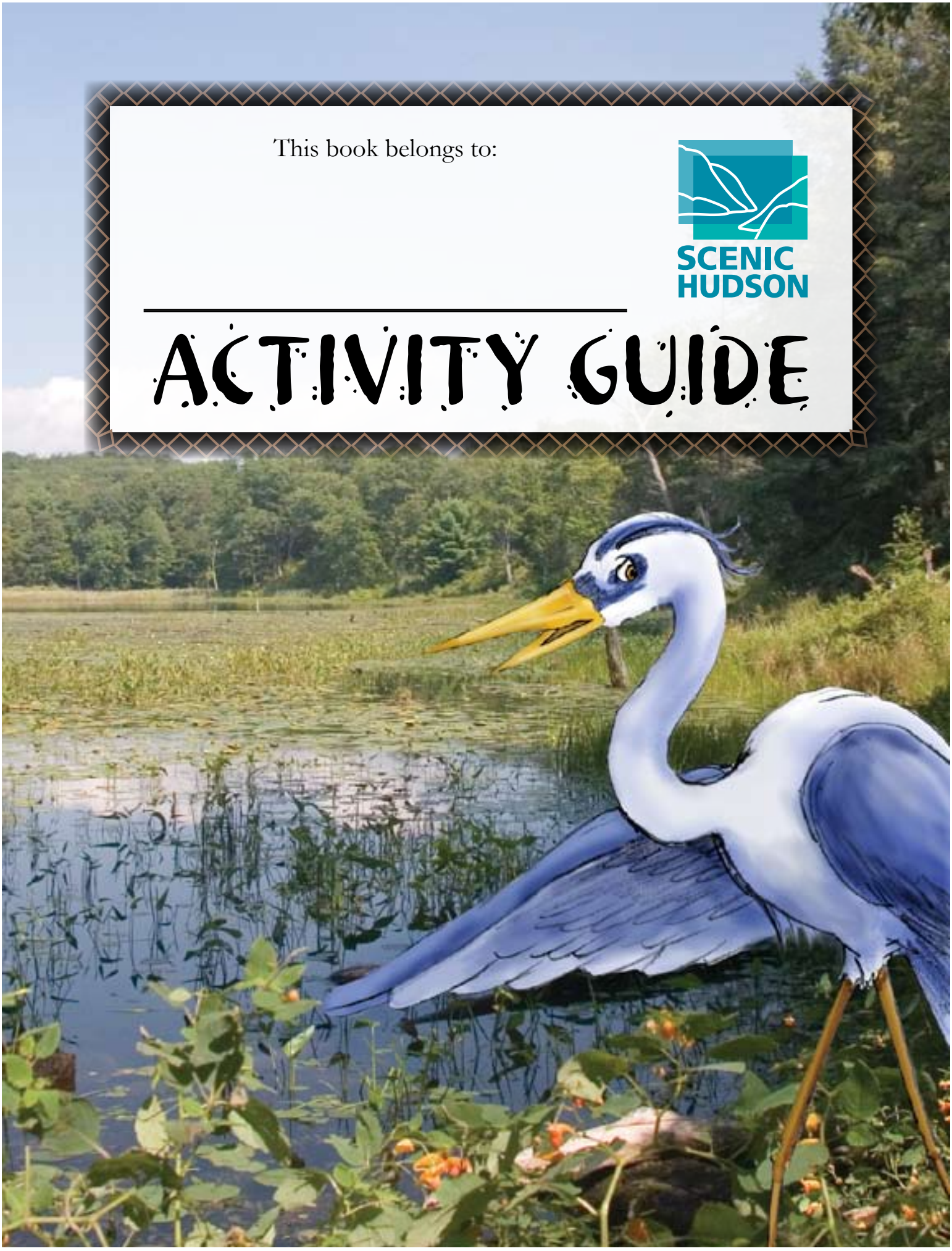
This book belongs to:

SCENIC HUDSON

ACTIVITY GUIDE



The Mighty Hudson River

The Hudson is an important water source for people and animals. Many types of animals and fish depend on the river for their survival. Some people like to fish, some enjoy boating on the river, while others appreciate its quiet beauty. Many cities in New York get drinking water from the Hudson, including Poughkeepsie and Halfmoon. Ships travel the Hudson daily to deliver products that we use in our communities. Even when we don't realize it, the Hudson touches our lives every day.

