

2025

MY SUMMER
LEARNING AND LITERACY
ROAD TRIP

TRAVEL JOURNAL



Pennsylvania
Office of Child Development
and Early Learning

HOW TO USE THIS TRAVEL JOURNAL

FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

My Summer Learning and Literacy Road Trip Travel Journal is a great way to help your child explore books and fun learning activities. Each week, discover something new with your child, then help them complete their Travel Journal.

This year's theme represents elements from the 2025 Pennsylvania One Book selection, *Arlo Draws an Octopus*, written by Lori Mortensen and illustrated by Rob Sayegh Jr. Although Pennsylvania does not have octopuses in the wild, there are many other animals who live in Pennsylvania water ways. Look through the Travel Journal to find some of these friends who tag along on the Road Trip!

Activities in the Travel Journal compliment the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. Child care and other early learning programs, kindergarten and elementary school teachers use Pennsylvania's Early Learning Standards as a guide for what children typically can do at each age. These activities let you have fun with your child while helping them build skills they will use in kindergarten and beyond.

Pennsylvania libraries, water trails and state parks offer fun, family-friendly learning opportunities. The Travel Journal contains children's book recommendations and adventurous activities to try with your young learner.

For more early learning activities, book recommendations, and early learning resources, visit PA's Promise for Children at www.papromiseforchildren.com. Learn more about the Pennsylvania One Book at paonebook.powerlibrary.org.



EXPLORE PENNSYLVANIA'S WATER TRAILS

A water trail is a pathway for adventure and learning, connecting a variety of recreational and educational opportunities. Pennsylvania is home to 29 amazing water trails! These scenic routes on lakes, rivers, and streams provide access points and rest areas for paddlers. Just like hiking trails and bikeways, water trails link parks, green spaces, museums, historic sites, and nature preserves, creating exciting places to explore and discover.

With helpful maps, signs, and educational programs, water trail organizations share the natural beauty, rich history, and cultural significance of these special waterways. Water trails serve as outdoor classrooms, where families and adventurers of all ages can learn by seeing, listening, and experiencing nature firsthand.

When exploring a lake, river, or stream, keep an eye out for some of Pennsylvania's amazing wildlife! You might spot reptiles like the Common Snapping Turtle, Northern Map Turtle, and Eastern Box Turtle, or see snakes such as the Eastern Gartersnake and Smooth Green Snake. Amphibians like the American Toad, Wood Frog, Eastern Hellbender, and various salamanders also call these waters home.

Beneath the surface, fish like trout, bass, and walleye swim through the waterways, while insects such as the Asian Lady Beetle, Eastern Carpenter Bee, and Brown Marmorated Stink Bug can be found nearby. There's always something new to discover!

When visiting a water trail, safety comes first! Never leave young children unsupervised around water. Children under age 12 must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on the water, and everyone should stay on designated water trails while respecting private property. Enjoy your adventure and explore responsibly!



LEARN MORE ABOUT PENNSYLVANIA'S WATER TRAILS

Want to know more about Pennsylvania's water trails and how to find one near you? Here are our favorite resources about Pennsylvania water trails:

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has an interactive map with Water Trail Guides. pfbc.pa.gov/WaterTrail.htm

Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC) has information about Pennsylvania's 29 water trails, including a map. pecpa.org/water/pa-water-trails

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Looking Below the Surface website has an interactive macroinvertebrates activity! It also shares information about the habitat of each macroinvertebrate. gis.dep.pa.gov/macroinvertebrate/index.html

The Penn State Extension website has information about the types of native animals that live in Pennsylvania's streams. extension.psu.edu/stream-connections-benthic-macroinvertebrates-native-fish-and-pa-geology_

National Wild and Scenic River System has information about Pennsylvania's approximately 83,260 miles of rivers. www.rivers.gov/rivers/pennsylvania

Learn about the different animals that live in Pennsylvania at the Animal Spot website. www.animalspot.net/animals-in-us/animals-in-Pennsylvania



WEEK 1

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Choose multiple words from a book that may be unfamiliar and learn the meaning or definition of the words.
- Retell a favorite book in your own words. Draw different scenes from the story and share them with friends. Express yourself and the story through movement or sound.

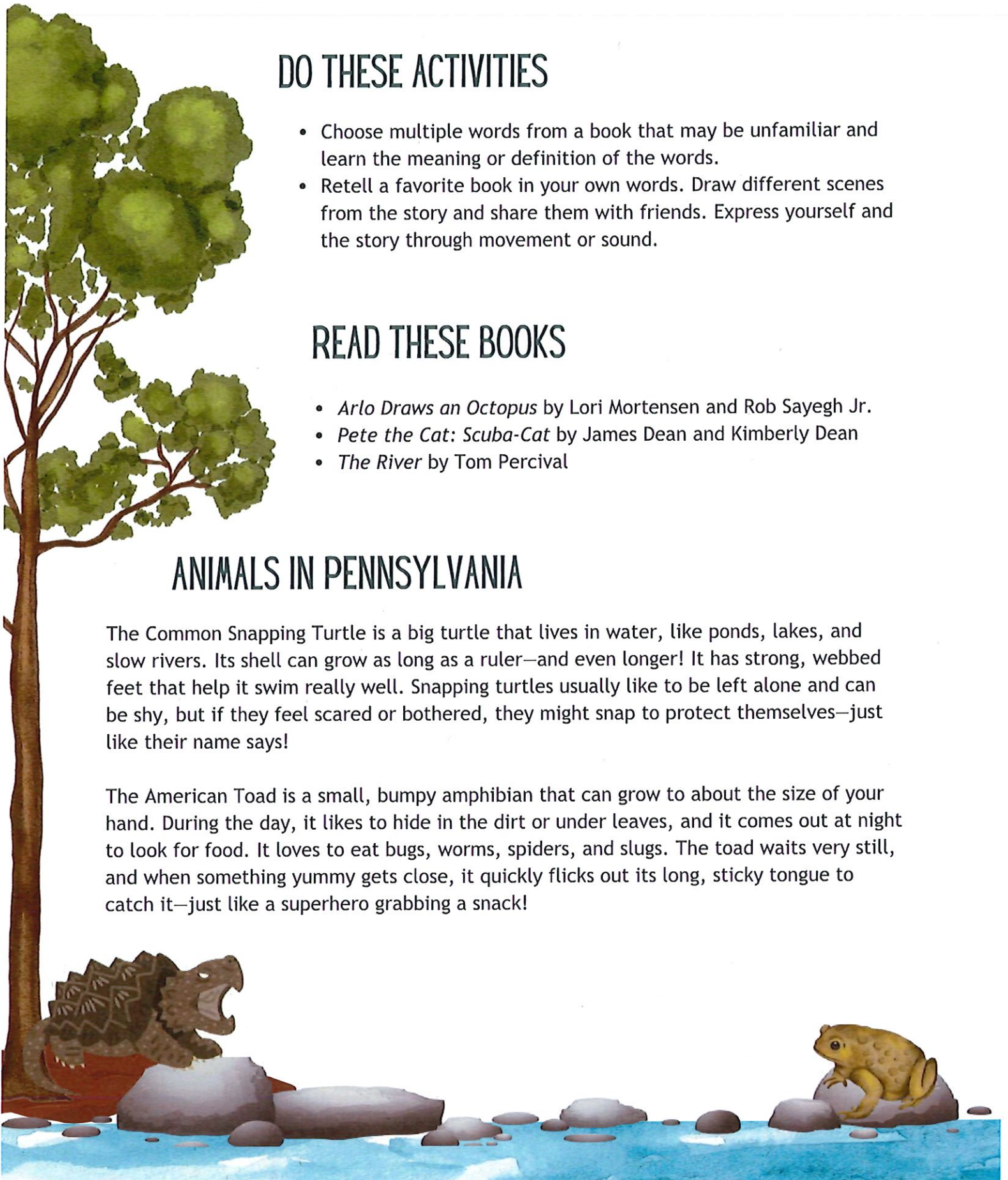
READ THESE BOOKS

- *Arlo Draws an Octopus* by Lori Mortensen and Rob Sayegh Jr.
- *Pete the Cat: Scuba-Cat* by James Dean and Kimberly Dean
- *The River* by Tom Percival

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

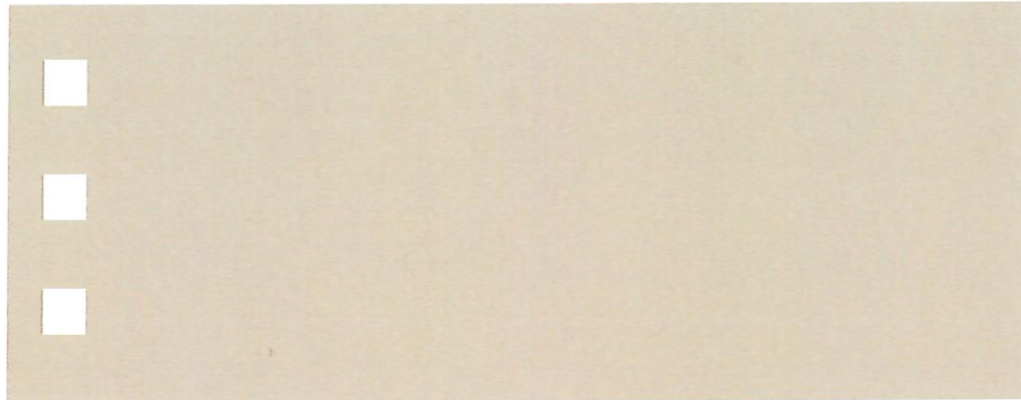
The Common Snapping Turtle is a big turtle that lives in water, like ponds, lakes, and slow rivers. Its shell can grow as long as a ruler—and even longer! It has strong, webbed feet that help it swim really well. Snapping turtles usually like to be left alone and can be shy, but if they feel scared or bothered, they might snap to protect themselves—just like their name says!

