

It's spring!

Birds are migrating north, spring wildflowers are emerging, and trees are leafing out. The outdoors is abuzz with new life and change from week to week, and the sun is setting later and later.

This field guide will help you get to know the plants and animals that also call your Chicagoland neighborhood home. These are just a few of the many birds, mammals, insects, trees, spiders and more that live in backyards, under logs, in gardens, and in nearby parks or forest preserves. Learn their common names in both English and Spanish, and their scientific names too!



Grey Squirrel

Ardilla Gris

Sciurus carolinensis

Find them coming out of their shelters as the days warm, playing in the sun, and finding food they hid last fall.



Robin

Mirlo Primavera

Turdus migratorius

Some stay all winter but many robins that have migrated south for food are returning – and may return year after year to the same yard or tree.



Red-Winged Blackbird

Sargento Alirrojo

Agelaius phoeniceus

The bright red of the male's shoulder is hard to mistake, and so too is their conk-la-ree song.



Tadpole

Renacuajo

Order Anura

Explore local ponds or wetlands and you may see a tadpole of one of Chicago's thirteen frog or toad species.



Mourning Cloak

Capas de Luto

Nymphalis antiopa

Butterflies need to be warm to fly – the mourning cloak's dark color helps it absorb sunlight.



Red Admiral

Vanessa o Almirante rojo

Vanessa atalanta

They can often be seen landing on a sunny white fence to warm up.



Hunting Spider

Araña lobo

Schizocosa or *Dolomedes*

These spiders don't make webs, except for homes for their babies. They are on the prowl looking for food with their eight eyes but are non-aggressive with people.



Bright Green Sweat Bee

Abeja de sudor verde brillante

Augochlora

Overwintering in old rotting logs, they are ready to emerge in spring to feed on and pollinate our spring wildflowers.



Inchworm

Oruga

Geometridae

These cute moth larva have fewer extra legs than most caterpillars, so they walk in a loopy way.



Earthworm

Lombriz

Lumbricus terrestris

Disturbed by spring rains, earthworms will come to the surface where they provide food for the robins.



Grasshopper

Saltamontes

Acrididae

Even as babies, grasshoppers and their cousins, the crickets, can be recognized because of their big jumping legs



Ant

Hormiga

Formicidae

There are over 1000 ant species in North America, only 30 of which pester humans. Ants live in colonies and are remarkably strong.



Dandelion

Diente de León

Taraxacum officinale

This cheerful flower is a good friend to bees and other pollinators by providing important nectar early in the season.



Violet

Violeta

Viola sororia

This delicate perennial beauty is the most common species of the eight violets found in Illinois. Look for white, pink and yellow ones too.



Spring Beauty

Belleza de Virginia

Claytonia virginica

Maybe our most common native spring wildflower, it can cover our lawns with pink in the spring.



Oak

Roble

Quercus

It's one of the latest trees to leaf out in spring, but you will see its stringy flowers hanging from the branches.



Maple

Arce

Acer

The tips of the trees will look red in the spring as flowers, and then seeds and leaves appear.



Maple Seeds

Semillas de Arce

Acer

The winged fruits, called samaras, appear early on our native maples, providing plenty of food before berries and acorns are ripe.

Go, explore!

Keep your eyes open for wildlife on your walk to school or in your parkway. See for yourself what critters are out there. Ask a trusted adult to take you to a park or nature center.

Draw your own observations of nature and what's around you! Don't forget to record Date, Location, Time, and Weather!

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