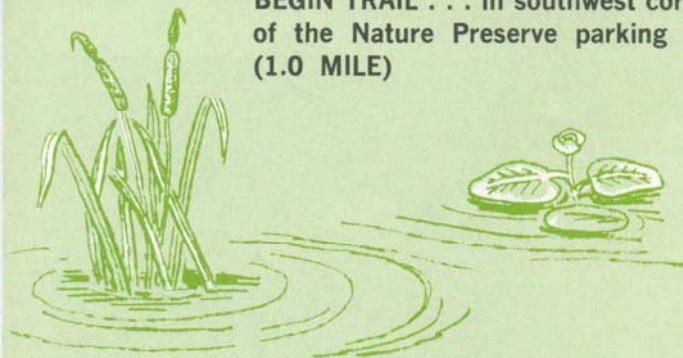




ILLINOIS
BEACH
STATE
PARK

DEAD RIVER TRAIL

**BEGIN TRAIL . . . in southwest corner
of the Nature Preserve parking lot.
(1.0 MILE)**



ZION, ILLINOIS



MEADOW SWEET

1 GLACIAL LAKE CHICAGO

Centuries ago, after the Illinoian glacier retreated, a large glacial lake covered the spot where you are standing (there once were 40 feet of water over this area). As the lake receded it formed sandbars which are now the ridges of the area.

The area directly west — is a low marsh with standing water (except in mid-summer) which is drained by a slow, sluggish, meandering (winding) stream along which this trail runs.

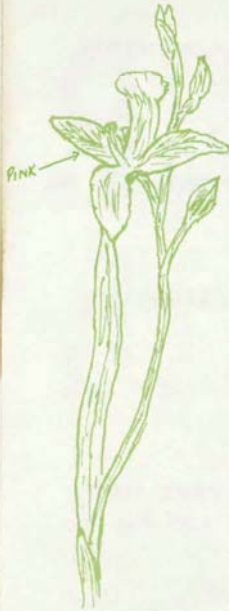
2 GRASS PINK

You are now parallel to a small swale (low area) which has a profuse growth of plants.

Important among these is the Grass Pink Orchid, a diminutive, delicate flower growing only in certain swales of the area. This rare flower is found in a very few locations throughout the state.

The area in which it grows at Illinois Beach State Park, is in reality a peat bog formed when the lake level was higher.

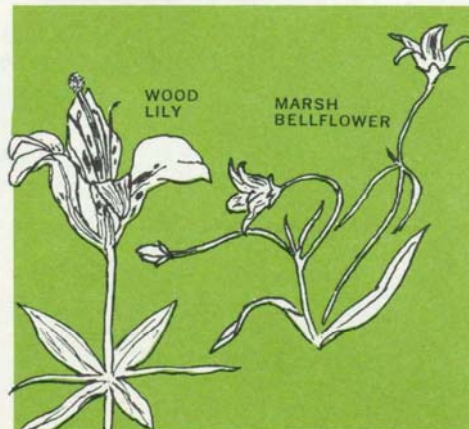
Other plants associated with the swale are: Mints, Blue Flag (Wild Iris), Meadowsweet, Wood Lily, Marsh Fern and Marsh Bellflower.