The American Toad is a small, bumpy amphibian that can grow to about the size of your hand. During the day, it likes to hide in the dirt or under leaves, and it comes out at night to look for food. It loves to eat bugs, worms, spiders, and slugs. The toad waits very still, and when something yummy gets close, it quickly flicks out its long, sticky tongue to catch it—just like a superhero grabbing a snack!

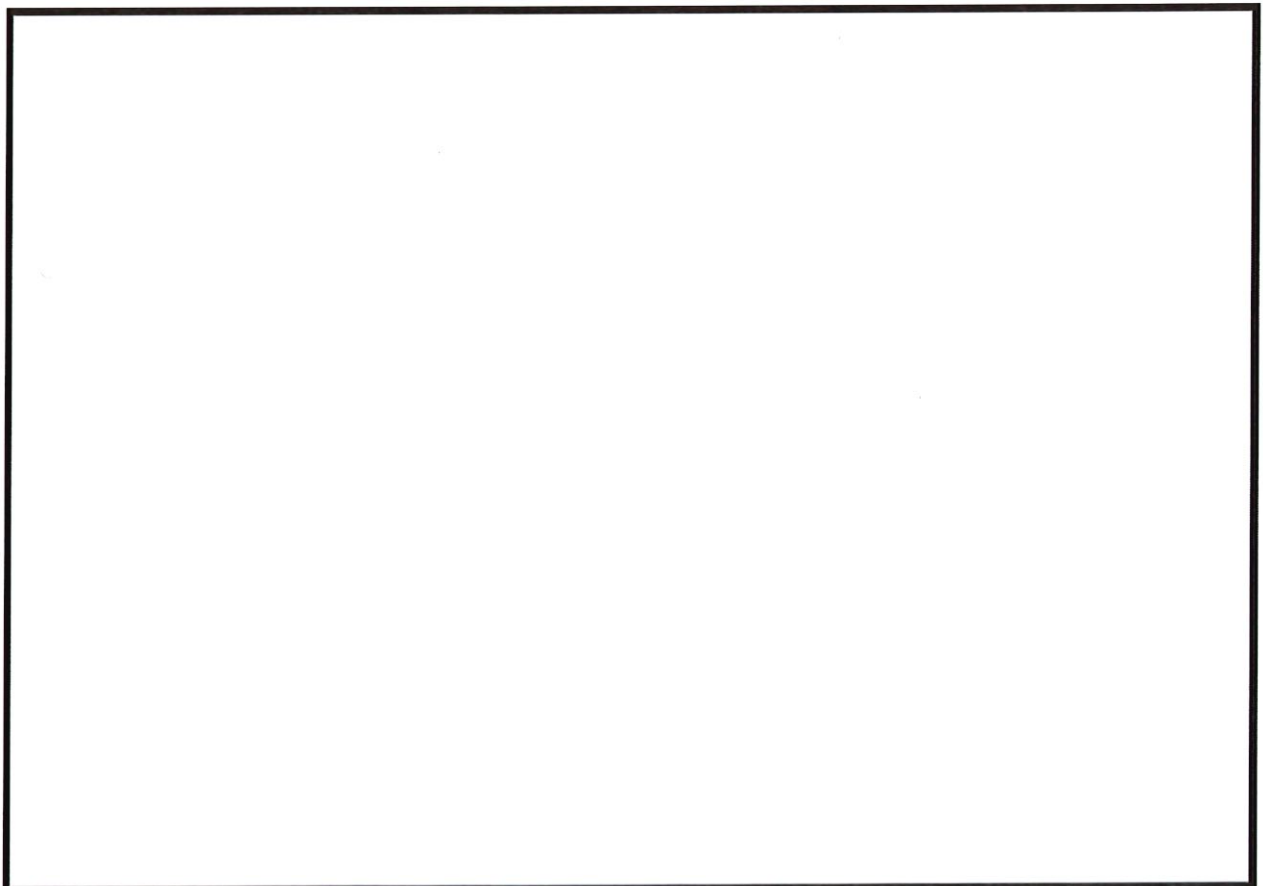


WEEK 1

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK

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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing the favorite thing done this week.

WEEK 2

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Use a measuring tape, find the differences between inches and feet on the measuring tape. Next, find different things to measure and compare largest and smallest.
- Play the song “Octopus’s Garden” by Raffi and dance and move. If you can’t dance, can you tap your hand or nod your head to the music?

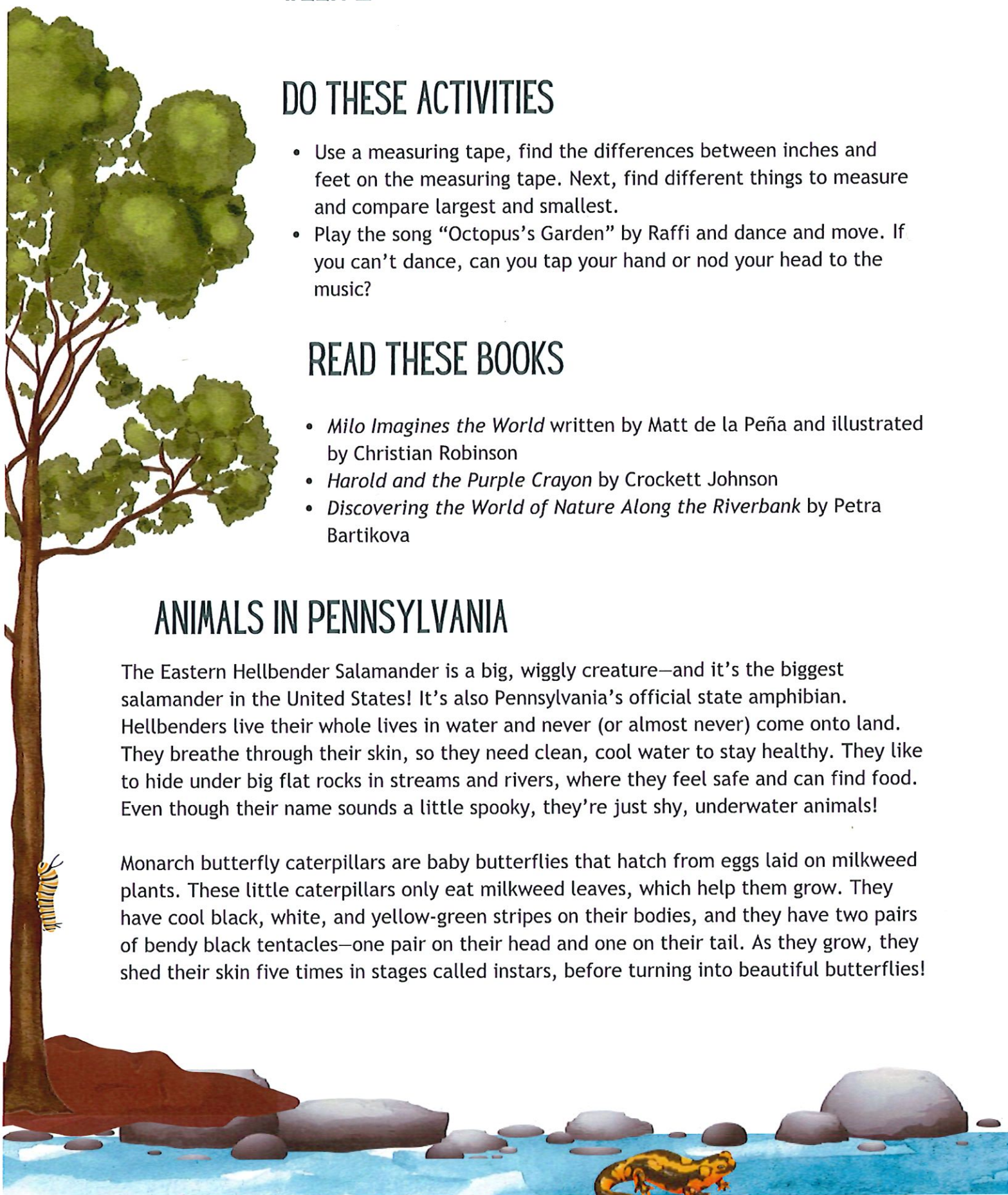
READ THESE BOOKS

- *Milo Imagines the World* written by Matt de la Peña and illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson
- *Discovering the World of Nature Along the Riverbank* by Petra Bartikova

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

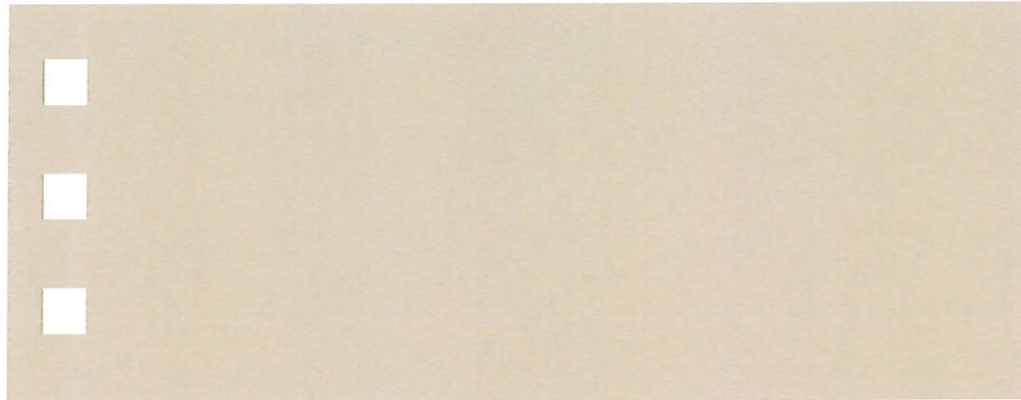
The Eastern Hellbender Salamander is a big, wiggly creature—and it’s the biggest salamander in the United States! It’s also Pennsylvania’s official state amphibian. Hellbenders live their whole lives in water and never (or almost never) come onto land. They breathe through their skin, so they need clean, cool water to stay healthy. They like to hide under big flat rocks in streams and rivers, where they feel safe and can find food. Even though their name sounds a little spooky, they’re just shy, underwater animals!

