



# Indiana Children and Nature Network Nature Scavenger Hunt



While you're on the trail, watch for our state bird, the **Northern Cardinal**. The male Cardinal is easy to spot with his beautiful red feathers! What other birds do you see?



Look for **tree holes** –they can be big or small and sometimes round! Holes in a tree can provide a nice, cozy home for many different animals. Do you see a tree hole nearby? These are often made by woodpeckers.



Do you see a **bird's nest** up in the trees? A hawk's nest can be made of big sticks. A smaller bird may use tiny twigs. Every bird makes their nest in their own special way. Leave the nest as they might use it next year.



Find the **bark of the Sycamore tree**. Some people think it looks like camouflage. Some think it looks more and more sick as you look up—'sick-a-more' -but it is not sick at all! This tree sheds layers of its bark as it matures. Sycamore trees grow near water. You can look for the bright white branches reaching out for the sun.



While you are wandering in the woods, look at the bark of the trees. If you see trees that have bark that is nearly black and have a rough texture, you are looking at the **Black Cherry tree**! Some people think the bark resembles burnt potato chips.



If there are lots of squirrels and chipmunks, that means there may be lots of **walnuts** and other seeds. The Black Walnut tree seeds are great food for the animals. Look for acorns and hickory nuts. These seed usually have a hard shell on the outside—it takes strong teeth to bite through!



What's that noise up in the trees? It's a **Fox Squirrel**! Look for their long, bushy tail bouncing up and down as they forage for food. You can also look for a Fox Squirrel nest—a bundle of dried leaves up high in the branches of a tree.

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## Nature Scavenger Hunt



Find a **rotting log** on the forest floor and poke around. Rotten logs are home to many beneficial insects and mushrooms. They provide shelter for animals and enrich the soil as they break down.



Look high above you—up into the sky. Often there are **birds soaring**. They soar on currents of warm air called thermals. It might be a hawk, turkey vulture, eagle or other bird of prey.



**Shelf mushrooms** can be found clinging to trees in the park. They get their name because they look like shelves! Do you think that animals use them like stairs to climb the tree?



Look for vines hanging from the trees. If the vine is stuck to the tree and hairy—don't touch it is poison ivy! Vines grow from the ground and have to hold on tight to a tree or bush to get to the sunlight.



Many animals make their home in the woods. When these animals walk in mud, sand or snow, they leave **tracks**. Look for tracks near the water or in muddle spots. The tracks in the picture are Raccoon tracks.



Find a **maple leaf**. There are several different species of maple trees in Indiana. The Sugar Maple is used to make maple syrup. It takes almost 40 gallons of Sugar Maple sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup?!



Can you spot some **tree roots**? The roots of a tree soak up the water that helps the tree grow while holding it firmly in the ground.