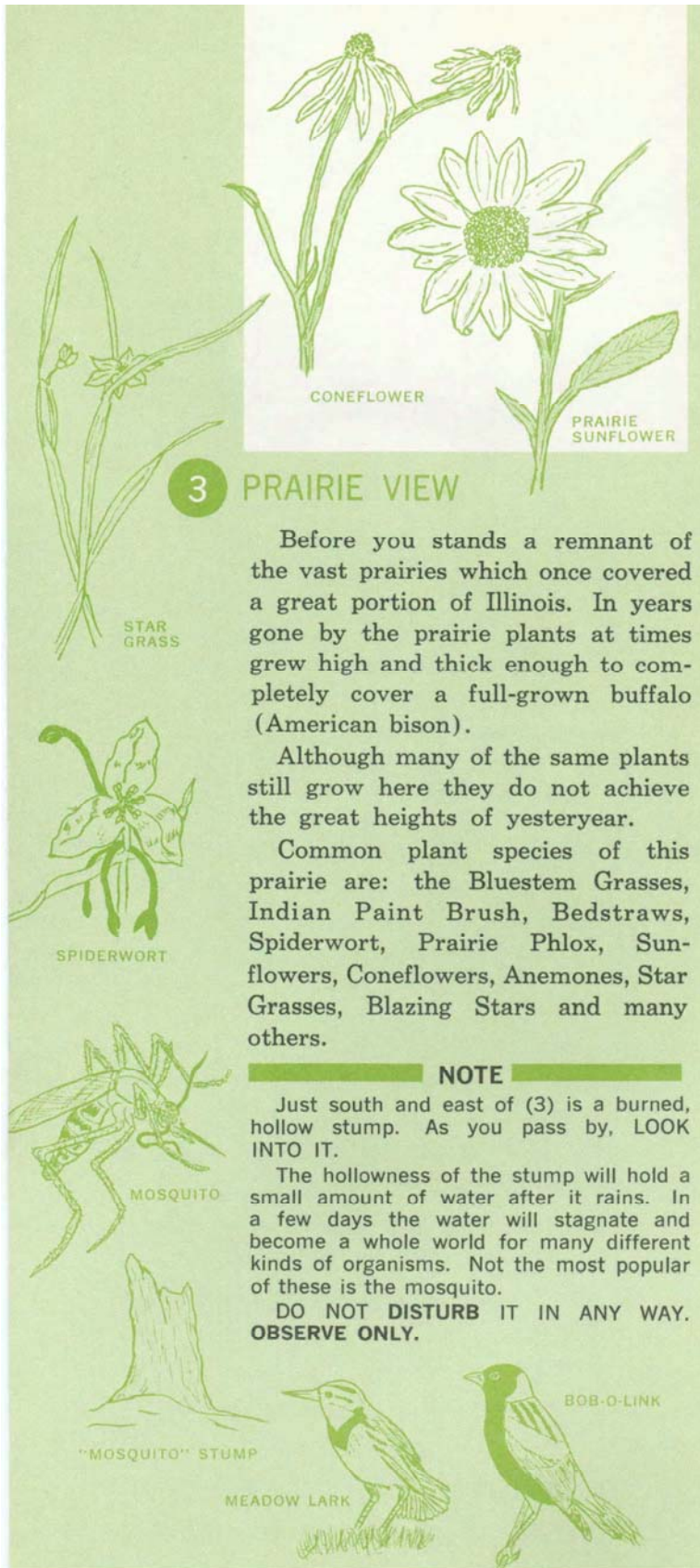


GRASS PINK

NOTE

As you proceed to Station (3) be on the watch for more Grass Pink, but **DO NOT TOUCH**.





3 PRAIRIE VIEW

Before you stands a remnant of the vast prairies which once covered a great portion of Illinois. In years gone by the prairie plants at times grew high and thick enough to completely cover a full-grown buffalo (American bison).

Although many of the same plants still grow here they do not achieve the great heights of yesteryear.

Common plant species of this prairie are: the Bluestem Grasses, Indian Paint Brush, Bedstraws, Spiderwort, Prairie Phlox, Sunflowers, Coneflowers, Anemones, Star Grasses, Blazing Stars and many others.

NOTE

Just south and east of (3) is a burned, hollow stump. As you pass by, LOOK INTO IT.

The hollowness of the stump will hold a small amount of water after it rains. In a few days the water will stagnate and become a whole world for many different kinds of organisms. Not the most popular of these is the mosquito.

DO NOT DISTURB IT IN ANY WAY. OBSERVE ONLY.

STAR GRASS

SPIDERWORT

MOSQUITO

"MOSQUITO" STUMP

MEADOW LARK

BOB-O-LINK

CONEFLOWER

PRAIRIE SUNFLOWER

4 DEAD RIVER BEND

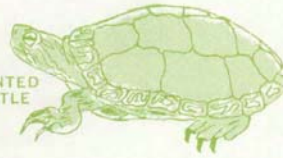
At this point you can see Dead River as it winds its way from the marsh on its short journey to Lake Michigan. (the complete distance of flow is about 2.5 miles)

The river is a small drainage stream for the marsh, which varies greatly with the amount of rainfall received. (Average depth—4 feet maximum, 6 inch minimum)

RINGED-NECK
PHEASANT



PAINTED
TURTLE



5 PAINTED TURTLE POINT

This spot gives a good view of the river at its slow, meandering best. Note the amount of plants that grow in and around the river. This heavy vegetation affords a good cover for Fish, Ducks, and the different kinds of Turtles which live there.