Monarch butterfly caterpillars are baby butterflies that hatch from eggs laid on milkweed plants. These little caterpillars only eat milkweed leaves, which help them grow. They have cool black, white, and yellow-green stripes on their bodies, and they have two pairs of bendy black tentacles—one pair on their head and one on their tail. As they grow, they shed their skin five times in stages called instars, before turning into beautiful butterflies!

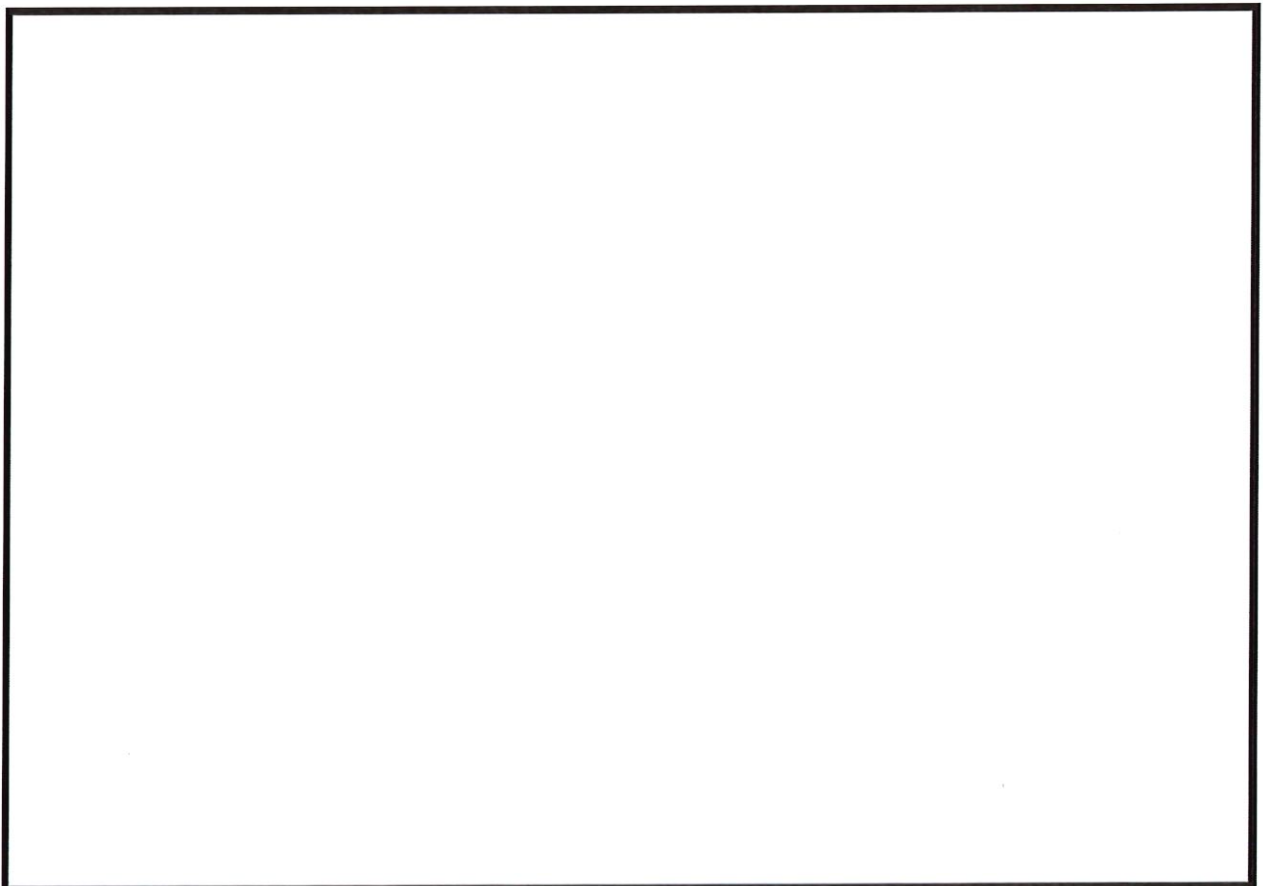


WEEK 2

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK

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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK

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WEEK 3

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Talk about how different animals move, then pretend to be the animals. Do the animals crawl, gallop, slither, fly, wiggle, swim or jump? What parts of their bodies do they use?
- If you can't visit a Pennsylvania water trail, do a virtual tour by connecting with area science museums, universities or by using free online videos.

READ THESE BOOKS

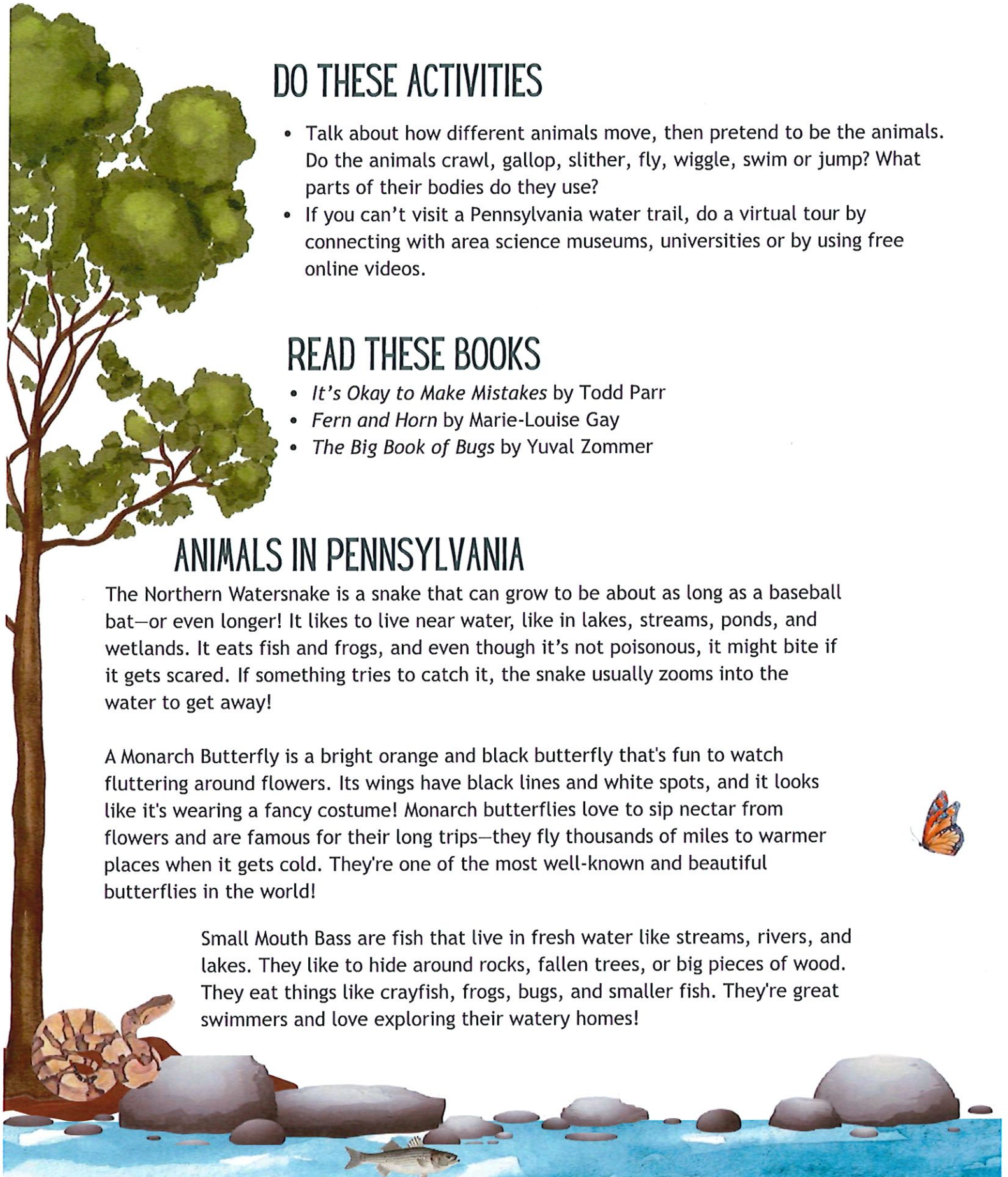
- *It's Okay to Make Mistakes* by Todd Parr
- *Fern and Horn* by Marie-Louise Gay
- *The Big Book of Bugs* by Yuval Zommer

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Northern Watersnake is a snake that can grow to be about as long as a baseball bat—or even longer! It likes to live near water, like in lakes, streams, ponds, and wetlands. It eats fish and frogs, and even though it's not poisonous, it might bite if it gets scared. If something tries to catch it, the snake usually zooms into the water to get away!

