



Bird's Eye View

This activity is adapted from the Shorebird Sister Schools Arctic Nesting Curriculum.

Teacher

Description

Students use their imagination and artistic talent to explore shorebird migration from the bird's perspective.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Describe the bird's eye view during migration
2. List environmental features and factors that are important to migrating shorebirds
3. Use a map to help create the view from a bird's perspective

Time Required

Teacher Prep: None

Activity: One 30-minute class period

Subjects

Language Arts, Life Science, Geography, Art

Skills

Creative visualization, Interpreting and applying information, Writing, Drawing

National Science Standards

K-4: Life Science

Organisms and environment

5-8: Science In Personal and Social Perspectives

Populations, resources, and environment

Materials

Large newsprint

Large drawing paper (one sheet per student)

Maps

Pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons, or paints

Procedure

1. Ask students to remember what the world looked like below them when and if they've ever been in an airplane. Have they ever looked down on the tops of trees, clouds, a river, or the ocean shore? What was the purpose of their journey (did they have to go, or did they want to go?) Did they look forward with anticipation to the sight of the cabin, town, or even different type of climate and geography that they were traveling towards?
2. Western Sandpipers fly from Central America, up the Pacific coast, and end in western Alaska during migration. They pass through many different countries along the way. Ask students to imagine what the world looks like to a migrating shorebird in the spring or in the fall. How high does it fly? Brainstorm as a class about what sort of things on the earth below would be important to a shorebird. What kind of weather would it be experiencing? What would it see? (e.g., the shoreline; estuaries, river deltas, or other types of wetlands; receding ice or snow; other shorebirds flying with it or landing, feeding, or roosting below, perhaps in large flocks; tree tops; the height of the tide; storms; clouds; warm sunshine; people with binoculars; towns; cities; bare plowed field where last year there was a marsh).
3. Instruct students to draw or paint a picture of the world from the view of a migrating shorebird. Using a map of the local area or any place they choose, encourage them to accurately portray the habitat the bird might pass over and also use their imaginations so that their picture conveys the length of the journey, the altitude the bird is flying, and the feel of the air.
4. Have them use the newsprint to practice drawing aerial views of objects and the appropriate sizes, etc. When they are satisfied with their plans, they can draw a careful and complete picture on the drawing paper.