Of the 4 or 5 species in the area, the common snapper can be seen only when it pokes its head up for a gulp of air and then retreats to the bottom again to continue its foraging.

The Painted, Blanding's, and infrequently, the Softshell Turtles can be seen basking on floating vegetation or on a log.

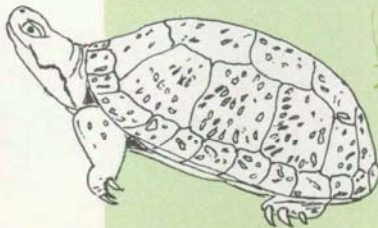
NOTE

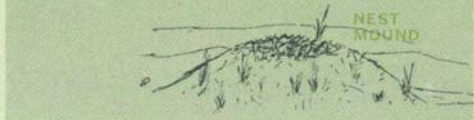
Be cautious when approaching, for turtles are wary and will dive into the safety of the water quite readily.

SNAPPING TURTLE



BLANDING'S
TURTLE





6 ANT HILL

Within a 30 foot radius of you are 8 nest mounds in various stages of development.

The ants within this area are mainly of the Genus *Formica*, deriving its name from its production of formic acid, used as a food capturing device.

The nest (mound) consists of a large mound of sand with numerous, 2 to 3 inch long grass stems piled in the center. The function of the grass is not fully understood, but it does seem to have good insulating qualities (sand temperatures will reach 130° F).

CAUTION! Do not stand here too long for the ants are numerous and they bite. Also do not disturb the nests in any way.



FORMICA ANT

7 WHITE-TAILED DEER



WHITE-TAILED DEER

Again you are overlooking a portion of the prairie. This portion of the Nature Preserve is the prime summer feeding ground for the white-tailed deer of which there remains a fairly constant "herd" of around 6.

The beautiful, graceful and stately animals are natives to Illinois but were driven out, due to the encroachment of man and his exploitation of everything available. They were re-introduced in the 1930's and are now almost too numerous in many sections of the state. If too numerous, they can become a serious problem by over-grazing an area. They have even been known to venture into the city and feed in gardens.

NOTE

Watch for tracks of various animals in the sand — also observe the different birds in the Oak Ridge as you pass by.



DEER TRACK



8 CHOKE CHERRY

This hardy shrub, like many of the plants here sends its roots deep into the sand in order to get a secure hold.

The plant flowers in May with a cluster of small white flowers and the fruit ripens in late August or early September.

When eaten from the tree, the berry gives the eater a dry, puckering taste. The berries however are used as flavoring in many different things.

More important is the use of the fruit to other wildlife, mostly birds, which feed upon it.



CARDINAL
(STATE BIRD)

9 CREEPING JUNIPER

In the plant progression at Illinois Beach State Park, the Creeping Juniper is one of the first plants to take root and keep the sand from blowing away. As the years pass and other plants get a "foothold" the Juniper is gradually choked out until it completely disappears, as when the Black Oaks become dominant. This is what is happening here.

Note the heavy coverage and root system of the plant. This plant is unique in being present only in this sandy dune region in the entire state.



CEDAR-WAXWING

NOTE

It is not unusual to see Illinois' only native Cactus, the Prickly-Pear, along the trail. This low, spiny succulent blooms with a magnificent yellow flower around the first week of July. WATCH FOR THEM. DO NOT TOUCH.



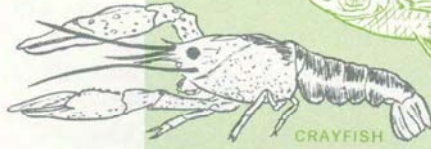


CRICKET FROG



MUD MINNOW

BLUE GILL



CRAYFISH

10 DEAD RIVER BRIDGE

(STAND ON BRIDGE for best observation)

Even though brief in its own life, Dead River enables a host of creatures to live.

