

RIVER SCHOLARS 2025/2026 WORKSHOP THEMES:

September 26, 2025: A Pirate's Life for Me

This hands-on, interactive workshop explores the intriguing world of pirates in Ontario's Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region. Students will learn about real pirates who sailed these waters, especially the infamous Bill Johnston and his attack on the Sir Robert Peel. Through creative activities like designing pirate flags, decoding secret messages, and singing pirate chants, students connect with Ontario's maritime history while discovering how pirates communicated at sea.

October 24, 2025: Geologist for a Day - Unearthing Earth's Secrets

To celebrate National Fossil Day (October 15), students will become junior geologists and paleontologists. They'll explore different types of rocks and fossils, learn about how the land around the St. Lawrence River formed, and examine the layers of Earth like true scientists.

November 21, 2025: Creatures of the Night - Nature After Dark

As nights grow longer, this workshop dives into the mysterious world of nocturnal animals. Students will learn about night vision, echolocation, and how various creatures like owls, bats, and raccoons adapt to life after dark.

January 23, 2026: Frozen or Furry - How Animals Beat the Cold

Why don't animals wear jackets? This workshop dives into the physical adaptations animals use to survive the chill of winter. Students will explore how animals stay warm through thick fur, blubber, and specialized body structures. We'll also compare how humans adapt to cold weather using tools like clothing, shelters, and heating. Migration, hibernation, and winter activity strategies are also explored to understand the full range of survival techniques in cold climates.

February 20, 2026: Species SOS - Going, Going, & Gone

SOS - Wildlife needs your help! In this interactive, mission-based workshop, students will meet a variety of threatened and endangered species, including the American Eel and Spotted Turtle. Through games, stories, and hands-on conservation challenges, they will learn about the pressures each species faces and the important ecological niches they fill in Ontario ecosystems.

April 10, 2026: Salty vs. Fresh - Water Worlds Explored

What's the difference between saltwater and freshwater ecosystems? Students will compare the Great Lakes and oceans in terms of animal life, buoyancy, and water chemistry. They'll dive into adaptations that make aquatic life successful in each environment.

May 8, 2026: Venomous vs. Nonvenomous - Snake Science

In this thrilling finale, students will learn how to distinguish between venomous and nonvenomous snakes using clues like pupil shape, head structure, and belly patterns. They'll learn about snake safety, venom's role in the ecosystem, and debunk myths about snakes.

