

SUMMER CAMP 2026

Wild Survival Camp 5th-8th grade
at Bowyer Farm



Dear Parents & Guardians,

Thank you for enrolling in the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden Summer Camp.

We are very excited to have them with us this week. We have many exciting and hands-on activities such as birdwatching, knot tying, herpetology, mammal tracking, and plant identification planned to explore nature at the Zoo's off-ground Bowyer property! Due to the nature of this camp, we encourage campers to wear comfortable closed ankle/toe shoes (no flip-flops) that can get muddy/dirty, light weight clothing, a hat/cap, and bring a water bottle every day. The weather is ever-changing and can have an impact on the camp experience if campers aren't dressed for the weather. Campers will be exploring fields, forests, wetlands, and ponds. Below, you will find a list of some of each day's possible activities for you to talk about with your camper. Please note that Friday's itinerary will include a presentation that parents are invited to attend – check with your camper for the specific time.

Should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, all camp staff will be happy to assist you. Thank you for your continued support of your Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden.





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Day One: Naturalist Know-how

Campers will explore what it means to be a naturalist by learning and practicing skills with real tools of the trade.

Possible Activities:

- Exploring the forest and wetland
- Field guide basics
- shelter building

Conversation Starters:

- What does it mean to be a naturalist?
- Can you tell me about one species that you observed today?

Day Two: Birds and Wetlands (Creek Day)

There are hundreds of native birds in Ohio - learn some naturalist skills and techniques to help figure out who is who. We will spend the afternoon in the creek playing with and learning about the macroinvertebrates that call that space home.

Possible Activities:

- Binocular basics + birding hike
- Macroinvertebrate study and freeplay in the creek

Conversation Starters:

- What is one way to identify an animal that lives in a habitat without ever seeing it?
- Can you tell me about one species that you observed today?



Day Three: Wild about Crawley Critters

Insects, reptiles, and amphibians, oh my! Learn about these bio-rich organisms throughout the Bowyer property. Meet with an expert in the field while becoming an expert yourself!

Possible Activities:

- Introduction to herpetology
- Dip netting in the wetlands
- Insect study and collection

Conversation Starters:

- Why is citizen science valuable? Are there projects we can participate in at home?
- Can you tell me about one species that you observed today?

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Day Four: Pollinator Party and Creek Day 2

The relationship between plants and pollinators is one of the most fascinating and complex relationships in the natural world! Spend the morning deep diving into the world of plants and their pollinators then cool down in the creek for the afternoon!

Possible Activities:

- Pollinator guest speaker and Bioblitz
- Creek free play and wetland exploration

Conversation Starters:

- What can we learn from the organisms that we find (or don't find) living in a pond or creek?
- Can you tell me about one species that you observed today?

Day Five: Know it and Show it

This week we have learned about birds, macroinvertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, plants, trees, mammals, tracks and so much more! Let's put it all together and show off our naturalist skills to our friends and family!

Possible Activities:

- Hikes around the property
- Presentation creation

Conversation Starters:

- Why is it important to know what species live in a habitat?
- How can humans impact a habitat (both positively and negatively)?



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