

# Welcome to Silver's Lagoon: Discover the World of Fish

Imagine living as a rainbow trout in

**Silver's Lagoon for one day.** What would you eat? Who might want to eat you? How would you be part of nature's web of life?



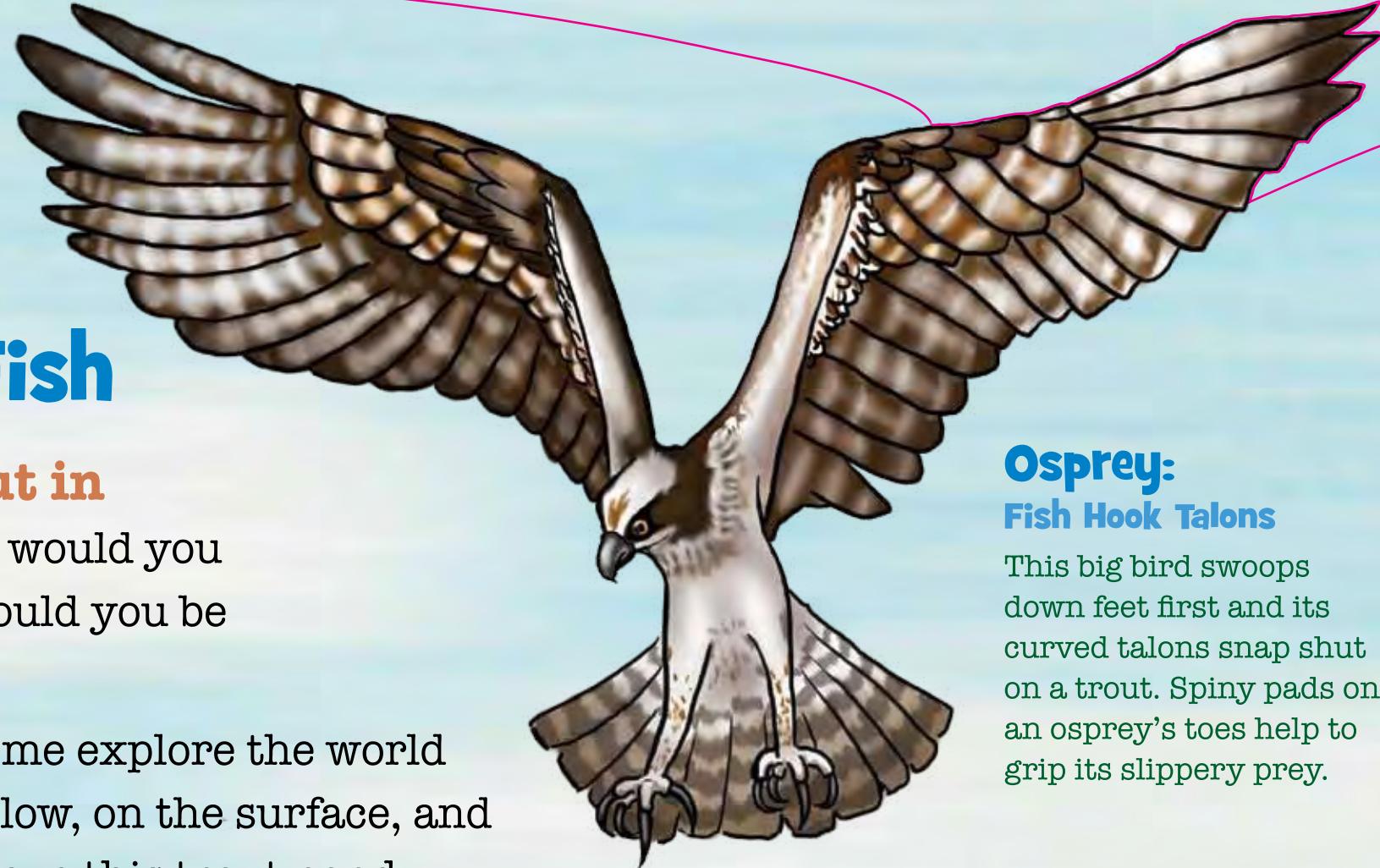
## Great Blue Heron:

### Still as a Statue

This wading bird knows how to avoid spooking a fish. The trick? Be very still. When a fish swims by, the heron lunges and stabs it with a spear-like bill. How long can you stand in one place without moving?

