

Which Niche

Study Units

[Iowa's Wildlife Habitats](#); [Wildlife Management](#)

Supplemental Information

Iowa has a diversity of habitats: prairies, wetlands, forests, streams, rivers, lakes, plus “edge” areas where different habitats overlap. Each supports a variety of occupants, all with a certain function or “job.” Producers, herbivores, carnivores, omnivores, decomposers, and scavengers all are linked together in an ecosystem. Just as it would be difficult to accomplish our daily tasks without power company employees providing electricity, convenience stores providing fuel, and grocers providing access to food, organisms linked in an ecosystem need each other too. Sometimes these links are not obvious. This niche / profession research activity will help students appreciate interconnectedness of animals in a habitat and the importance of different jobs and careers of people in your community.

Teaching Suggestions

Students can use the [Jobs Investigation Worksheet](#) to formulate questions for guest speakers or to investigate different jobs in your community. Use the same handout to research animals’ niches or “jobs” in a particular habitat. Visit [Iowa's Wildlife Habitats](#) for links about Iowa habitat types and which animals live in them. The *Iowa Association of Naturalists Biological Community Series* booklets are very helpful. Encourage students to choose animals from different groups in the food web: predator, prey, decomposer, or scavenger. Representatives from each group are needed to show relationships.

Evaluation

See the activity.

Student Materials

Job Investigation Worksheet

Teacher Aids

None

Additional Materials

- [Iowa's Prairies – Biological Communities](#) (PDF). Iowa Association of Naturalists publication with information on types of prairies, plants of Iowa prairies, wildlife of Iowa prairies, prairie ecology and more.
- [Iowa Woodlands – Biological Communities](#) (PDF). Iowa Association of Naturalists’ publication about Iowa’s woodlands, plants and animals of Iowa woodlands, woodland ecology, and more.



- [Iowa Wetlands – Biological Communities](#) (PDF). Iowa Association of Naturalists publication about Iowa's wetlands, plants and animals that live in Iowa wetlands, wetland ecology, protecting wetlands, and more.



Jobs Investigation Worksheet

Job

Job				
What do they do for the community?				
How do they provide the service?				
What resources are used to provide the service?				
Where do they live and work?				
What time of day is the work done?				
What other professions do they depend on?				
What special skills (adaptations) do they need to do their job?				
What other professions might compete with this one?				
What other professions cooperate with this one?				