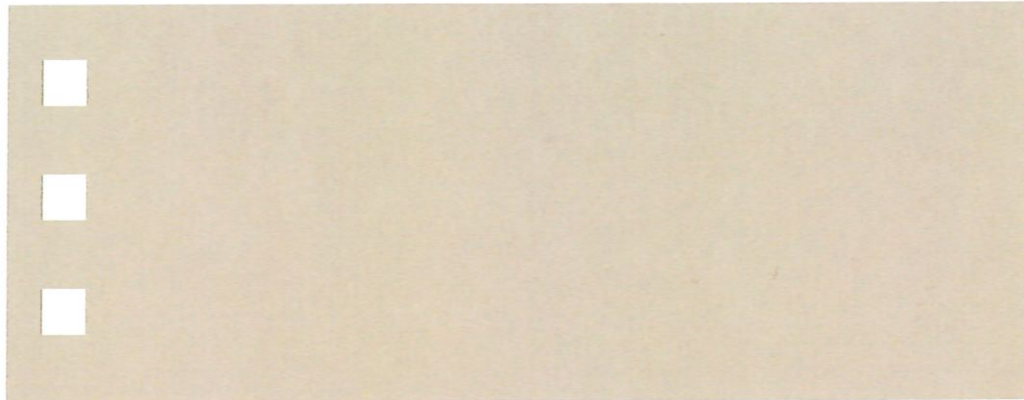
A Monarch Butterfly is a bright orange and black butterfly that's fun to watch fluttering around flowers. Its wings have black lines and white spots, and it looks like it's wearing a fancy costume! Monarch butterflies love to sip nectar from flowers and are famous for their long trips—they fly thousands of miles to warmer places when it gets cold. They're one of the most well-known and beautiful butterflies in the world!

Small Mouth Bass are fish that live in fresh water like streams, rivers, and lakes. They like to hide around rocks, fallen trees, or big pieces of wood. They eat things like crayfish, frogs, bugs, and smaller fish. They're great swimmers and love exploring their watery homes!



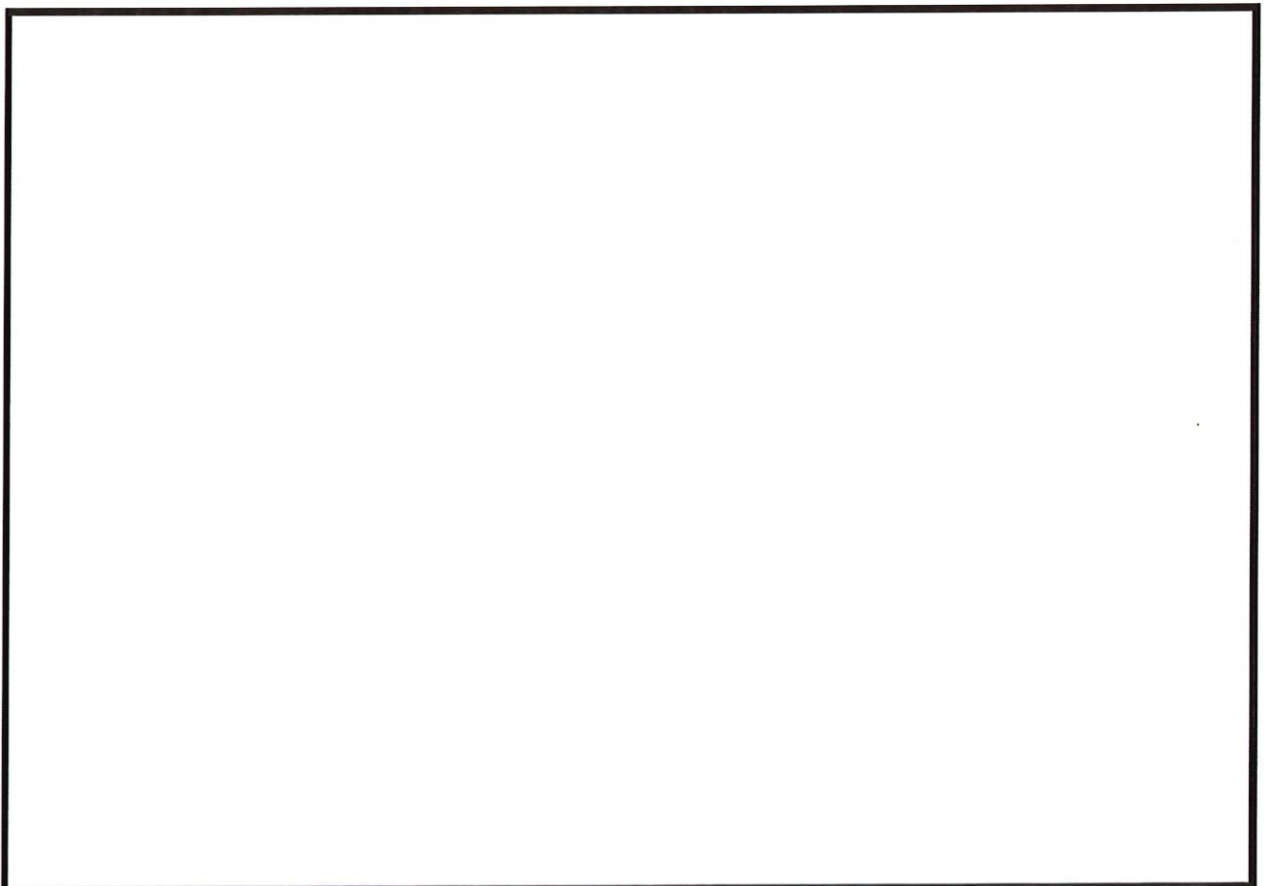
WEEK 3

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK



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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK



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WEEK 4

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Pennsylvania has many art museums throughout the state. Pick a museum in your community to visit. While there, talk about the different types of art, like paintings, drawings, or sculpture. What is a favorite and why?
- Talk about things that make you nervous, scared, excited, sad, and happy. Find photos of feelings in books, magazines, and on the web. Practice making the different faces and describe the feeling.

READ THESE BOOKS

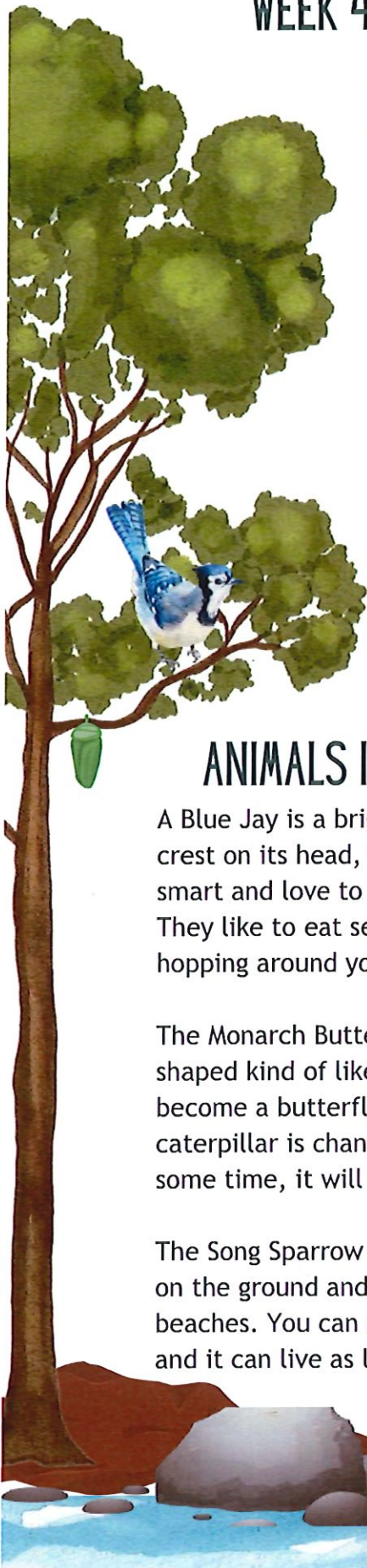
- *Jeremy Draws a Monster* by Peter McCarty
- *The Hike* by Alison Farrell
- *A Stroll Through the Seasons* by Kay Barnham and Maddie Frost

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Blue Jay is a bright blue bird with a loud voice and lots of personality! It has a fluffy crest on its head, white and black markings, and shiny blue feathers. Blue jays are super smart and love to explore. They can copy the sounds of other birds and even squirrels! They like to eat seeds, nuts, and sometimes insects, and you'll often see them in trees or hopping around your backyard. Blue jays are noisy, curious, and fun to watch!

The Monarch Butterfly chrysalis is the third stage in its life cycle. It's a little green case, shaped kind of like a tiny hanging jewel, that the caterpillar makes when it's ready to become a butterfly. It hangs upside down from a branch or leaf. Inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar is changing—it's going through a big transformation called metamorphosis! After some time, it will come out as a beautiful butterfly with wings ready to fly!

The Song Sparrow is a small bird that's really good at catching bugs! It likes to hop around on the ground and in bushes, especially near water like streams, rivers, lakes, and even beaches. You can also find it in grassy fields and forests. It eats mostly seeds and insects, and it can live as long as 11 years—that's pretty old for a little bird!