Observe carefully and quietly.

In the mornings and evenings you may see such things as Raccoons, Deer, or Muskrat, or you may hear the croak of Frogs or the whirr of bird and bat wings as they dive over the water for insects. Occasionally a Great Blue Heron can be observed.

During the "heat-of-the-day" most of the animal life have taken shelter. However, you may still see a few fish in the shade under the bridge with a possible crayfish foraging nearby.

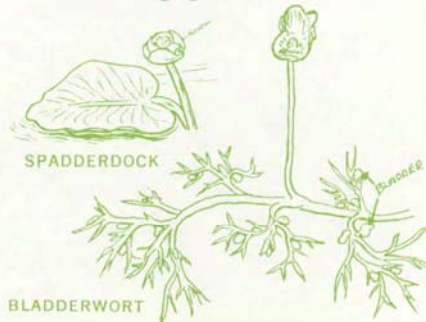
A few of the more interesting aquatic plants that may be observed are the Spadderdock, Bladderwort (with its hundreds of little insect traps), White Pond Lily and the Wolffia Columbiana, the world's smallest flowering plant.



WHITE POND LILY



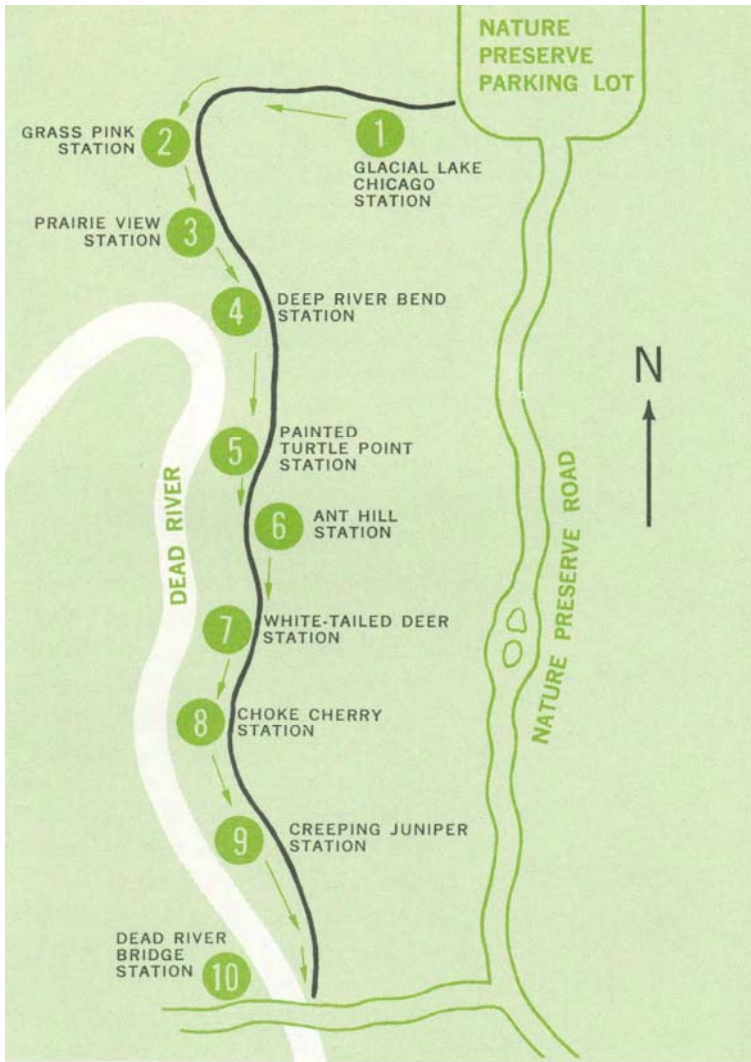
GREAT BLUE HERON



SPADDERDOCK

BLADDERWORT

BLADDER



NOTICE

1. Stay on the trail — trampling kills the plants.
2. Do not collect ANYTHING — leave it to be appreciated by others.
3. No picnicking and no littering — natural beauty is spoiled by unnatural litter.
4. Watch you smokes — better yet don't smoke.

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