Study Questions

to “Dancing With Grebes”

Multidisciplinary classroom activities based on the Young Naturalists nonfiction story in Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, March–April 2016, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine

*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, pimpleback, 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.

*Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!*
“Dancing With Grebes” Study Questions
Multidisciplinary classroom activities based on the Young Naturalists nonfiction story in Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, March–April 2016, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine

1. Why are western grebes unique among Minnesota birds?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

2. Are female and male western grebes identical? Explain your answer.
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

3. Why does the author describe western grebes as wearing “feathered tuxedos?”
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

4. Where does this story take place?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

5. What do western grebes eat? (Hint: Don’t answer until you read the entire article.)
____________________________________________________________________
6. Where do western grebes choose to nest?

7. What materials do they use to build their nests?

8. Why do you think western grebes take turns incubating their eggs?

9. When a chick pips, what is it doing?

10. Where do chicks go immediately after hatching? Why?

11. What predators does a western grebe chick have to watch out for?

12. What is back-brooding?
13. Something interesting happens to chicks when they are hungry. What? __________________________________________ Who eats first? __________________________________________

14. Why do western grebes gather in large flocks at night? ____________________________________________________

15. Describe how western grebes dive differently in smooth and rough water. How do you explain these behaviors? ____________________________________________________

Challenge: Draw a picture of a western grebe’s profile as it swims or dives. Pay close attention to the location and design of its feet.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment

Name ___________________________ Period _____ Date ___________

1. What is a ratchet call?
   A. Grebes make a soft, rustling sound when they are in danger.
   B. Grebes use ratchet calls to communicate underwater.
   C. Ratchet calls are loud, harsh trills made during the mating ritual.
   D. None of the above.

2. The large bare patch of skin on grebe’s belly is used for
   A. laying eggs.
   B. incubating eggs.
   C. floating on water.
   D. catching insects.

3. Describe bob-shaking. ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
4. Western grebe chicks have a tiny white ___________ on their bills.
   A. spot
   B. bump
   C. egg tooth
   D. ridge

5. Why does the mother grebe have to work so hard to feed her chicks?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

**Student Study Guide: Vocabulary**

**Aquatic plants** plants that live in water or in soil that is permanently saturated with water (wetlands)

**Bulrushes** also called reeds, these grasslike aquatic plants can grow up to 10 feet tall

**Courtship** a set of behaviors that attract a mate

**Crustaceans** hard-shelled, mostly aquatic animals with segmented body parts, such as crayfish or shrimp

**Dominant** most important or strongest

**Elegant** graceful or stylish

**Embryo** unborn or unhatched offspring

**Forage** search for food

**Incubate** sit on eggs in order to keep them warm

**Juvenile** an immature animal that is not an infant but also not an adult

**Larva** wormlike immature insect that hatches from an egg

**Migration** movement from one area to another

**Predator** animal that kills and eats other animals

**Species** a group of animals or plants that are similar and can produce young animals or plants that can also reproduce

**Wildlife biologist** scientist who studies or manages wild animals and their habitats
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are <strong>aquatic plants</strong>?</th>
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<td><strong>What is a LARVA?</strong></td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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