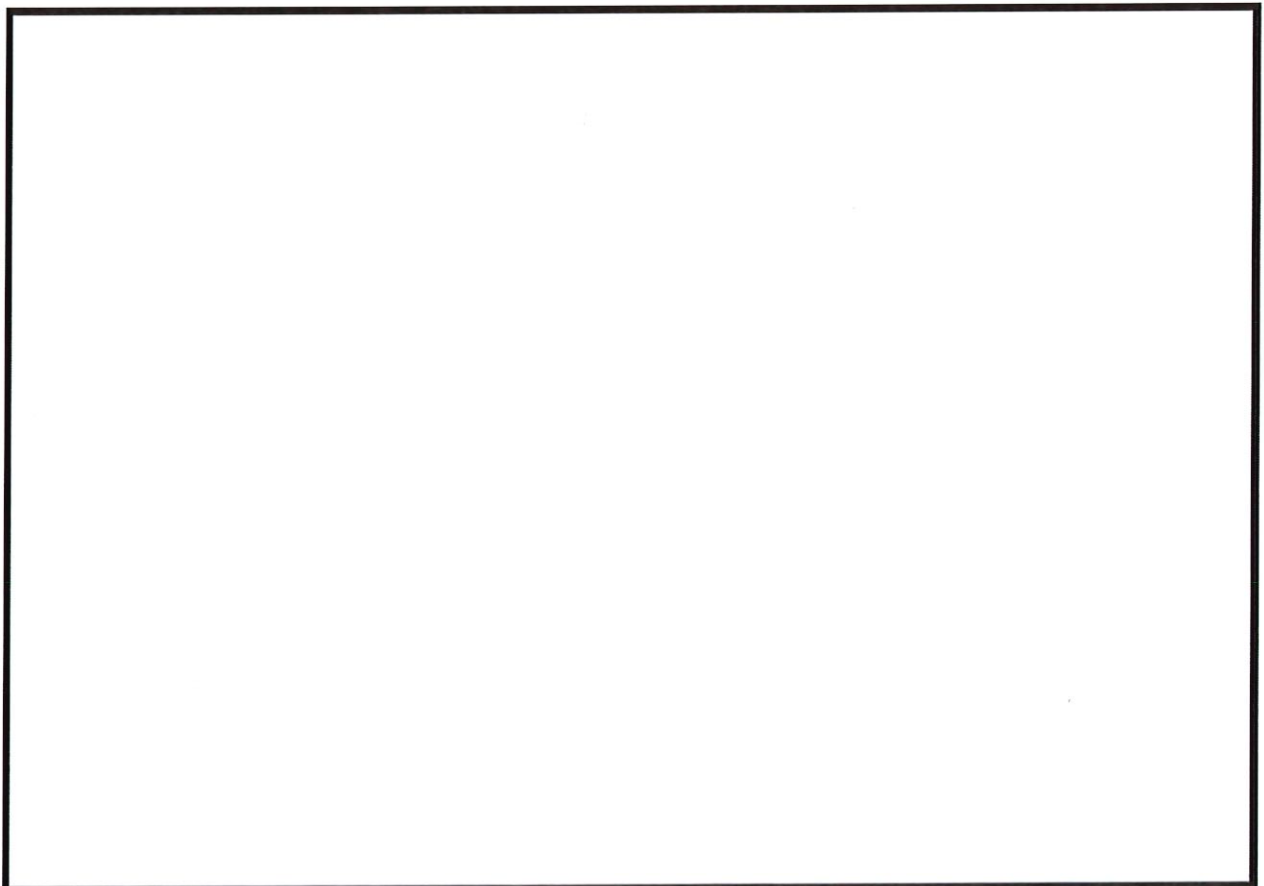


WEEK 4

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK

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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK

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WEEK 5

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Talk about how the weight of an item is measured in grams, kilograms, pounds or ounces. Using a scale, weigh different items, like a block, books, toys, etc. Talk about how to tell how much each item weighs, then guess which item will weigh more or less.
- Using a sensory table or tray, create an underwater scene. Use playdough to form water creatures.

READ THESE BOOKS

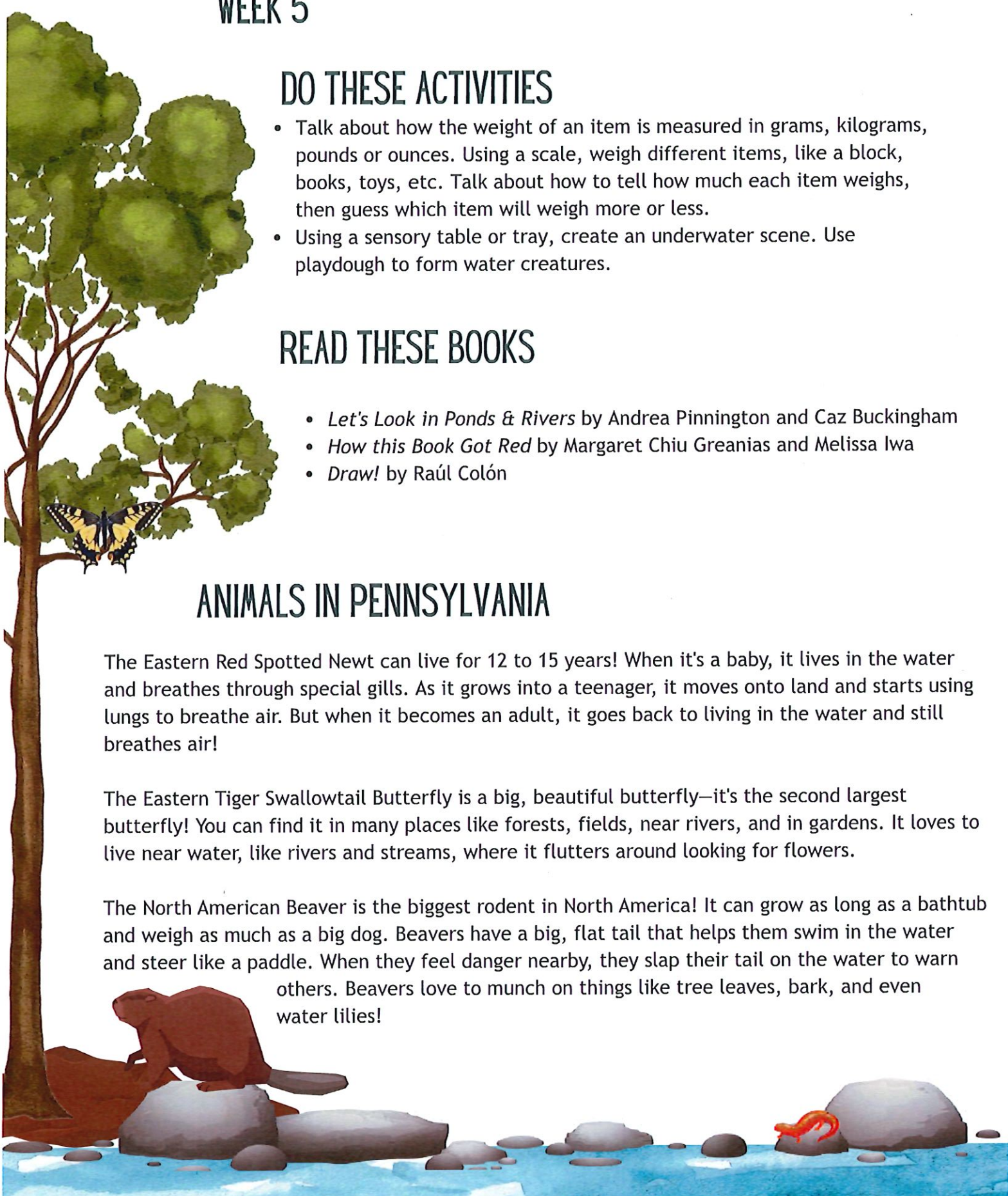
- *Let's Look in Ponds & Rivers* by Andrea Pinnington and Caz Buckingham
- *How this Book Got Red* by Margaret Chiu Greanias and Melissa Iwa
- *Draw!* by Raúl Colón

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Eastern Red Spotted Newt can live for 12 to 15 years! When it's a baby, it lives in the water and breathes through special gills. As it grows into a teenager, it moves onto land and starts using lungs to breathe air. But when it becomes an adult, it goes back to living in the water and still breathes air!

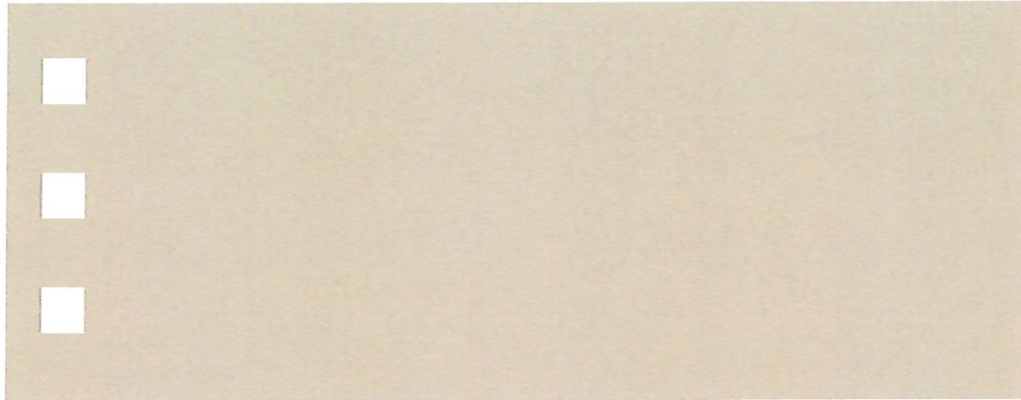
The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly is a big, beautiful butterfly—it's the second largest butterfly! You can find it in many places like forests, fields, near rivers, and in gardens. It loves to live near water, like rivers and streams, where it flutters around looking for flowers.

The North American Beaver is the biggest rodent in North America! It can grow as long as a bathtub and weigh as much as a big dog. Beavers have a big, flat tail that helps them swim in the water and steer like a paddle. When they feel danger nearby, they slap their tail on the water to warn others. Beavers love to munch on things like tree leaves, bark, and even water lilies!



