



Conservationist for Kids

Supplement for Classroom Teachers
"Birds!" – April 2008

One of the priorities of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is to connect New Yorkers to nature. Research has demonstrated a spectrum of developmental, health, performance and social benefits of children's experiences with nature. *Conservationist for Kids* has been created as one aspect of DEC's *Leave No Child Inside* program. Our goal is to encourage children in New York State to go outdoors and explore natural areas, and to develop an interest in environmental stewardship.

Conservationist for Kids, and an accompanying teacher supplement, is distributed to public school fourth grade classes three times each school year (fall, winter, spring). These materials are also available at www.dec.ny.gov in both HTML and PDF formats. Teachers and students may e-mail questions and suggestions to us at cforkids@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Using *Conservationist for Kids* in the Classroom

Information and activities in *Conservationist for Kids* encourage readers to explore outdoors. You may wish to read together as a class activity or have your students read the magazine independently. The activities in the magazine may be completed by your students at school or at home. Additional activities and resources can be found in this Teacher Supplement and on DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov (Look for *Conservationist for Kids* under the Education heading.) If you receive more copies of *Conservationist for Kids* than you require for your students, please share the extras with your school library and curriculum resource specialists.

MST Curriculum Connections

The activities in this issue of *Conservationist for Kids* have been correlated to the New York State Math, Science and Technology Learning Standards for 4th grade, below. Connections to other learning standards may also be valid.

Feed the Birds:	MST4. <i>The Living Environment</i> 1-7 MST5. <i>Engineering Design</i> 1, 2
Keep a Life List:	MST1. <i>Scientific Enquiry</i> 1-3 MST4. <i>The Living Environment</i> 1-7

Supplemental Activities for the Classroom

Make Your Own Field Guide

Materials needed for each student: blank "bird profile" page (found at www.dec.ny.gov)

Shared materials: resource books, photos, etc.
coloring pencils/crayons

Instructions: Have each student in the class research a different species of bird and create a one-page profile of that bird. Assemble the pages from the class into a book. A sample page for students to complete is available at the "For Teachers" section of the *Conservationist for Kids* webpage, along with a list of birds commonly found in New York State. You may wish to make copies of your class "field guide" for each student.

Build a Bird Nest

Shared materials: photos of different bird nests, bird nest field guides
assorted nest-building materials:

twigs	moss	dryer lint & other fluff
dry grass	feathers	hair (human, dog)
mud	leaves	yarn, cut into pieces

Instructions: In small groups or individually, have students look at photos of bird nests to determine what they're made of and how they have been constructed. Take a walk outdoors and look for nests in your neighborhood. (Do not disturb nests.) Back in the classroom, provide a collection of nest-building materials and ask the students to build a nest they think a bird might use. (*Things they could consider:* What kind of bird are they building for? How big does the nest need to be? What building materials does their bird prefer?) Once the student-made nests are finished, compare and contrast them with those made by birds. Whose are sturdier? Finish the activity by taking your nesting materials outdoors and spreading them around for the birds to pick up and incorporate into their own nests.

Mission: Migration (Audubon NY internet game)

Materials needed for each student: internet access

Instructions: Log on to **ny.audubon.org** to play *Mission: Migration*, a web-based flash game that teaches about bird migration. *Mission: Migration* teaches children about the difficulties birds face during migration and how children can make their backyards healthier for birds.

Teacher Workshops

For teachers who have participated in a Project WILD or Flying WILD workshop, the following activities complement the current issue of *Conservationist for Kids*. For information about workshops to obtain these curriculum and activity guides, visit **www.dec.ny.gov/education/2035.html**

Project WILD Activities

Color Crazy

Learning to Look, Looking to See

Flying WILD Activities

Bird Behavior Scavenger Hunt

Who Was That Masked Bird?

More Great Stuff

Printable activity sheets and links to other resources can be found on our website, including instructions for building a bluebird nest box. Go to **www.dec.ny.gov** and look for *Conservationist for Kids* under the Education heading.

Recommended Resources (additional resources are listed in *Conservationist for Kids*):

Birdwatching for All Ages by Jorie Hunken (The Globe Pequot Press, Chester, CT, 1992)

Birdwise by Pamela M. Hickman for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (Kids Can Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1988)

A Field Guide to the Birds' Nests: United States east of the Mississippi River by Hal H. Harrison (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1975)

National Audubon Society North American Bird Feeder Handbook by Robert Burton (Dorling Kindersley, New York, 1995)

Flute's Journey by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt, Brace & Company, Orlando, Florida, 1997)

Hawk Hill by Suzie Gilbert (Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1996)

PDF versions of DEC bird-related posters available at **www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4791.html**