



# Nature Hunt at Churchill

## Spring 2021

Look for these woodland flowers, pond animals, and birds this Spring!

### **Bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis***

No blood here! Bloodroot blooms are delicate, daisy-like flowers with soft white petals and a golden center. Bloodroot's name comes from its rusty-colored juices, which Native Americans used as a dye.



### **Wild Geranium, *Geranium maculatum***

Pale pink and purple geraniums start to bloom in the spring and last until early summer. They like to grow in small, rounded bushes about one and a half feet tall at full height. Look for their five-lobed leaves with deep veins.

### **Virginia Bluebells, *Mertensia virginica***

Bluebell flowers hang downwards out of soft, floppy leaves that grow from three to seven inches in length. This pale blue flower has a tubular shape, making it attractive to long-tongued bees and moths.



### **Common Blue Violet, *Viola sororia sororia***

A spring staple, the Common Blue Violet is a delicate flower that hangs off a gently curved stem. Its lightly scalloped leaves form clumps just a bit shorter than its flowering stalks.

## **Boreal Chorus Frog, *Pseudacris triseriata***

Although you'd be lucky to catch a glimpse of these tiny amphibians, it won't be hard for you to hear them! Males have a distinctive "cree-ee-eeek" call that can be heard throughout spring. They grow to about a half inch long and call during the day and night.

## **American Toad, *Bufo americanus***

Like the chorus frog, you might have an easier time hearing these amphibians than seeing them. They have a long, trilling call that can be heard in the evening throughout spring. Look for these hardy hoppers in both swampy and dry areas.



## **Muskrat, *Ondatra zibethicus***

Muskrats are semi-aquatic rodents that can weigh up to four pounds. These strong swimmers can go up to fifteen minutes underwater and like to live in small dens with their families. Although muskrats can be very shy, we frequently see them pop their heads above the water to take a breath.



## **Tree Swallow, *Tachycineta bicolor***

These iridescent birds are quite striking if you can get a close enough look. They have shiny blue feathers on their wings and a snowy white chest. Look for them sitting atop bird houses and in the air as they dive and swoop after flying insects.

## **Great Egret, *Ardea alba***

Egrets frequent Churchill's ponds and can usually be found along the edges, quietly stalking fish. With a bright orange beak, snow-white feathers, and a wingspan of 67 inches, this is one bird you can't miss. If that's not enough, they develop neon green feathers on their face and tail during the breeding season.



## **Eastern Bluebird, *Sialia sialis***

Male bluebirds can't be missed, but female bluebirds share similarly striking bright blue feathers on their tail and wings. These songbirds require a lot of space, so Churchill's open prairies and widely-spaced birdhouses provide habitat for them.