

2026 SMSU Ag Bowl FFA Fish & Wildlife Management
Current Issue – Individual Activity
2026 Topic: Invasive Species

Directions: This section contains 25 multiple-choice questions worth 2 points each (50 points total). Questions focus on current issues related to invasive species affecting Minnesota fish, wildlife, and habitats. Choose the best answer.

1. An invasive species is best defined as a species that:
 - A) Is rare or endangered
 - B) Is native but increasing in number
 - C) Is non-native and causes economic or environmental harm
 - D) Migrates seasonally through Minnesota
2. Why are invasive species a major concern for wildlife managers?
 - A) They increase biodiversity in ecosystems
 - B) They often outcompete native species
 - C) They reduce the need for habitat management
 - D) They are easier to manage than native species
3. Which invasive species has caused widespread damage to ash trees in Minnesota?
 - A) Asian longhorned beetle
 - B) Emerald ash borer
 - C) Gypsy moth
 - D) Japanese beetle
4. How are emerald ash borers most commonly spread to new areas?
 - A) Natural flight over long distances
 - B) Transport on birds
 - C) Movement of infested firewood
 - D) Wind dispersal
5. Which aquatic invasive species filters large amounts of plankton from lakes, reducing food for native fish?
 - A) Zebra mussel
 - B) Rusty crayfish
 - C) Spiny water flea
 - D) Eurasian watermilfoil
6. Zebra mussels attach to surfaces using structures called:
 - A) Suckers
 - B) Roots
 - C) Byssal threads
 - D) Spines

7. Which invasive plant forms dense mats that interfere with boating and fish habitat?

- A) Curly-leaf pondweed
- B) Cattail
- C) Wild rice
- D) Coontail

8. Why is Eurasian watermilfoil considered invasive in Minnesota lakes?

- A) It provides too much cover for fish
- B) It spreads rapidly and crowds out native plants
- C) It cannot survive Minnesota winters
- D) It improves water clarity

9. The spiny water flea primarily impacts aquatic ecosystems by:

- A) Feeding on fish eggs
- B) Preying on zooplankton
- C) Spreading disease
- D) Attaching to boat hulls

10. Which invasive species is known for aggressive behavior and displacement of native crayfish?

- A) Signal crayfish
- B) Rusty crayfish
- C) Virile crayfish
- D) Northern crayfish

11. One reason invasive carp species are a concern in Minnesota waters is because they:

- A) Increase water clarity
- B) Compete with native fish for food
- C) Improve spawning habitat
- D) Are popular sport fish

12. Which practice helps prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species between lakes?

- A) Moving fish between lakes
- B) Draining water from boats and livewells
- C) Releasing unused bait into the water
- D) Washing boats only at home

13. The phrase “Clean, Drain, Dispose” refers to:

- A) Waste management at fish hatcheries
- B) Proper handling of harvested fish
- C) Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species
- D) Shoreline restoration practices

14. Which invasive species threatens Minnesota prairies and grasslands by forming dense stands?

- A) Reed canary grass
- B) Big bluestem
- C) Switchgrass
- D) Little bluestem

15. Why is reed canary grass difficult to control?

- A) It grows only in dry soils
- B) It reproduces by seed and underground rhizomes
- C) It is sensitive to herbicides
- D) It does not spread once established

16. Which invasive species is known for jumping out of the water when startled by boats?

- A) Common carp
- B) Silver carp
- C) Grass carp
- D) Black carp

17. How do invasive species most often enter Minnesota?

- A) Natural migration
- B) Intentional release for hunting
- C) Human activity and transportation
- D) Changes in climate only

18. Which government agency is primarily responsible for managing invasive species in Minnesota?

- A) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- B) Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- C) Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- D) National Park Service

19. What is the role of early detection in invasive species management?

- A) It increases recreational use
- B) It allows rapid response before widespread establishment
- C) It eliminates the need for regulation
- D) It guarantees complete eradication

20. Which invasive insect threatens Minnesota forests by defoliating hardwood trees?

- A) Gypsy moth (spongy moth)
- B) Emerald ash borer
- C) Asian lady beetle
- D) Boxelder bug

21. Why should anglers never release aquarium fish or plants into natural waters?

- A) They may not survive
- B) They could introduce invasive species

- C) It is legal in Minnesota
- D) They improve fish diversity

22. Which of the following best describes biological control?

- A) Using chemicals to kill invasive species
- B) Physically removing invasive species
- C) Using natural predators or diseases to manage invasives
- D) Preventing species from entering the state

