



New Jersey Naturalist Try-It

To earn this try-it you must complete at least 4 requirements **including the two starred**, but don't stop if the girls are having fun! We recommend you take out some books from your local library to show the girls examples of wildlife in New Jersey.

1. Naturalists study nature and teach others about the environment. Visit a park or nature center and talk to the naturalist. Find out why she chose this job, what her typical day is like and what she had to study in school to be a naturalist.
2. Naturalists, wildlife biologists and zoologists study animals by putting them into categories. Make a list of animals or cut pictures out of magazines. Learn about domestic animals and wildlife. Divide the animals into a group that lives in the wild and a group that depends on people for their food, water and shelter. Divide the wildlife pile again. Separate the animals that live in New Jersey from the non-native animals. Can you divide the piles even more by putting similar animals together?
3. Learn about the tracks and signs of animals that live in New Jersey. What things can you see outside that will tell you an animal was there? Some examples are nests, burrows and tracks. Go for a walk and look for tracks in the mud or the snow and use a field guide to identify them. You can also choose to use track stamps to learn animal tracks.
4. New Jersey has a large variety of habitats such as freshwater swamp, shore, mountains, grasslands, and estuary. Visit two different habitats and compare them. How are they similar and different? What plants and animals live in these habitats?
5. Much of New Jersey's unique landscape was formed by glaciers. Learn about the Wisconsin Glacier. Look in a state map and locate areas that were formed by this glacier. If possible, visit a one of these areas to see the landscape first hand. Use the following activity to demonstrate how glaciers change the landscape. Fold several towels lengthwise and place them on top of each other. The towel represents the soil and your hands represent the glacier. The different layers of the towel are similar to the layers of sedimentary rocks. Press in the sides so that the towel forms folds. This shows how glaciers slide across land and form mountains.
6. Find out the names of the Native Americans that lived in New Jersey. Learn how they used New Jersey's plants and animals.
7. When people think about wildlife, they usually think of animals that live on land and forget about sea creatures. Visit the shore and look for signs of animals that live in the ocean. Take a field guide with you and identify sea shells.
8. *Visit a local park or natural area and go on a hike or scavenger hunt. Look at nature up

close. You may also choose to go on a scavenger hunt in your backyard and discover that plants and animals that also call your yard “home.”

9. *Wildlife have adaptations, or characteristics that help them survive. Learn about the adaptations of five animals that live in New Jersey. For example, the opossum pretends that it is dead when it feels threatened. Play the opossum and coyote game with your troop. Chose one girl to be the coyote. The rest of the girls are opossums. The coyote will turn on music and the opossums will dance. When the coyote turns off the music, the opossums will “play dead” by freezing in place. The coyote will then try to make the opossums move, smile or giggle. The first opossum to move or make a sound will become the new coyote.
10. There are many animals that live in New Jersey that are active during the night. Learn about three nocturnal animals that live in our state including bats. Bats hunt for insects at dusk and during the night using echolocation. Learn how echolocation works. Play the bat and moth game. All the girls will form a circle. Chose one girl to be the bat and one to be the moth. The bat and moth enter the circle. The bat closes her eyes and says “bat.” The moth will respond by saying “moth.” The bat will try to tag the moth inside the circle.