

CRITICAL HABITAT INDOOR LAB ANIMAL CUT-OUT SHEET

FISH AND OTHER ANIMALS THAT LIVE IN CRITICAL HABITATS

Critical habitat is important to all the living things in and around our lakes and waterways. For this exercise you will place the fish or other living things into their critical habitat. You will also see that a few of the living things do not live in critical habitat, but other areas. These are primarily rough or invasive fish species.

WHAT YOU NEED: This sheet, the lake map with critical habitats, scissors and a glue stick

WHAT YOU DO: Study your lake map and where the critical habitats are. Then cut out the fish, insects or animals and paste them where they might be found (feed/spawn/nest) on the lake map. Some critical habitats might support more than one living things.



Northern Pike like still, sometimes shallow-warmer water and feed on smaller fish in aquatic plants and lay their eggs on aquatic plants like bulrush. They usually “hunt” under lily pads or logs. They are very aggressive feeders.



Walleyes like clean cold water, feed on minnows and spawn in rivers or lakes with gravel bottoms. They need clean water with high dissolved oxygen.



Bluegills like lily pads and other plants, feed on anything small that moves and spawn in groups (beds) close to shore.



Yellow Perch live in groups in medium depth and eat most anything moving that is small and need gravel to spawn. They are closely related to the walleye.





The muskellunge “Musky” is usually a solitary fish. They prosper in lakes with a wide range of depths and large beds of aquatic plants, such as pond weeds (“cabbage”), bulrushes (rush beds), arrowleaf, pickerel weed, and water lilies. They like to hang around rock bars, stumps, or rocky ledges, or hiding amongst the broad-leaved pond weeds or other vegetation, waiting for their next meal!



The Great Blue Heron stands in shallow water and hunts small fish, frogs and small turtles and nest high in trees in groups called rookeries.



Painted turtles are scavengers and help to keep the lake clean and need dry sandy areas to lay and burry eggs. They are cold blooded, so they like to sun themselves on shoreline logs.



The dragonfly eats hundreds of mosquitos daily and lays eggs on bulrushes near shore. When the eggs hatch they live most of their life on the bottom where they provide food for fish.



Largemouth bass live in warm water and spawn close to shore where there is no mud. They eat just about anything that is small enough to swallow, especially things on the surface.





Smallmouth bass likes cooler water than the largemouth. They spawn close to shore on clean bottoms and guard their nests.



Bullheads live in shallow dark muddy water and are bottom feeders. They have “stingers” on their fins and need to be handled with care. The “feelers” on their nose is for tasting.



Carp is a rough invasive species that group and feed in the shallow muddy bottoms. They are not a game fish.



Brown Trout likes streams/ivers and face upstream to watch for floating insects. They require clean oxygenated water with gravel to spawn.



Lake trout live in large deep lakes with very cold water and feed on small fish. They can get quite large.



Otters (North American River Otter) are found anywhere there is a permanent food supply and easy access to water, including rivers, lakes, marshes, swamps, and estuaries. **Otters eat mainly aquatic organisms such as amphibians, fish, turtles, crayfish, crabs, other invertebrates and sometimes aquatic plants.** They also eat birds, their eggs.





Raccoons are extremely adaptable. Raccoons prefer to live in moist woodland areas. However, they can also be found in farmlands, suburban, and urban areas. Raccoons prefer to build dens in trees. They easily live near humans. **They require ready access to water.** Raccoons are omnivorous and will eat most things that they find. Crayfish, insects, rodents, frogs, fish, and bird eggs. Raccoons consume more invertebrate prey than vertebrate prey.



Beavers live in lodges. They will either live in one built on an island, one built on the shore of a pond, or one built on a lakeshore. **Beavers eat bark and cambium, the soft wood underneath bark. Their favorites include maple, willow, beech, birch, and aspen/poplar trees. Beavers also eat plants that live in the water, including root and flowers.**

