

# STUDY QUESTIONS

## TO “HURRAH FOR MUSKRATS!”

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, July–August 2020, [www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine](http://www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine).

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*Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. **Are you curious about wild things?** Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

**Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback?** How about a pink heelsplitter, pimple-back, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to **peek inside the den of a red fox** and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of **giants of the ice age**? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

Learn how to get started **camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing**.

**Find these stories and more online** at [www.mndnr.gov/young\\_naturalists](http://www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists).

*Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!*

## “HURRAH FOR MUSKRATS!” STUDY QUESTIONS

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**1. WHERE IN NORTH AMERICA DO MUSKRATS LIVE?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL IS A MUSKRAT?**

- a. rodent
- b. amphibian
- c. primate
- d. canid

**3. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, WHAT IS ONE TRAIT ALL RODENTS SHARE?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. TRUE OR FALSE:** Muskrats have webbed feet that help them swim.

**5. HOW DOES A MUSKRAT'S UNDERFUR HELP IT SURVIVE?**

- a. It helps keep the skin warm and dry
- b. It traps air bubbles, helping the muskrat stay above water
- c. It gives off a “musky” scent that scares away predators
- d. a and b

**6. HOW DOES A MUSKRAT'S FURLESS TAIL HELP IT CONTROL ITS BODY TEMPERATURE?**

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**7. WHAT DOES THE “MUSK” IN MUSKRAT REFER TO?**

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**8. NAME FOUR THINGS A MUSKRAT EATS.**

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**9. THE STORY TELLS US THAT 15 MUSKRATS MAY LIVE ON AN ACRE OF LAND AND WATER. IF SEVEN MUSKRAT PAIRS SET UP HOUSEKEEPING ON A POND AND EACH HAD THREE LITTERS OF SIX KITS, HOW MANY MUSKRATS WOULD THERE BE BY THE END OF THE BREEDING SEASON?**

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**10. TRUE OR FALSE:** Muskrats hibernate in the winter.

**11. WHY ISN'T THE WORLD OVERRUN WITH MUSKRATS?**

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**12. NAME THREE WAYS IN WHICH A MUSKRAT AFFECTS ITS ENVIRONMENT.**

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**13. TRUE OR FALSE:** Muskrats make their lodges from small tree trunks and branches.

**14. WHICH OF THESE IS NOT TRUE ABOUT MUSKRATS?**

- a. They are born blind.
- b. They have scales.
- c. They can stay underwater without breathing for more than 10 minutes.
- d. They eat snapping turtles.

**CHALLENGE: THE STORY TELLS US THAT MUSKRATS SPACE THEIR HOUSES ABOUT 60 FEET APART. HOW MIGHT THIS HELP MUSKRATS SURVIVE AND THRIVE?**

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# MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

1. IF AN ANIMAL IS AQUATIC, WHAT DOES THAT TELL YOU ABOUT IT? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. NAME TWO WAYS IN WHICH A MUSKRAT'S TAIL HELPS IT SURVIVE. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. WHAT IS A BABY MUSKRAT CALLED?

- a. pup
- b. kit
- c. larva
- d. nestling

4. TRUE OR FALSE: A young muskrat learns how to swim before it can walk.

5. WOULD A MUSKRAT BE MORE LIKELY TO SWIM UNDER WATER GOING UPSTREAM OR DOWNSTREAM? EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. HOW DOES A MUSKRAT USE THE SPACE BETWEEN ITS FRONT AND BACK TEETH? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. WHY DOES A MUSKRAT HAVE "RAT" IN ITS NAME?

- a. It has a tail like a rat
- b. It is a kind of rat
- c. It makes a rat-a-tat-tat sound with its teeth
- d. It steals things from other animals

## STUDENT STUDY GUIDE: VOCABULARY CARDS

Cut along horizontal lines, fold in the middle and tape or staple. Blanks are provided to allow you or your students to add new words or phrases

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**AN INJURY CAUSED BY  
FREEZING PART OF THE BODY**  
is known as

FOLD

When a muskrat has  
**FROSTBITE,**  
it has

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A creature's  
**HABITAT**  
is

FOLD

**THE SETTING A CREATURE  
IS PART OF**  
is its

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**AN ANIMAL'S  
SKIN**  
is known as its

FOLD

A  
**PELT**  
is

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When you line things up by  
**RANK**  
you line them up in

FOLD

**RELATIVE ORDER OF  
IMPORTANCE OR POWER**  
is known as

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An animal that is  
**SCALY**  
has

FOLD

An animal that has  
**SCALES**  
is

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**A TUBE-SHAPED WEAPON SHOT  
THROUGH THE WATER**  
is known as

**A  
TORPEDO**  
is

FOLD

FOLD

FOLD

FOLD

FOLD

FOLD