23. What impact can invasive species have on wildlife habitat?

- A) Improved nesting success
- B) Increased food availability
- C) Reduced habitat quality for native species
- D) No measurable impact

24. Which invasive species is regulated in Minnesota due to its impact on wetlands and shorelines?

- A) Purple loosestrife
- B) Blue flag iris
- C) Marsh marigold
- D) Pickerelweed

25. The most effective long-term strategy for managing invasive species is:

- A) Complete eradication in all cases
- B) Public education and prevention
- C) Ignoring small populations
- D) Reliance on chemical control alone

KEY

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. C
7. A
8. B
9. B
10. B
11. B
12. B
13. C
14. A
15. B
16. B
17. C

- 18. C
- 19. B
- 20. A
- 21. B
- 22. C
- 23. C
- 24. A
- 25. B

2026 SMSU Ag Bowl FFA Fish & Wildlife Management – Individual Exam

Directions: This exam contains 50 questions worth 5 points each (250 points total). Answer all questions. Questions reflect Minnesota species, wildlife biology, identification, habitat, feeding behavior, and state regulations. Choose the best answer.

MAMMALS (Questions 1–10)

1. This semi-aquatic mammal is known for creating lodges and dams that alter wetland habitat.
 - a. Muskrat
 - b. River Otter
 - c. Beaver
 - d. Mink
2. Which member of the weasel family is the largest in Minnesota?
 - a. Ermine
 - b. Mink
 - c. Fisher
 - d. River Otter
3. Which animal may legally be taken without a license if it is causing damage to property or livestock?
 - a. White-tailed deer
 - b. Raccoon
 - c. Bobcat
 - d. Moose
4. The primary diet of a snowshoe hare consists of:
 - a. Insects and larvae
 - b. Fish and amphibians
 - c. Grasses, twigs, and bark
 - d. Small mammals

5. Which mammal produces the greatest average number of offspring per year?
 - a. Beaver
 - b. Virginia Opossum
 - c. White-tailed Deer
 - d. Porcupine
6. Which adaptation allows bats to successfully hunt insects at night?
 - a. Keen eyesight
 - b. Long whiskers
 - c. Echolocation
 - d. Camouflage coloring
7. What best describes the habitat of an elk?
 - a. Dense conifer forest
 - b. Open prairie only
 - c. Mixed woodland and grassland
 - d. Wetland edges
8. Why are regulated trapping seasons used for furbearers?
 - a. To eliminate predators
 - b. To protect endangered species
 - c. To prevent overharvest and manage populations
 - d. To increase fur prices
9. Which mammal is classified as an omnivore?
 - a. Shrew
 - b. Pocket gopher
 - c. Virginia opossum
 - d. Elk
10. White-tailed deer populations in Minnesota are primarily managed through:
 - a. Predator reintroduction
 - b. Habitat removal
 - c. Regulated hunting seasons
 - d. Supplemental feeding

BIRDS (Questions 11–20)

11. Which bird is Minnesota's state bird?
 - a. Bald Eagle
 - b. Common Loon
 - c. Mallard Duck

d. Sandhill Crane

12. Which bird species relies heavily on humans providing nesting boxes or gourds?

- a. Barn Swallow
- b. Purple Martin
- c. Eastern Bluebird
- d. Tree Swallow

13. Which bird nests in tree cavities and lines its nest with fur, feathers, and moss?

- a. Black-capped Chickadee
- b. Common Loon
- c. Grackle
- d. Ring-necked Pheasant

14. What habitat best suits a great blue heron?

- a. Open prairie
- b. Dense upland forest
- c. Marshes and lake edges
- d. Rocky bluffs

15. Which bird can legally be harvested in Minnesota as a game bird?

- a. Ruffed Grouse
- b. American Robin
- c. Blue Jay
- d. Sandhill Crane

16. Which bird typically produces the most offspring in a single breeding season?

- a. Common Loon
- b. Turkey Vulture
- c. Great Blue Heron
- d. American Robin

17. Aggressive behavior from this bird may be deterred using non-injurious items such as brooms.

- a. Mourning Dove
- b. Wild Turkey
- c. Eastern Bluebird
- d. Bald Eagle

18. Which duck is an early migrant and has rusty-colored wing bars on the drake?

- a. Mallard
- b. Pintail
- c. Gadwall
- d. American Coot

19. This soaring bird can be identified in flight by a black belly and silvery wing feathers.

- a. Bald Eagle
- b. Turkey Vulture
- c. Crow
- d. Trumpeter Swan

20. Which bird is a fast flyer known for producing a whistling sound with its wings?

- a. Northern Cardinal
- b. Eastern Bluebird
- c. Mourning Dove
- d. Black-capped Chickadee