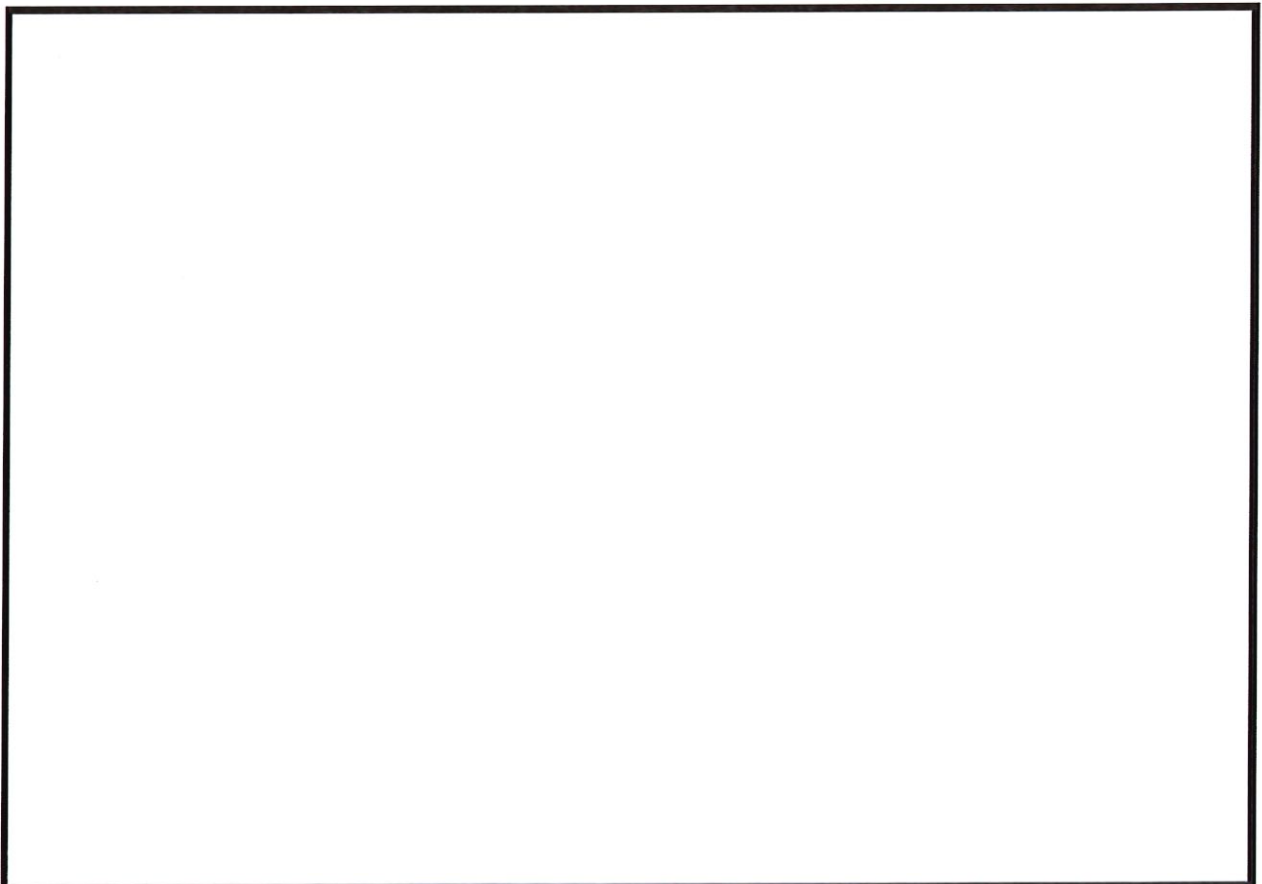
WEEK 5

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK



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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK



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WEEK 6

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Think about where you live and where animals live. Where do animals sleep and where do you sleep? Do animals live with their family or friends? What do they eat and where do they get their food? Visit your library to get books about different animals.
- Write down special events on a calendar. Talk about when the events are happening. Draw pictures of special events or put a small star or cross the days off the calendar to count down until the special events.

READ THESE BOOKS

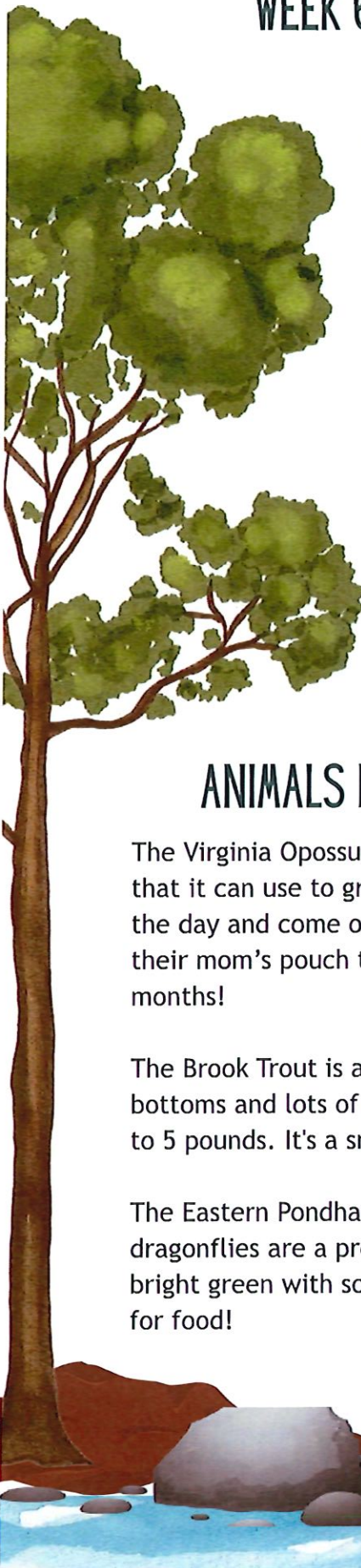
- *Over and Under the Pond* written by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal
- *This Book Is On Fire!* written by Ron Keres and illustrated by Arthur Lin
- *The Box Turtle* by Vanessa Roeder

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Virginia Opossum is a special type of animal called a *marsupial*. It has a long, hairless tail that it can use to grab things, and it has a strong body and sharp claws. Opossums sleep during the day and come out at night to find food. When baby opossums are born, they climb into their mom's pouch to stay warm and safe until they grow big enough to leave after about two months!


The Brook Trout is a fish that loves to live in cool, clear streams and ponds with sandy or rocky bottoms and lots of plants. In streams, it usually grows to be 6 to 15 inches long and weighs 1 to 5 pounds. It's a small but speedy swimmer!

The Eastern Pondhawk Dragonfly loves to hang out near ponds and calm lakes. The boy dragonflies are a pretty blue color with a yellow tip on their body, while the girl dragonflies are bright green with some dark spots on their bodies. They zoom around, flying fast and looking for food!

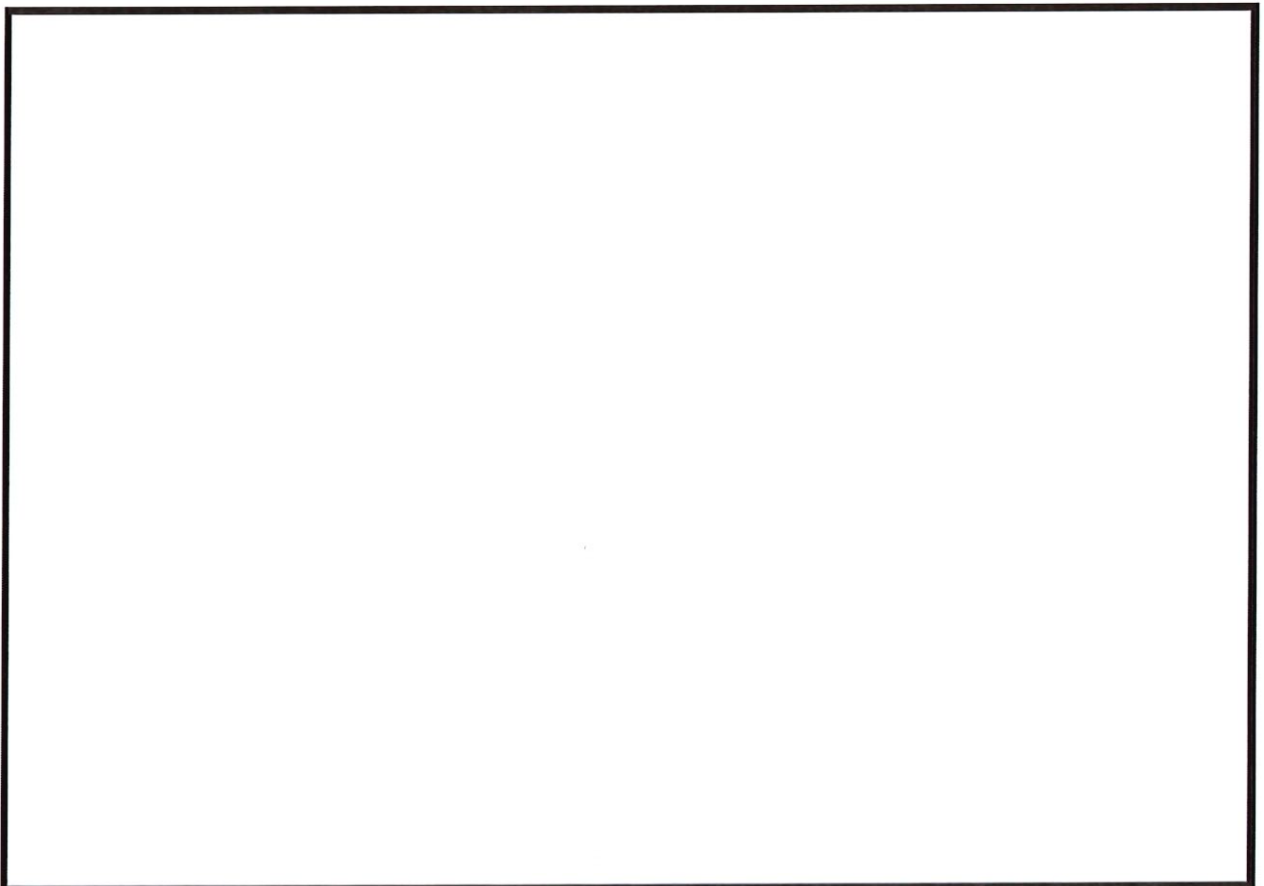


WEEK 6

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK



MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK



WEEK 7

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- How are your surroundings different when it's dark or light outside? How might you find your way when it's dark? Does using a flashlight help? What happens if you turn off the flashlight?
- Close your eyes and listen when it's quiet. What do you hear? Do you hear the same things during the day and at night?

