

Illinois County Butterfly/Moth Poster Activity

Objective: students will learn how to identify which species of dragonflies or butterflies are found in their Illinois County by learning to read the Odonata or Lepidoptera checklist to find the scientific names; they will also search field guides and the Internet for (1) the common name (2) description (3) life habits and (4) a photograph. The findings can be published as a poster, a book, or a bulletin board display.

Age Group: Grade 4-7

Time Required: It varies by county, but one class period for research (each student or pair assigned one or more), and one class period to assemble display.

WARNING: Photographs are often copyrighted. Include the name of the photographer in the display or image. Usually these digital and print images may be copied for educational use.

ISM Museum Online Link: http://www.museum.state.il.us/research/entomology/od_species4cnty.html
or
http://www.museum.state.il.us/research/entomology/leps_species4cnty.html
(also see References section)

Materials:

- computer with internet connection
- printer
- (optional) dragonfly field guide book such as *Dragonflies Through Binoculars* by Sidney W. Dunkle, 2000. Oxford University Press. (through an interlibrary loan) OR Butterfly field guides
- paper
- scissors
- poster board (or half-sheets of construction paper if making a bulletin board)
- glue stick

Procedure:

Find the listing for your county in the Lepidoptera database; print it out or cut and paste it to notepad and print it.

Assign students a species or variety to research on the Web and in field guides..

Students will bookmark their find (searched by scientific name); they can print out the page.

Using the information in their source, students will write an informative label.

- Scientific name
- Common name(s)
- Description (size, color, markings, shape)
- Habitat
- Status (common, rare, threatened, endangered)

Students will compose a digital 'poster' in Photoshop and print it out, or copy or print information out and cut and paste it on a posterboard or sheet as part of a bulletin board display. An alternative product could be a class book on the county's species, with a page for each one.

Students will present the information verbally to the others in class, so that everyone learns about all the butterflies and moths.

Illinois State Board of Education Goals Addressed:

Science:

12B. Know and apply concepts that describe how living things interact with each other and with their environment. Which species have been found in the same areas concurrently and over time?

13.B.2a Explain how technology is used in science for a variety of purposes (e.g., sample collection, storage and treatment; measurement; data collection, storage and retrieval; communication of information). How does a checklist of species help us to understand the distribution of species?

References for other Midwest States:

Curry, James R. *Dragonflies of Indiana*. Indiana Academy of Science, 2001. Good photographs of specimens and of habitat.

Legler, Karl and Dorothy and Dave Westover. *Common Dragonflies of Wisconsin*. 1998. 429 Franklin St., Sauk City, WI 53583 608-643-4926. karlndot@bankpds.com

Bouseman, John K. and Sternburg, James G. *Field Guide to Butterflies of Illinois*. Illinois Natural History Survey, 607 E. Peabody Dr., Champaign, IL 61820. Order online at <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/chf/pub/surveyreports/winter-01/guide.html> or email order at rjohnson@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/distr/lepid/bflyusa/il/toc.htm> US Geological Survey site on butterflies of Illinois (and other states)

<http://www.mesc.usgs.gov/resources/education/butterfly/resources/butterfly-faq.asp>
Resources for students from the US Geological Survey.