FISH (Questions 21–30)

21. This bottom-feeding fish eats mussels, snails, insects, and crayfish.

- a. Rainbow Trout
- b. Northern Pike
- c. Lake Sturgeon
- d. Fathead Minnow

22. Which action involving bait fish is legal in Minnesota?

- a. Dumping bait into the lake after fishing
- b. Selling harvested minnows
- c. Harvesting bait in a state park
- d. Keeping bait after exchanging lake water with bottled water

23. The open season for black and white crappie in Minnesota is:

- a. May 1 until ice-up
- b. Catch and release only
- c. Continuous
- d. Memorial Day to Labor Day

24. A fish is considered “immediately released” if it:

- a. Is returned to the water within one hour
- b. Is placed in a live well

- c. Is only handled to remove the hook and take a photo
- d. Both A and C

25. Cisco are typically found in:

- a. Shallow, warm lakes
- b. Large rivers
- c. Deep, cold lakes
- d. Shallow streams

26. Which fish has an underbite and a square tail?

- a. Channel Catfish
- b. Flathead Catfish
- c. Bullhead
- d. Fathead Minnow

27. What is the possession limit for catfish in Minnesota?

- a. 1 channel and 1 flathead
- b. 5 total, no more than 2 flathead
- c. 10 total, 12–24 inches
- d. Catch and release only

28. Males of which fish species build and guard nests?

- a. Rock Bass
- b. Green Sunfish
- c. White Crappie
- d. All of the above

29. What conditions are required for a stream to support trout?

- a. Warm, cloudy water
- b. High nutrient content
- c. Cool, consistent temperatures and clean water
- d. Temperatures above 80°F

30. Which species were added to state catch-and-release weight records?

- a. Channel Catfish and Freshwater Drum
- b. Brook Trout and Golden Shiner
- c. Darter and Sauger
- d. Common Carp and Cisco

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS (Questions 31–40)

31. The shell of a snapping turtle is best described as:

- a. Domed with yellow spots
- b. Smooth and leathery
- c. Brown with ridges

- d. Red and yellow patterned

32. Which animal gives off an onion-like smell when handled?

- a. Mink Frog
- b. Red-backed Salamander
- c. Common Garter Snake
- d. Eastern Hognose Snake

33. Which species depends on standing water for part of its life cycle?

- a. Prairie Skink
- b. Western Fox Snake
- c. Tiger Salamander
- d. Timber Rattlesnake

34. How do garter snakes typically hibernate?

- a. Buried in pond mud
- b. Alone under leaf litter
- c. Communally in rock crevices
- d. In tree cavities

35. Which amphibian's breeding season extends into June?

- a. Spring Peeper
- b. Boreal Chorus Frog
- c. Green Frog
- d. Northern Leopard Frog

36. Which amphibian breathes entirely through its skin?

- a. Mudpuppy
- b. Tiger Salamander
- c. Spring Peeper
- d. Red-backed Salamander

37. As of January 1, 2024, commercial harvest was banned for which two species?

- a. Northern Leopard Frog and Tiger Salamander
- b. Snapping Turtle and Painted Turtle
- c. Common Garter Snake and Bullsnake
- d. American Toad and Gray Tree Frog

38. Which turtle has the smallest range in Minnesota?

- a. Painted Turtle
- b. Northern Map Turtle
- c. Snapping Turtle
- d. Spiny Softshell Turtle

39. Which statement about bullfrogs is correct?

- a. They are native statewide

- b. Their tadpoles may be released anywhere
- c. They eat only insects
- d. None of the above

40. If you have a fishing license, you may legally sell frogs and toads for the pet trade.

- a. True
- b. False

INSECTS (Questions 41–50)

41. Which of the following insects is NOT native to Minnesota?

- a. Bumble Bee
- b. Emerald Ash Borer
- c. Lacewing
- d. Katydid

42. How many pairs of prolegs do sawfly larvae have?

- a. 1 pair
- b. 2 pairs
- c. 3–5 pairs
- d. 6 or more pairs

43. The sound produced by male katydids rubbing their wings together is called:

- a. Drumming
- b. Strumming
- c. Stridulation
- d. Vibrating

44. Which insect commonly overwinters in large numbers in homes?

- a. June Beetle
- b. Boxelder Bug
- c. Robber Fly
- d. Yellow Jacket

45. Large emergences of which insect provide an important food source for swallows?

- a. Aphids
- b. Lady Beetles
- c. Giant Water Bugs
- d. Mayflies

46. The life cycle of a Red Admiral butterfly is:

- a. Egg, larva, adult
- b. Egg, larva, chrysalis, adult
- c. Egg, nymph, adult
- d. Egg, adult