READ THESE BOOKS

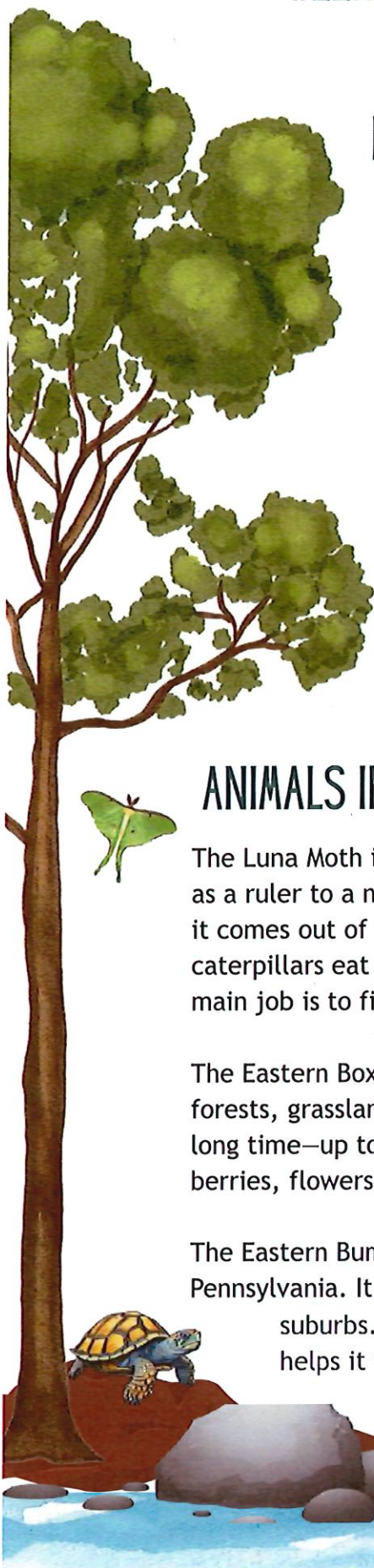
- *As Strong as the River* by Sarah Noble
- *Water Is Water* written by Miranda Paul and illustrated by Jason Chin
- *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The Luna Moth is one of the biggest moths in the world, with wings that can be as wide as a ruler to a notebook! It's most active at night, flying around looking for a mate. After it comes out of its cocoon, it only lives for about 7 to 10 days. Even though Luna moth caterpillars eat a lot, adult Luna moths don't have mouths or stomachs because their main job is to find a mate and lay eggs!

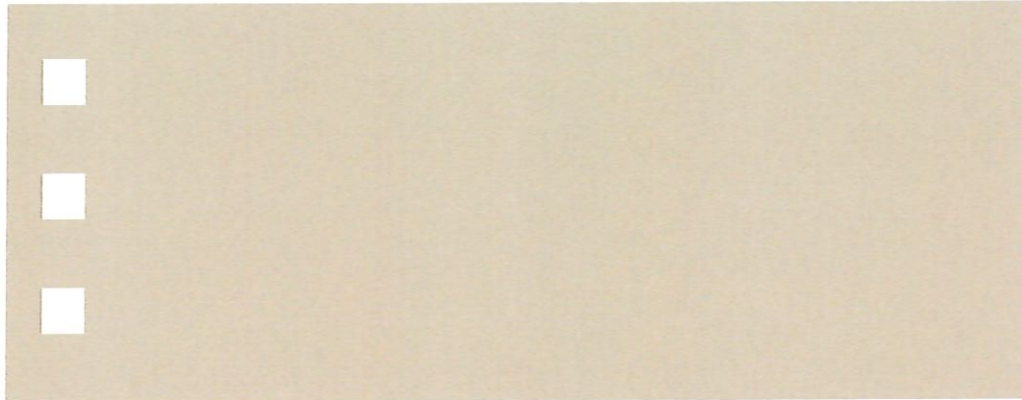
The Eastern Box Turtle doesn't live in the water like some turtles. It likes to live in forests, grasslands, meadows, and even places near rivers. This turtle can live a super long time—up to 100 years! It eats lots of different things like earthworms, snails, bugs, berries, flowers, and even mushrooms. It's a very tasty eater!

The Eastern Bumblebee is one of the most common bumblebees you'll find in Pennsylvania. It's very good at living in different places, like the countryside, cities, and suburbs. This bee is bigger than a honeybee and can make more heat, which helps it work even when the weather is cool!



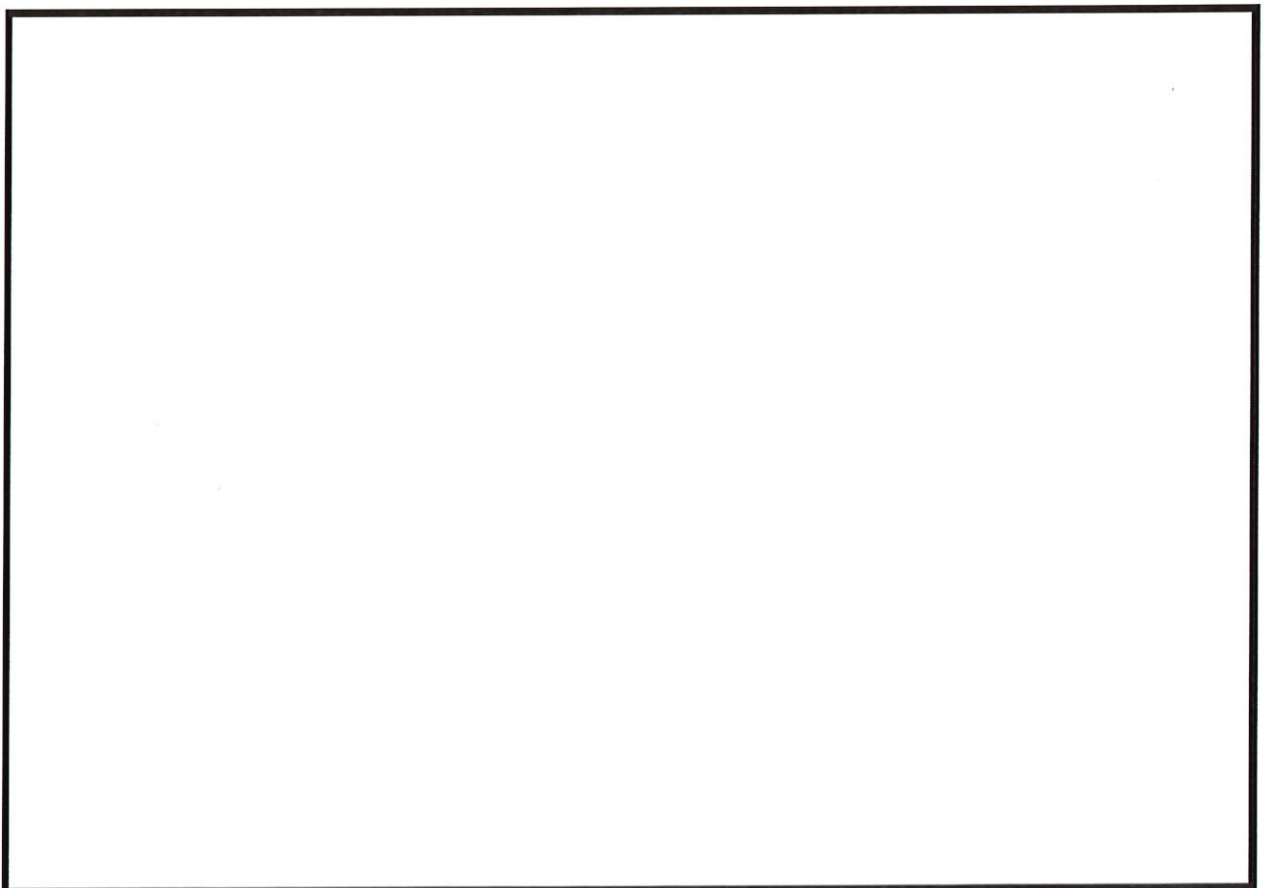
WEEK 7

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK



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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK



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WEEK 8

DO THESE ACTIVITIES

- Look through magazines to find words that begin with the first letter of your name. Use a crayon to circle the letter or a stamper. Say the letter, sound the letter sound, sign the letter with your finger.
- Use a glass or clear plastic up to view items in shallow water, like a bathtub, wading pool, stream, or a bowl. Place an item at the bottom of the water, then use the upright cup to see the item through the water.

