our week was our Thursday field trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo. We couldn't have asked for better weather. Have you been to a zoo lately? If not, I encourage you to check out both the old favorites as well as the many new exhibits at the Omaha Zoo.

We started our tour in the Desert Dome, the world's largest indoor desert under the world's largest geodesic dome, that is filled with plants and wildlife from the Namib Desert in Africa, the Red Center Desert in Australia, and our own Sonoran Desert. We then viewed the big cats and bears before landing in the new Children's Adventure Trails area. This interactive display that opened just last month was very popular with kids & adults alike as we interacted with nature via hands-on activities such as a large treehouse, sand beach, and prairie dog habitat.

We then walked to another new area, the African Grasslands. Guarding the entrance was a life-sized bronzed replica of the Columbian mammoths that roamed the Midwest 10,000 years ago. Our zoo group fit easily beneath its huge tusks. The long walk paid off as we watched giraffes and elephants grazing among the trees of the savanna.

As we headed back to the zoo entrance, we trekked through the Lied Jungle, the zoo's first exhibit still featuring the sights and sounds of the rain forest, and the Scott Aquarium whose penguins, sharks, and tropical fish and corals are still favorite sights. A group photo and pizza in the Washington Park in Denison wrapped up the day.



Pocahontas Conservation would like to thank everyone who helped with our camp this summer. Everyone enjoyed the great sack lunches provided by PAC Café. PCCB appreciates the talented people who helped lead camp stations: Lisa Zeman, Joan Fitzgerald, Laurie Westerman and students Brooklyn, Nicole, Keely, Akaysa, Addie, Annika, and Preston. We're glad everyone but Lisa & Annika were able to join us on our zoo trip. We also appreciate our zoo chaperones Joy Herman, Carrie Miller, Arlan and Randy Fosburgh, Courtney Hamilton, Amy Dreith, Dale and Peg Behrens, as well as our able bus driver Barney Essing. We couldn't have done it without you!