

STUDY QUESTIONS

TO “THE GREATEST LAKE”

Study and learn facts and ideas based on this Young Naturalists nonfiction story in *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*, January-February 2026, www.mndnr.gov/mcvmagazine.

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine is your guide to wild things. Every other month, six times a year, the magazine arrives in your school library. Each one has a story for Young Naturalists like you. **Are you curious about wild things?** Young Naturalists tells true stories that can answer all kinds of questions such as these—

Have you ever heard of a purple wartyback? How about a pink heelsplitter, pimple-back, or monkeyface? All are Minnesota freshwater mussels. Read Young Naturalists stories to learn which species (kinds) of critters live in Minnesota—frogs, salamanders, snakes, wild cats, wild dogs, weasels, mice, and rabbits.

Want to **peek inside the den of a red fox** and see how the kits grow up? Are you a rock hound searching for agates? Have you ever wondered what’s alive under snow? How animals see? Why is a bluebird blue? How birds fly?

Would you like to hear the true story of **giants of the ice age**? Young Naturalists also tells you about the underground universe. You can read the story of a tiny owl that went to a hospital with an injured wing. Find out about a boy who worked in a logging camp. Read the story of Ojibwe children today hunting and gathering like their ancestors did.

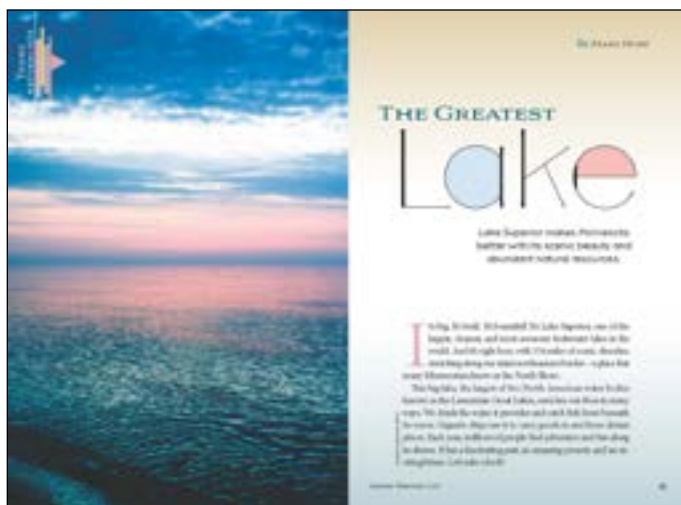
Learn how to get started **camping, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or canoeing**.

Find these stories and more online at www.mndnr.gov/young_naturalists.

Your knowledge of wild things helps you explore and enjoy the outdoors. Have fun!

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1. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS NOT TRUE ABOUT LAKE SUPERIOR?

- a. It is the saltiest of the Great Lakes
- b. It is the largest of the Great Lake by volume and surface area
- c. It is the coldest of the Great Lakes
- d. It is the deepest of the Great Lakes

2. WHY IS LAKE SUPERIOR SOMETIMES CALLED AN INLAND OCEAN?

- a. Because of the sea lamprey that live in its water
- b. Because of the melting glaciers that filled its basin with water
- c. Because in places along its shoreline, you can look out and see only water.
- d. Because it is connected to the Atlantic Ocean by the St. Lawrence Seaway

3. TRUE OR FALSE:

The shrimp-like creature called a scud is one of the nonnative species that has disrupted the Lake Superior ecosystem.

4. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS THE DARK GRAY VOLCANIC ROCK THAT MAKES UP MANY OF THE ROCK FORMATIONS ON THE NORTH SHORE?

- a. Agates
- b. Basalt
- c. Rhyolite
- d. Diabase

5. IF YOU WANTED TO SEE THE TAN- OR PINK-COLORED ROCK CALLED RHYOLITE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PLACES WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO VISIT?

- a. Lawrence Seaway
- b. Palisade Head
- c. Pebble beaches
- d. Tallgrass aspen parkland

6. TRUE OR FALSE? ABOUT 2 MILLION YEARS AGO, THE SURFACE OF THE WATER IN THE LAKE SUPERIOR BASIN WAS MUCH HIGHER THAN THE LAKE WE SEE TODAY.?

7. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WERE THE EARLIEST HUMANS TO USE LAKE SUPERIOR AS A TRAVEL CORRIDOR??

- a. Commercial anglers
- b. European explorers
- c. Indigenous peoples
- d. Fur traders

8. WHY HAS THE INTRODUCTION OF NONNATIVE FISH, SUCH AS SALMON AND TROUT, BEEN A PROBLEM FOR LAKE SUPERIOR?

These nonnative fish species compete with native fish for food, altering the balance of nature in the lake.

9. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAS DISRUPTED THE HEALTH OF LAKE SUPERIOR?

- a. Climate change
- b. Nonnative species
- c. Pollution
- d. All of the above

10. TRUE OR FALSE? MICROPLASTICS HAVE HELPED CONTROL THE NONNATIVE TROUT, IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF LAKE SUPERIOR

CHALLENGE QUESTION:

GO BACK THROUGH THE STORY TO FIND AND LIST EXAMPLES OF THE MANY WAYS IN WHICH LAKE SUPERIOR ENRICHES OUR LIVES – YEARS AGO AS WELL AS TODAY.

MINNESOTA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENTS PRACTICE ITEMS

1. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE CONSIDERED A MAIN IDEA FROM THE STORY?

- a. Lake Superior is home to dozens of species of fish that come in all shapes and sizes.
- b. Humans are interconnected with Lake Superior's past, present, and future.
- c. The North Shore of Lake Superior is a popular tourist destination.
- d. It is better for Lake Superior to have native species, rather than nonnative species.

2. USING STORY DETAILS, WHICH TWO SPECIES WOULD BE FOUND IN A SIMILAR PART OF LAKE SUPERIOR?

- a. Lake whitefish and scud
- b. Cisco and burbot
- c. Sea lamprey and diabase
- d. Phytoplankton and rhyolite

3. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DOES THE STORY LIST AS EXAMPLES OF THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON LAKE SUPERIOR?

- a. Bigger and more frequent storms
- b. Increased amounts of acid and mercury contaminants in the water
- c. Fewer tourists wanting to visit the North Shore
- d. Greater need for shipping regulations to control the spread of sea lamprey

VOCABULARY

Surface area - the total amount of space a lake covers on the Earth's surface (like a giant, flat map of the lake's top)

Volume - the total amount of water a lake holds

Freshwater – water that does not contain salt, like a river or sea

Vast – something that is large, huge, or wide

Bountiful – large in quantity, plentiful

Phytoplankton – tiny algae suspended in the water that capture the sun's energy and use it to live and grow