



2024 Iowa 4-H WHEP State Competition Rules

The Iowa 4-H Wildlife Habitat Education Program Competition will take place on Saturday, May 18th, 2024. Participants from all age ranges are welcome to compete in the competition. The rules for the Iowa WHEP competition have been modified from the national program's rules to offer a gentle introduction to the program in the state and to offer participants from a diversity of teams and ages to compete and, more importantly, have fun and learn together! This document introduces the rules for the competition and provides more information on where to learn more!

Competition Elements

Our competition will have two elements and award prizes for individual and team competitors. All the competition elements are based on information in the WHEP Manual (2020 Edition) available at this link: <https://www.whep.org/national-whep-manual/> Participants can prepare for the competition by reviewing materials in the manual, along with the information about the competition elements described in this document.

Competition activities and questions will be based on the WHEP manual information on Wildlife Management Practices, Wildlife Species, and Population Management Practices for the Tallgrass/Mixed Prairie Ecoregion, Urban Ecoregion, and Wetland Ecoregion.

Event 1: Wildlife Management Plan

The Wildlife Management Plan portion of the competition will be a team event, with teams of 2-4 people each. Teams will be given bags at the start of the competition that have four sheets of paper, a clipboard, colored pencils, and a WHEP manual to use during the event. We will distribute a scenario for managing a piece of tallgrass prairie for a wildlife species from the tallgrass prairie. We will ask the teams to write a detailed wildlife management plan, including a map, as described in the explanations in the manual. Team members will write the management plan in a 2-hour session. *No other resources, like phones or notes, may be used. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to the event.*

Event 2: Wildlife Challenge

The Wildlife Challenge is an individual event that will be administered indoors in the basement of the Jester County Park Nature Center. The competition will be a written test where students visit stations with questions or specimens to identify. Questions could come from the manual, including concepts and terms, ecoregions (tallgrass prairie, urban, and wetland), wildlife species (found in the tallgrass prairie, urban, and wetland ecoregions), wildlife management practices, and the glossary. Youth may be asked to identify bird songs, taxidermy specimens, photos of animals, and animal parts. This part of the competition will be closed-book, meaning participants can only use the sheet of paper provided and a pencil during the competition. We will allow a certain amount of time at each question/station and then rotate among the questions until everyone has visited each. *No other resources, like phones or notes, may be used.*

Scoring

Event 1: Wildlife Management Plan will be graded and scored in the same way described on pages 12-14 of the Manual. It is worth 125 points and will be assigned one team score.

Event 2: Wildlife Challenge will be graded individually and is worth 50 points.

*Correct spelling and neat penmanship are strongly encouraged. However, points will be given as long as the words can be easily determined. Close evaluation of correct spelling will be used in the case of a tie.

Awards

The top three senior and junior teams will be honored at the competition. Team scores will be calculated from the score on the Wildlife Management Plan plus the average score of all teammates on the Wildlife Challenge.

The three senior and junior individuals with the highest score on the Wildlife Challenge will be honored at the competition.

What to bring

- Weather-appropriate clothing, including closed-toe footwear for walking in the prairie, long pants, hats, and raincoats if needed.
- Bug spray and/or sunscreen if you want it.
- Water bottle(s)!
- A sack lunch and snacks for the day.
- Enthusiasm!

For questions, contact Allison Brundy (abrundy@iastate.edu), Kaycie Waters (kwaters@iastate.edu), or Adam Janke (ajanke@iastate.edu).

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