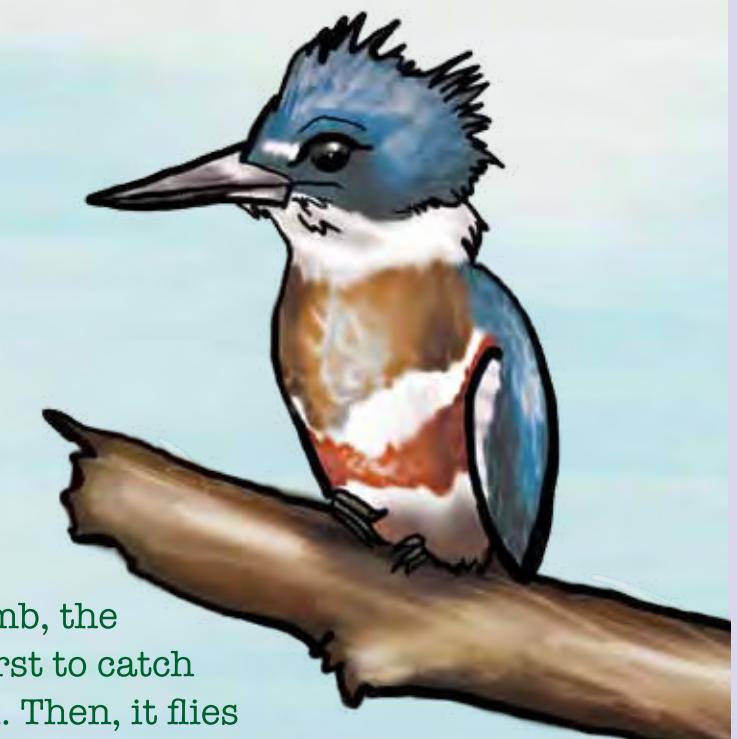
Come explore the world below, on the surface, and above this trout pond.

For starters, we'll meet up with three fishing experts: the great blue heron, the belted kingfisher, and the osprey.



## Osprey: Fish Hook Talons

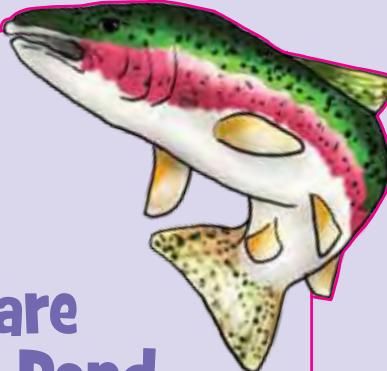
This big bird swoops down feet first and its curved talons snap shut on a trout. Spiny pads on an osprey's toes help to grip its slippery prey.



## Belted Kingfisher:

### Perfect Perch

From its perch on a tree limb, the kingfisher will dive head first to catch a small fish in its sharp bill. Then, it flies back to the branch, whacks the fish against the limb, and swallows it. Yum.



## Take Care of Your Pond

### Please:

- Keep your pet goldfish, turtle or frog at home. Never dump any critter in the pond, where it could spread diseases or take over, pushing out the wildlife that belongs here.



- Help ducks and other wildlife survive by **not** feeding them.

They depend on their natural foods to stay healthy.

**Silver's Lagoon is a gift to the City of Missoula from the Silver Family.**



Montana Natural History Center



Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks

Parks & Recreation  
City of Missoula • 600 Clegg Lane • 721-PARK



Illustrations on all three signs by Libby Anderson, age 12, a seventh grader at Washington Middle School when these were completed in 2010. Libby enjoys creative writing as well as art.

# The World of Fish Life Underwater



**Splash!** A rainbow trout dashes to safety, narrowly escaping an osprey's talons. After hiding in deep water, the fish darts forward to snack on a young mayfly. Just as the trout opens her mouth, the mayfly vanishes. A dragonfly larva snagged it first.

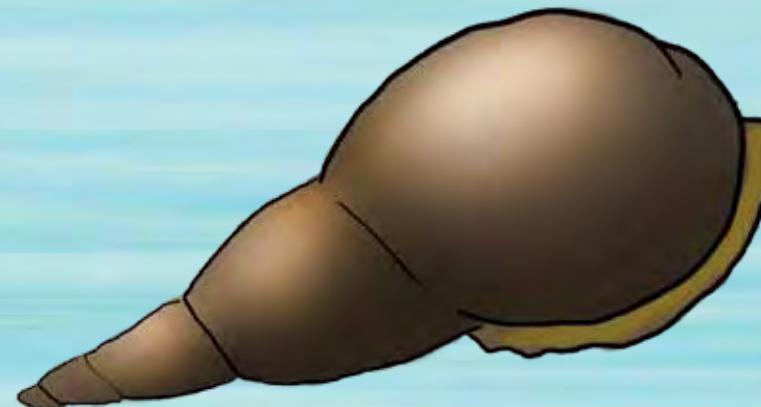
## Dragonfly Larva: Deadly Claw

Before a dragonfly transforms into a fabulous flyer, it spends the first part of its life under water, armed with a clawed lower lip that it shoots out to grab other bugs.