Water flows into the river when rain and melting snow travel downhill from streams and smaller rivers. The Hudson gets water this way from five surrounding states. This area is called a "watershed." From its beginning in the wilderness of the Adirondack Mountains to New York City, where the river reaches the Atlantic Ocean, it travels 315 miles.

© Josh Clague, Scenic Hudson

The part of the Hudson River from New York City to the Federal Dam in Troy is called an "estuary." The water level rises and falls with the ocean's high and low tides and contains a mixture of fresh water and salt water. The estuary provides an important habitat for many fish and animals, including striped bass, blue crabs and great blue herons.

On the Hudson River Watershed Map:

- Find the Hudson River.
- Measure the length of the Hudson River from Lake Tear of the Clouds to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Find some rivers and streams that flow into the Hudson. (These are called tributaries.)
- If a twig fell into the Mohawk River, trace its path as it travels to the ocean.
- Find where you live, and the streams and rivers near your house.

Answers: 1 - C; 2 - H; 3 - G; 4 - E; 5 - F; 6 - D; 7 - A; 8 - B.

Tricks of Tracking

Wild animals live all around your neighborhood. You may not see them, but they leave signs like nests, scat or tracks. Each animal has a unique track that gives us hints about how it has adapted to its environment.

Match the tracks below to the critters that made them. Answers are on the opposite page.

A.

H.

B.

1. Great Blue Heron

I walk on my toes in deep mud and water for balance.

2. Beaver

I'm an aquatic rodent with webbed back feet for swimming.

3. White-tailed Deer

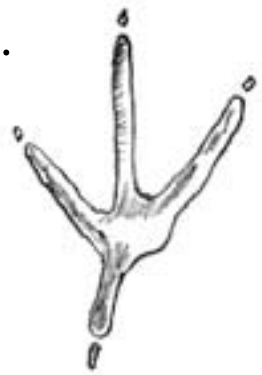
My long legs and hooves allow me to run fast and jump high.

G.

4. Red Fox

I'm a member of the dog family and have four toes and claws.

C.



5. Bald Eagle

I have thick, strong toes. I use my claws to capture prey.

6. Cottontail Rabbit

My large, furry rear feet provide power for hopping.

7. Gray Squirrel

I have large hind feet and claws to climb trees.

