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# themed field trips *for groups*

The Nature Museum offers free themed field trips for groups! From Insects & More to Conservation, these themed field trips will provide your groups with a focus while traveling through the Nature Museum's permanent, temporary and outdoor exhibits. Groups will be given a custom themed tour card for their self-guided tour.

**Choose from one of the themes below!** Indicate your interest on your field trip registration form.

## **Insects & More (2 to 8 year olds)**

Over 97 percent of the world's animals are invertebrates—animals without a backbone. Invertebrates come in all shapes and sizes—from butterflies, cockroaches, and honey bees to spiders, centipedes, and crabs. Animals that do have a backbone—like birds, fish, bears, cougars, turtles, snakes, and frogs—are called vertebrates.

## **Midwest Ecosystems (8 to 14 year olds)**

The Midwest is a geographic area of the United States that is made up of twelve states including Illinois. An ecosystem includes all of the plants, animals, and other living things in an area as well as their non-living physical surroundings (light, soil, water, wind, temperature). Studying ecosystems includes exploring interactions among and between living and non-living things, for example in food chains. In the Midwest, there are at least three major ecosystems: prairies, wetlands, and woodlands.

## **Conservation (8 to 18 year olds)**

Across the world, people and organizations are involved in conservation efforts to preserve and restore nature and use natural resources carefully. Anyone can be a part of conservation efforts by adopting environmentally-friendly behaviors such as reducing waste, using energy efficiently, and interacting with the environment in a respectful way.

## **Collections & Specimens (11 to 18 year olds)**

Collections are an essential part of a museum's research and education functions. Collections also serve an important role in environmental conservation efforts. The specimens in our collection are used by Academy scientists and others to study natural environments, especially the plants and animals that live in this region. Specimens, whether they're displayed in a museum or used in educational programming, can be excellent tools for connecting people to a topic of study or interest. They also allow people to have an up-close look at something that they couldn't otherwise access. Preserving (and displaying) specimens in different ways can tell us different things about the lives of the plants and animals in a collection.