### What's a larva?

The wingless first stage of an insect before it changes and emerges from the pond with wings.



## Pond Snail: Algae Grazer

A snail glides over the algae, powered by a muscular foot. It scrapes up pieces of the underwater plant for food. All that grazing helps keep algae from taking over.



## Native Cutthroat Trout

Can you find two kinds of trout in the pond?  
Cutthroat are natives of Montana and rainbow trout are not.

Trout are part of a web of life underwater. Every creature has a role to play and together they keep the pond a healthy place for fish to live. To make your own discoveries, dip a bucket into the water and take a closer look.

## Rainbow Trout: Featured Fish!

Trout eat mostly insects. To stay cool, they swim down 15 feet to the bottom of the pond. To hide, they head for aquatic plants. Kids fish for rainbow and cutthroat trout that are released into Silver's Lagoon each year.



# The World of Fish

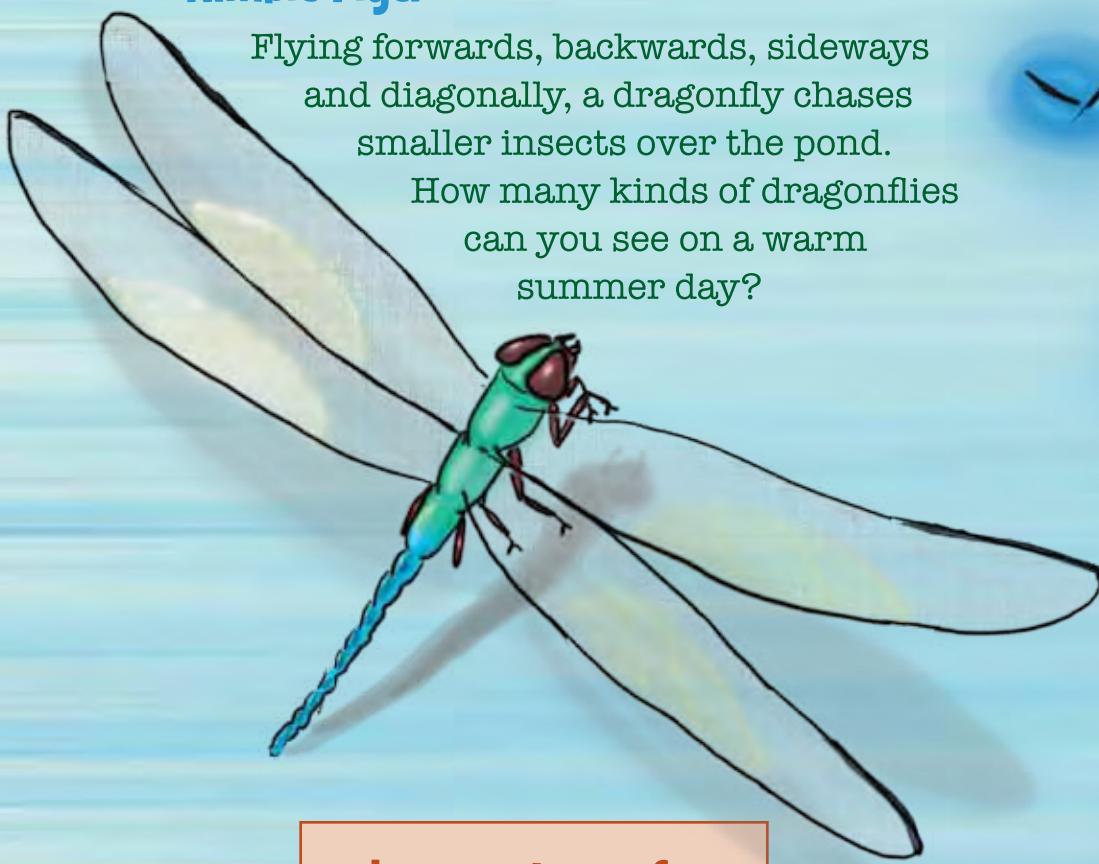
## Life on the Surface

**Crouch down and look** across the surface of Silver's Lagoon. What kinds of critters live here? Mallard ducks tip forward to scoop up underwater plants. Swallows dip down from above to capture flying insects.

### Dragonfly: Nimble Flyer

Flying forwards, backwards, sideways and diagonally, a dragonfly chases smaller insects over the pond.

How many kinds of dragonflies can you see on a warm summer day?



#### Why is a dragonfly like a helicopter?

Because they both can hover.