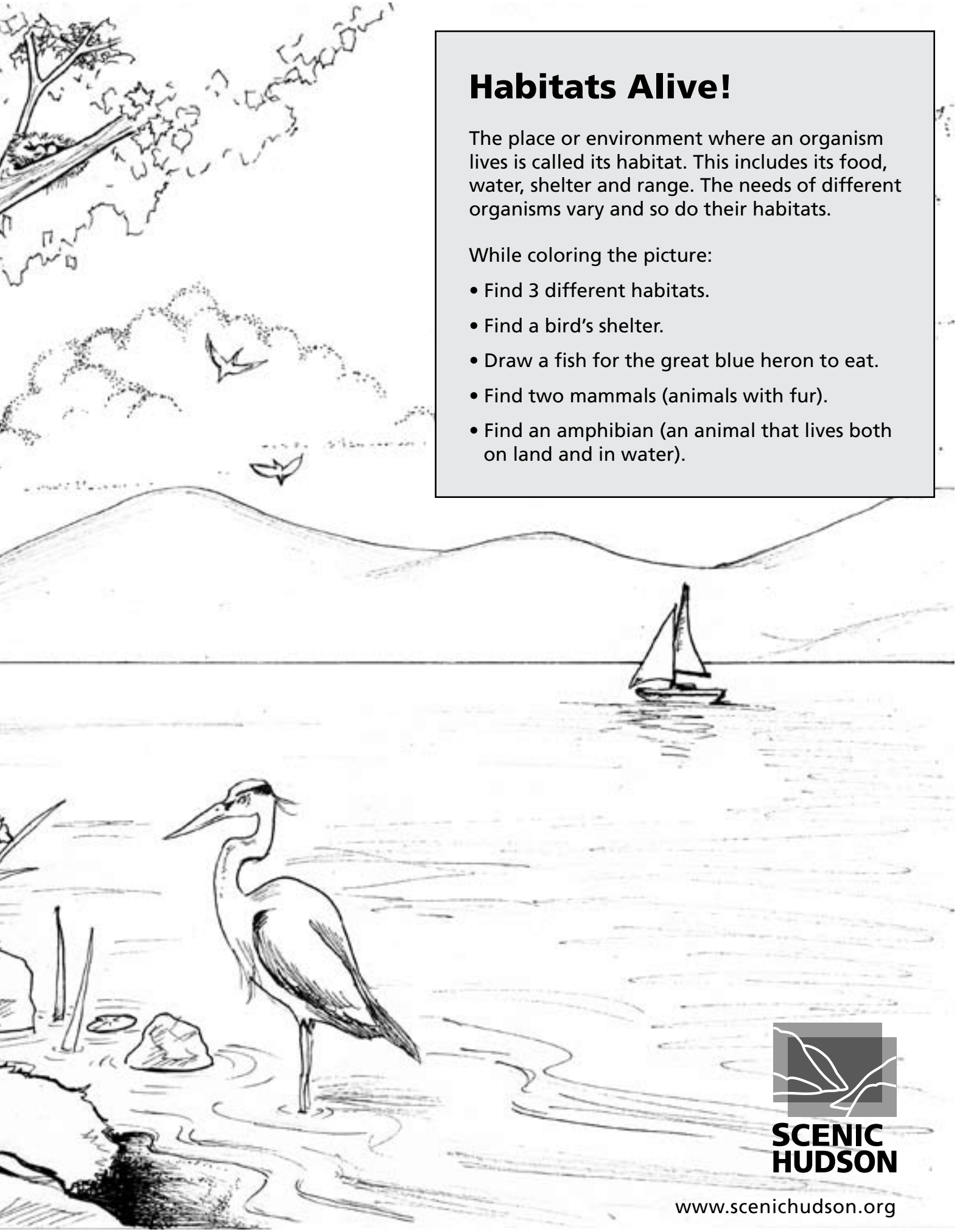
D.

F.

8. Skunk

My tracks show long claws attached to my toes. They are used for digging dens.

E.



Habitats Alive!

The place or environment where an organism lives is called its habitat. This includes its food, water, shelter and range. The needs of different organisms vary and so do their habitats.

While coloring the picture:

- Find 3 different habitats.
- Find a bird's shelter.
- Draw a fish for the great blue heron to eat.
- Find two mammals (animals with fur).
- Find an amphibian (an animal that lives both on land and in water).

SCENIC HUDSON

www.scenichudson.org

Branch Out!

Take a Tree Tour

birch

maple

Trees are important because they:

- Provide homes and food for birds and other animals.
- Prevent erosion by holding the soil with their roots.
- Produce the oxygen that we breathe.
- Act as a filter, removing pollution from the air, soil and water.
- Offer shade.
- Are beautiful.

poplar

ginkgo

oak

You can learn a lot about a tree by observing it. Find a tree and draw it in the space below. Look closely and answer the questions in the spaces provided. You may make some exciting discoveries. To learn more about identifying trees, visit your local library.

Does the tree have needles or leaves? What are their size, shape and color?

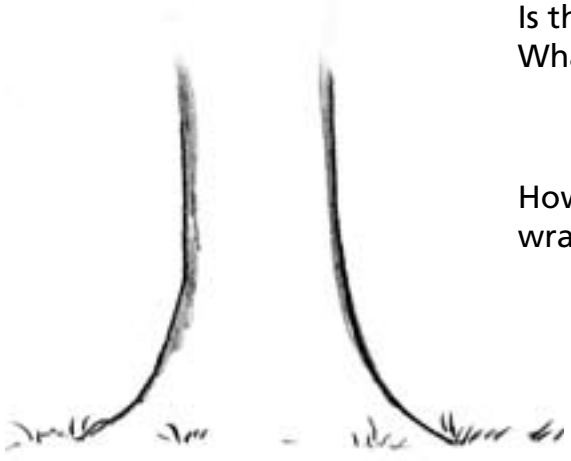
Are any birds or animals using this tree?