47. Which insects spend part of their life cycle underground?

- a. Cicada, Firefly, June Beetle
- b. Dragonfly, Diving Beetle, Cicada
- c. Grasshopper, Katydid, Lacewing
- d. Dobsonfly, Dragonfly, Mayfly

48. What habitat best suits the Cecropia moth?

- a. Rocky cliffs
- b. Peat bogs
- c. Fast-moving streams
- d. Mixed broadleaf forest

49. Nymphs of which insect may remain underground for up to 17 years?

- a. Dragonfly
- b. Cicada
- c. Katydid
- d. Ichneumon Wasp

50. Which insect produces a food product sometimes regulated by the USDA?

- a. Giant Water Bug
- b. Rove Beetle
- c. Honey Bee
- d. Deer Fly

KEY

MAMMALS

1. C – Beaver
2. D – River Otter
3. B – Raccoon
4. C – Grasses, twigs, and bark
5. B – Virginia Opossum
6. C – Echolocation
7. C – Mixed woodland and grassland
8. C – To prevent overharvest and manage populations
9. C – Virginia opossum
10. C – Regulated hunting seasons

BIRDS

11. B – Common Loon
12. B – Purple Martin
13. A – Black-capped Chickadee
14. C – Marshes and lake edges
15. A – Ruffed Grouse
16. D – American Robin
17. B – Wild Turkey
18. B – Pintail
19. B – Turkey Vulture

20. C – Mourning Dove

FISH

- 21. C – Lake Sturgeon
- 22. D – Keeping bait after exchanging lake water with bottled water
- 23. C – Continuous
- 24. D – Both A and C
- 25. C – Deep, cold lakes
- 26. B – Flathead Catfish
- 27. B – 5 total, no more than 2 flathead
- 28. D – All of the above
- 29. C – Cool, consistent temperatures and clean water
- 30. A – Channel Catfish and Freshwater Drum

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

- 31. C – Brown with ridges
- 32. B – Red-backed Salamander
- 33. C – Tiger Salamander
- 34. C – Communally in rock crevices
- 35. C – Green Frog
- 36. D – Red-backed Salamander
- 37. B – Snapping Turtle and Painted Turtle
- 38. B – Northern Map Turtle
- 39. D – None of the above
- 40. B – False

INSECTS

- 41. B – Emerald Ash Borer
- 42. C – 3–5 pairs
- 43. C – Stridulation
- 44. B – Boxelder Bug
- 45. D – Mayflies
- 46. B – Egg, larva, chrysalis, adult
- 47. A – Cicada, Firefly, June Beetle
- 48. D – Mixed broadleaf forest
- 49. B – Cicada
- 50. C – Honey Bee

Fish and Wildlife ID Key

Insects

- 1. Monarch butterfly
- 2. Long-Horned Beetle
- 3. Katydid
- 4. Cicada
- 5. Bumblebee

6. Bald Eagle
7. Cooper's Hawk
8. Whet-Owl
9. Purple Martin
10. Robin
11. American Widgeon
12. Lesser Scaup
13. Mallard
14. Ring-Necked Pheasant
15. American Kestrel
16. Beaver
17. Bobcat
18. Coyote
19. Ermine
20. Mink
21. Red Fox
22. Flying Squirrel
23. Pine Martin
24. Woodchuck
25. Muskrat
26. Bigmouth Buffalo
27. Green Sunfish
28. Coho Salmon
29. Freshwater Drum
30. Brook Trout
31. Pumpkinseed Sunfish
32. Burbot
33. Sauger
34. Whitefish
35. Black Crappie
36. Snapping Turtle
37. Painted Turtle
38. Eastern Ring-Baked Salamander
39. Tiger Salamander
40. Boreal Chorus Frog
41. Mink Frog
42. Spring Peeper
43. Milk Snake
44. Prairie Skink
45. 6-Lined Racerunner
46. Firefly
47. Stinkbug
48. Ground Beetle
49. Soldier Beetle
50. Predaceous Diving Beetle