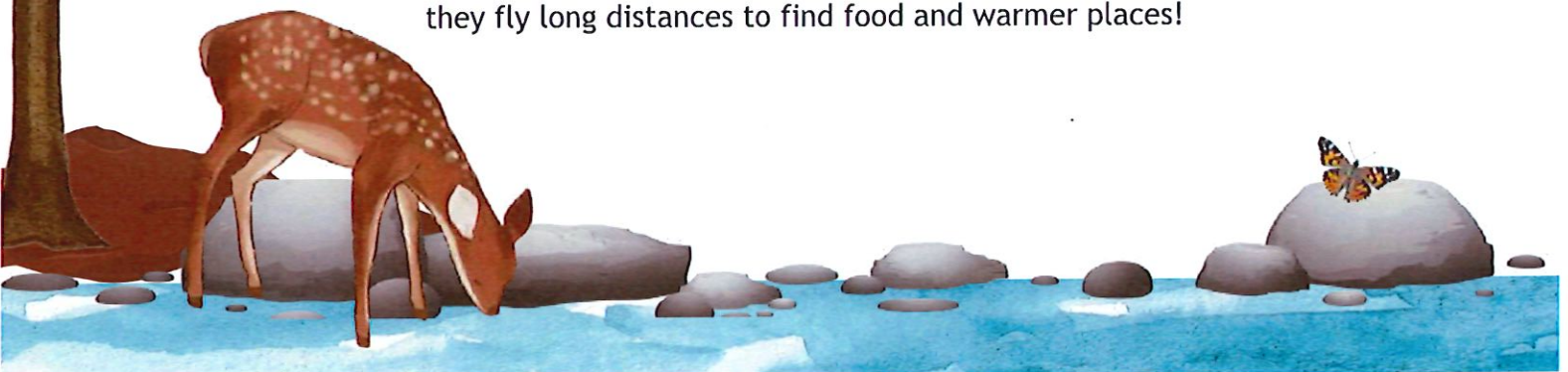
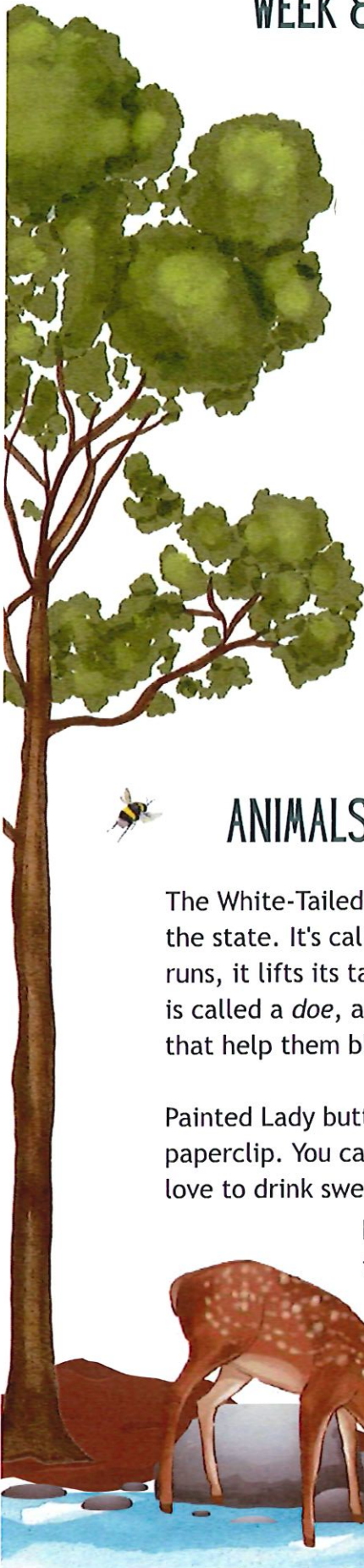
READ THESE BOOKS

- *A Squiggly Story* by Andrew Larsen
- *I Talk Like a River* written by Jordan Scott and illustrated by Sydney Smith
- *Freaky, Funky Fish: Odd Facts about Fascinating Fish* written by Debra Kempf Shumaker and illustrated by Claire Powell

ANIMALS IN PENNSYLVANIA

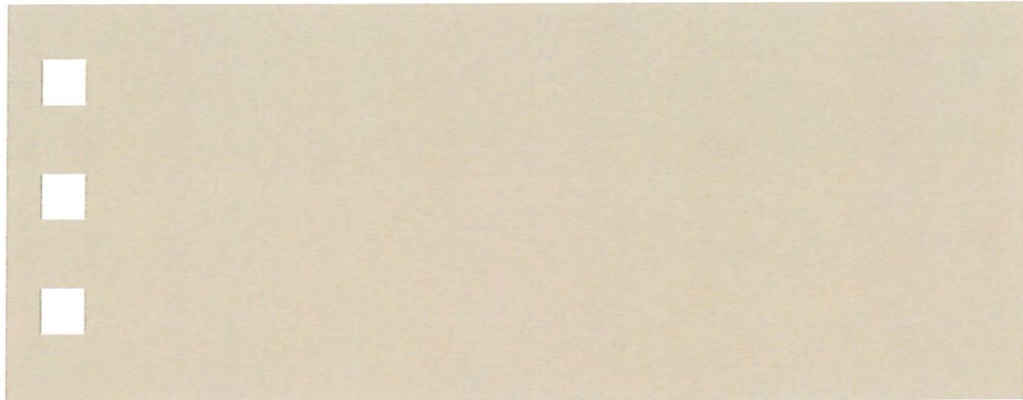
The White-Tailed Deer is Pennsylvania's State Animal and is the most common type of deer in the state. It's called "white-tailed" because the underside of its tail is white, and when it runs, it lifts its tail so you can see the white part. The male deer is called a *buck*, the female is called a *doe*, and the baby deer is called a *fawn*. Fawns have white spots on their backs that help them blend in and hide from predators!

Painted Lady butterflies are colorful butterflies with wings that are about as wide as a small paperclip. You can often see them flying around in open fields, meadows, and gardens. They love to drink sweet nectar from flowers, and their wings have beautiful patterns of orange, black, and white. These butterflies are great travelers, and sometimes they fly long distances to find food and warmer places!

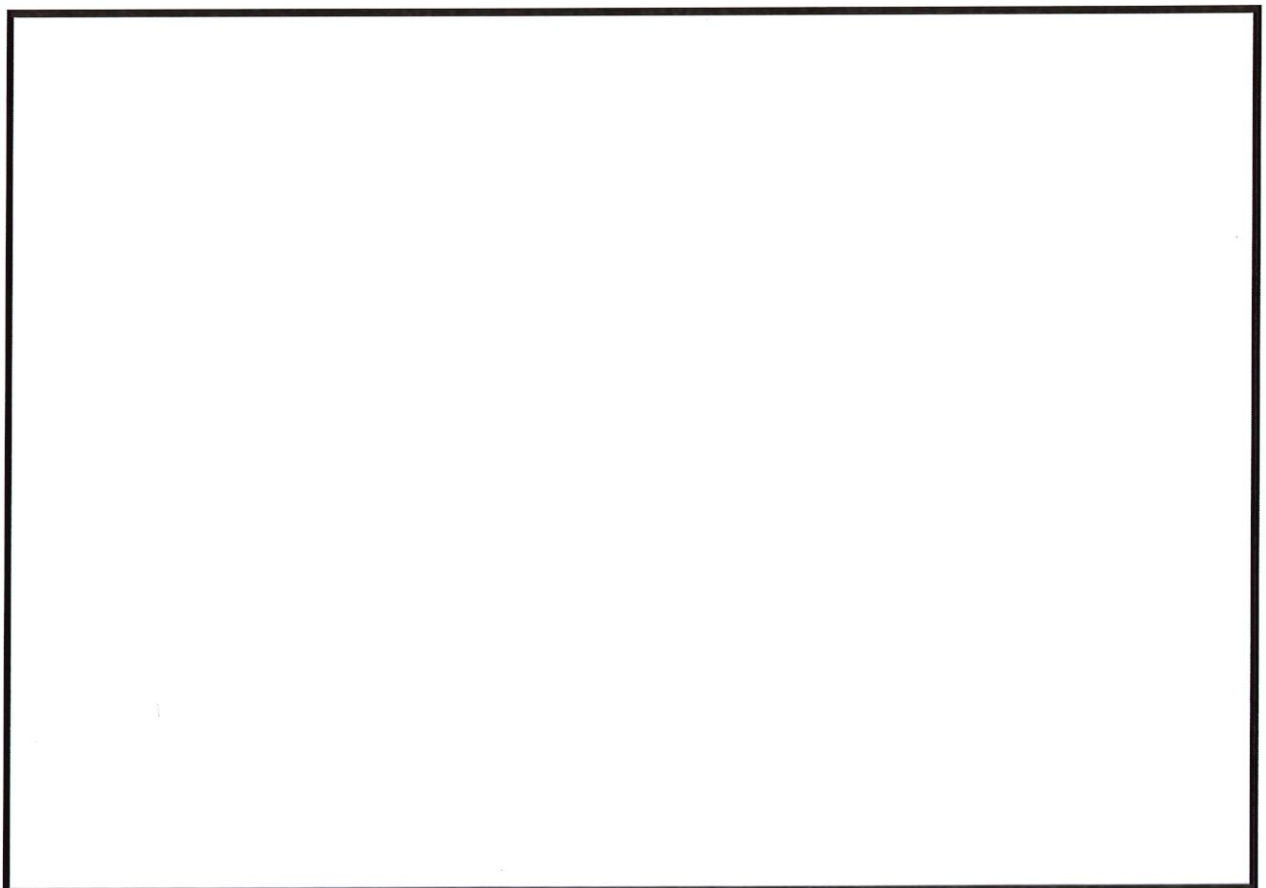


WEEK 8

BOOKS I'VE READ THIS WEEK

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MY FAVORITE THING I DID THIS WEEK

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