**Critter Quest PA**

**Objective**: To explore the types of organisms that live in Pennsylvania using an interactive online map.

**Procedure**:

1. Go to: [www.critterquest.psu.edu/viewer.htm](http://www.critterquest.psu.edu/viewer.htm)

2. On the right side, under “Base Map Layers,” check “PA Rivers” and “PA Lakes.” You will see them in blue on the PA map.

3. On the top right, select the name of your county from the pull-down menu and then click “Go.” A box will appear that has a list of all the critters that can be found in your county. You can move the box around if it is in front of your county on the map. (**Note**: This box will disappear when you click on the map. You can bring it back by clicking “Go” at the top right again.)

4. Scroll down the list in the box to see all of the critters in your county. Select a familiar organism and click on the checkbox in front of it. This will create a colored layer on the state map, showing the organism’s habitat. Uncheck it, and the layer will disappear.

**(Note**: By checking more than one organism, you can compare the habitats of several species. Each critter that you check will display on the map in a different color. Adding organisms with overlapping habitats will cause a blend of colors on the map. After several critters are added, the blending may be hard to see. Uncheck the organisms’ names to remove their color layers.)

5. Explore the habitats of organisms in the river otter’s food chain. Under “Mammals,” check the box for “Otter, river.” Observe where it can be found. Then under “Fish,” check the box for “Bluegill.” Are river otters found near the rivers on the map? Do the habitats for the river otter and the bluegill overlap? Under “Birds,” check the box for “Hawk, red-tailed.” Are the bluegill, the river otter, and the red-tailed hawk found in the same areas?

6. On the bottom right, click “Clear All Layers” to remove the colors from the map.

7. Go back to the box for your county and look for more familiar organisms. Explore where they live in Pennsylvania.

**Suggestions**:

* In the box of critters for your county, click on the underlined name of a critter to see a picture of it and find out more information about it.
* On the right side, under “Base Map Layers,” check “PA Land Use/Land Cover.” See if you can identify organisms that live in urban areas and organisms that live in forested areas.
* See how many different organisms you can identify that live near you!