

# Making the Grade: School Program Menu for 1st Grades 2025-2026



Katie Cantu   [kcantu@jasperia.org](mailto:kcantu@jasperia.org)  
Greg Oldsen   [goldsen@jasperia.org](mailto:goldsen@jasperia.org)

The following is a list of presentations offered to first grade classes in Jasper County. This is not a complete list, and for other options or questions about a program, please contact the naturalists. We work with teachers to fit our programming with their curriculum!

- All programs are free and materials will be provided unless otherwise noted.
- Although descriptions are for in-class, all programs can be adapted for outdoor locations.
- Please call or email at the beginning of the school year to guarantee your desired day and time.
- Plan for 30-40 minutes per program.
- Have your students come up with a list of questions for the naturalists before the scheduled program time.
- Please plan to sit with your class and enjoy the presentation along with them!

## ***Big Brown Bat***

Students will explore the intriguing lives of both local and exotic bats through several hands on activities. We will look through the bat lunch box to see what different bats eat, discuss their use of echolocation, and look at local bat specimens.



***\*1-LS3-1, 1-LS1-2***

## ***Animal Adaptations***

Students will be introduced to animal adaptations and how adaptations help animals survive in unique habitats. We will investigate how these traits may be helpful to animals found in Iowa by studying various "parts" brought in by the naturalist. This lesson can also be used as a station during a county park field trip (see back).

***\*1-LS1-1***



## ***Rockin' Reptiles vs Awesome Amphibians***

The naturalist will discuss reptile and amphibian characteristics using pictures, models and live examples (if available) of common reptiles and amphibians found in Iowa for the students to observe. Typically we bring a live Tiger Salamander and a Fox Snake to school with us!

***\*1-LS3-1, 1-LS1-2***



### ***Fossils***

Students will dig deeper into the history of the earth by learning about how fossils are formed and where they are found. Real fossils will be brought to the classroom for observation.

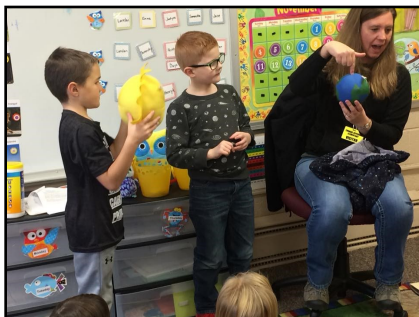


**\*1-LS3-1**

### ***Astronomy***

Students will be introduced to how the earth and moon move in relation to our sun, how the moon changes each month, which planets are in our solar system, and some common constellations. Students will learn how a sky map is used and what exciting things are currently happening in the universe!

**\*1-ESS1-1, 1-ESS1-2**



### ***Iowa Mammals***

Students will see and touch furs from common mammals and will learn about where they live, what they eat, and how they move. They will be able to feel the difference in the type of fur/hair and see how the animals use camouflage. A mammal charade game will be played if time allows.

**\*1-LS3-1, 1-LS1-1**

### ***Everybody Needs a Home***

Students compare their basic needs (food, water, shelter and space) and generalize that wildlife and other animals have similar basic needs. Similarities and differences between animal homes and our neighborhoods will be explored. We will also brainstorm how pollution and disturbance can alter habitats and what we can do to help.

**\*1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1**

### ***Plenty of Penguins***

January is a great month for a program on penguins. Storybooks, puppets, life-size poster of the Emperor penguin, life-size egg, and other visual aids will help students learn more about these fascinating animals and the places they live. We will compare students' heights with the height of the emperor penguin and their hands and feet with the size of the emperor's egg and chick. One student will help demonstrate to the class how difficult it is to be an emperor penguin dad!



**\*1-LS3-1, 1-LS1-2**

### ***Field Trip***

We work with individual schools on 1st grade field trip planning, however, we encourage schools to visit Mariposa Park for a day centered on animal adaptations and exploring our local wildlife. The experience consists of observation hikes, camouflage games, learning what special adaptations animals use to survive, and exploring the Nature Playscape Trail. We've been offering these as half day field trips, either in the morning, 9:00-11:30am, or afternoon, 12:00-2:30pm.

**\*1-LS1-1, 1-LS1-2, 1-LS3-1**