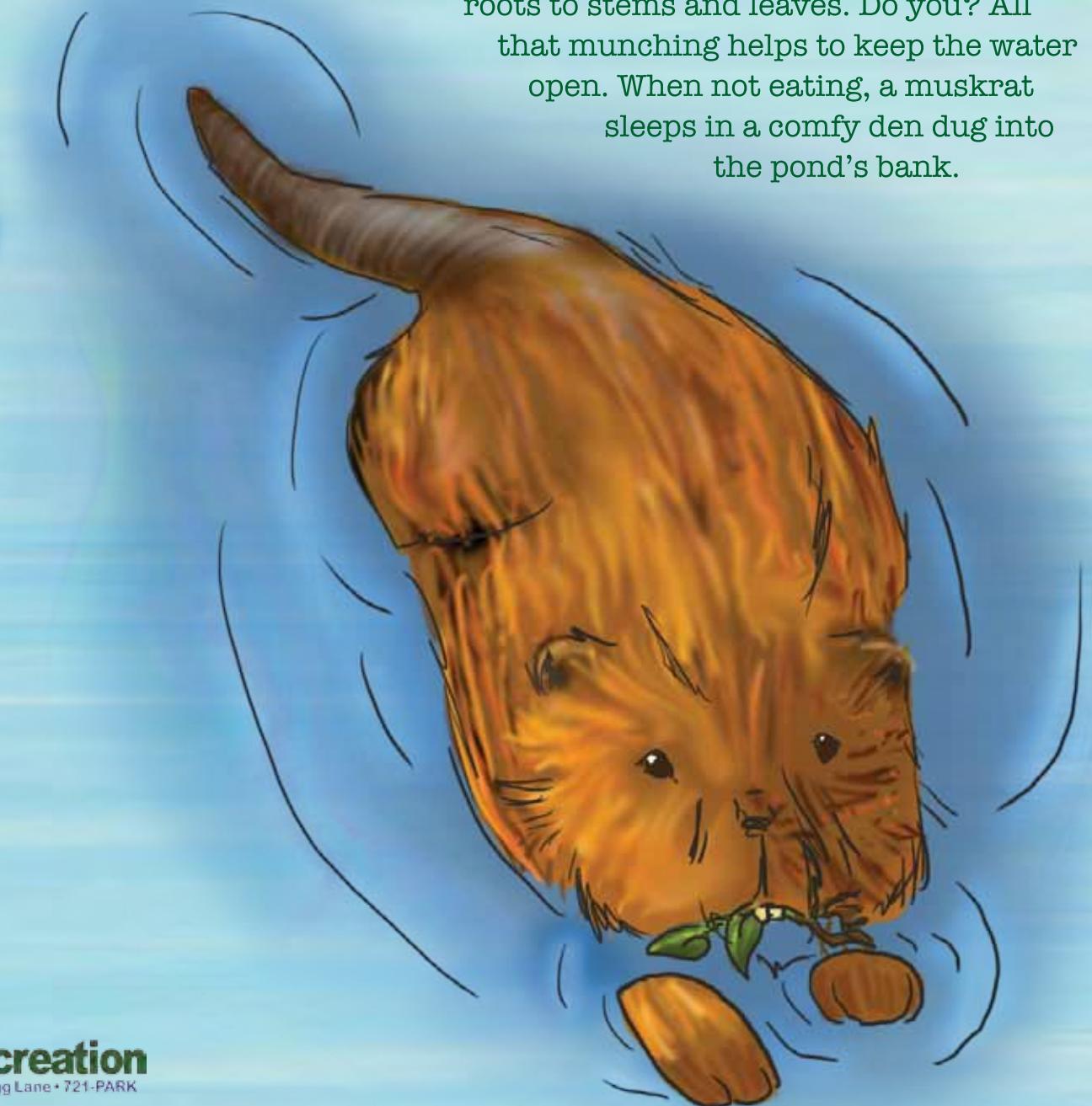
### Water Strider: Best Magic Trick

This insect traps air bubbles on its legs, so it can walk on water. Watch for striders darting after floating dead bugs. Trout come up to the surface to eat insects, too, including water striders!

Trout, too, are part of this middle layer of life. They swim up to eat insects. To catch the most action in the pond, come in the morning and late afternoon. Bring a notebook to write and draw what you see and hear.

### Muskrat: Mighty Muncher

A muskrat loves eating vegetables – from roots to stems and leaves. Do you? All that munching helps to keep the water open. When not eating, a muskrat sleeps in a comfy den dug into the pond's bank.



Montana Natural History Center



Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks

Parks & Recreation  
City of Missoula • 600 Gregg Lane • 721-PARK