Do you see any fruits, nuts or cones? (Look on the ground.)

Is the bark bumpy or smooth? What color is it?

Where does the tree grow? A field, forest, swamp, at a river's edge?

How big is the tree? Can you wrap your arms around it?



Explore a Creek

The Hudson Valley is full of rivers, steams and creeks of all shapes and sizes. These waterways eventually end in the Hudson River. The next time you're at a creek or stream, find out more about it by answering these questions.

1. The water is:

☐ **moving fast** ☐ **moving slowly** ☐ **standing still**

A stream's ability to support some kinds of life depends on how fast the water moves. Many creatures depend on running water because it helps put oxygen into the water.

2. The water is:

☐ **clear** ☐ **cloudy** ☐ **covered in algae**

Clear water is usually a good sign that your water is clean. Cloudy water probably means that the bank has been washed away. (This is called erosion.) Algae are the green, furry-like plants floating in the water. Some forms of pollution cause lots of algae to grow.

3. The creek bed is:

☐ **sandy** ☐ **rocky** ☐ **muddy**

Most water creatures prefer a sandy or rocky bottom. A muddy streambed may mean that the water is moving too slowly.

4. Growing in and around the water, I see:

☐ **ferns** ☐ **moss** ☐ **cattails**

Cattails, ferns and mosses are native to the area and usually live in or near healthy streams. Plants' roots hold the banks together and prevent erosion.

5. I see:

☐ **fish** ☐ **birds** ☐ **aquatic macroinvertebrates** ☐ **insects** ☐ **frogs** ☐ **other animals**

Some fish and aquatic macroinvertebrates (creatures that are big enough to see but have no backbone) are more sensitive to pollution than others. It's a good sign if you see frogs because they require fairly clean water. Insects are an important food source for many animals that live in and around streams. Birds like to visit creeks to eat bugs, fish and plant life.

6. The human-made objects I see are:

☐ **buildings** ☐ **bridges** ☐ **boats** ☐ **cars** ☐ **trash**

Humans need to make careful decisions about how we treat our precious water supplies.

Easy Ways YOU Can Protect The Environment

Place a check in the appropriate boxes to see how often you are helping the environment! You may not always do these things now, but you can pledge to in the future.

Always	Sometimes	Never	
			Conserve water
☐	☐	☐	Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth.
☐	☐	☐	Take shorter showers.
			Save energy
☐	☐	☐	Turn off lights, TVs, computers and radios when not in use.
☐	☐	☐	Turn down the heat or air conditioning.
☐	☐	☐	Walk or ride your bike whenever possible.
			Recycle
☐	☐	☐	Recycle paper, metal, glass and plastic.
☐	☐	☐	Use recycled products.
☐	☐	☐	Use rechargeable batteries.
			Don't litter
☐	☐	☐	Throw your garbage in a trash basket.
☐	☐	☐	Pick up litter in your neighborhood.
☐	☐	☐	Clean up after your pet.
			Save trees
☐	☐	☐	Buy recycled paper.
☐	☐	☐	Use both sides of a sheet of paper.
☐	☐	☐	Reuse cardboard boxes.
			Reduce garbage
☐	☐	☐	Take canvas bags to the grocery store.
☐	☐	☐	Bring your lunch and drinks in reusable containers.

Get Involved

- Volunteer in your community.
- Write to your elected officials—tell them your hopes for a healthy environment.

Who's Scenic Hudson? We are a group of dedicated people who care about the area we live in—the Hudson River Valley. Over 40 years ago, our founders fought to protect a mountain from being made into a power plant. Since then, we have continued to work together with towns like yours to protect special places and make them enjoyable for you to visit.

Scenic Hudson • One Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200 • Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
845 473 4440 • www.scenichudson.org

SCENIC HUDSON

Activity Guide created and illustrated by Scenic Hudson staff members Jolene Johnson and Seth Martel. Cover photo by Vickie Muller.