

# Flying WILD and School Outreach



Would you like to see schools near your Refuge teach about birds and bird conservation? Flying WILD can help you accomplish this by providing a gateway into the classroom for your staff or volunteers.

Joining the Flying WILD team is easy. And, the program provides the resources and support you need to develop Flying WILD in your area. In addition, Flying WILD's innovative service learning and bird festival components open up unique opportunities for your Refuge to be the hub of cooperative activities with local schools.

Flying WILD can help you to initiate the following:

- Flying WILD provides tools Refuge staff and volunteers can use to train teachers in how to incorporate bird education into the curriculum.
- Flying WILD can help to encourage more visits by school groups to your Refuge.
- Flying WILD provides hands-on activities and associated projects Refuge staff and volunteers can conduct with students.
- Flying WILD provides ideas for service projects Refuge staff and volunteers can conduct with students, including school bird festivals, citizen science projects, and habitat improvement on school grounds.

## **WHY IS FLYING WILD THE RIGHT EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES?**

People of all ages are fascinated with birds, and Flying WILD builds on this attraction to involve students in exciting learning activities about birds and their conservation. With its emphasis on birds, issues affecting bird populations, conservation strategies, and research, Flying WILD fits perfectly with the philosophy and management of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

## **WHO ADMINISTERS FLYING WILD?**

The Council for Environmental Education (CEE) created and manages Flying WILD. You may be familiar with one of Flying WILD's sister programs—Project WILD, also developed and managed by CEE.

## **HOW DO I GET STARTED?**

The first step in getting your program started is to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CEE. This MOU establishes you as a Flying WILD Refuge Partner and clearly spells out benefits and responsibilities. It also helps you set targets for a successful program.

The next step is to obtain Flying WILD certification training for Refuge staff. Training can be provided by CEE if the Refuge has funds to cover expenses, or you can attend training conducted by Flying WILD City Partners near you.

## **WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP ME LAUNCH MY FLYING WILD PROGRAM?**

The Flying WILD Educator's Guide and Flying WILD Leader Handbook you will receive during your training will be key resources for your program. The Flying WILD newsletter, electronic bulletin, and several listservs are also there to spark ideas and introduce you to your colleagues in the Flying WILD Network. BEN, the Bird Education Network [www.birdeducation.org](http://www.birdeducation.org) is also a great source for information on birds, bird conservation, and educational resources.

## **WHY ARE TEACHERS SO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT FLYING WILD?**

Teachers are attracted to Flying WILD because the program uses a science-based activity approach that involves students in enjoyable learning activities and is correlated to National, and in many cases, State Education Standards. All of these factors make it easier for teachers to include the program in their teaching schedule and to accomplish their required learning outcomes. Teachers also like the fact that they receive a 360 page Flying WILD Educator's Guide that includes over 40 tested activities and a wealth of resources that make implementation easy.

## **HOW DO I MAKE SURE THAT TEACHERS KNOW ABOUT OUR FLYING WILD OFFERINGS?**

After your initial training, you can generate support by introducing the program to the people who manage and supervise the formal education system in your area—school principals, science coordinators, and superintendents. Brief personal meetings with these “gatekeepers” will allow you to explain to them why their teachers should participate in Flying WILD and how their students will benefit. During the meetings you will want to emphasize the program's ability to help teachers achieve learning outcomes and meet required standards.

You will also want to reach out directly to teachers to ensure that they know about the program. The best way to accomplish this is to advertise and conduct a half-day Flying WILD training workshop for local teachers. During the workshop, teachers will enjoy participating in hands-on Flying WILD activities and you will have time to introduce your Refuge and the educational possibilities it represents.

You will need to compile lists of email address for teachers in your area to conduct direct promotion. Identify Education Service Centers in your area where you can advertise your Flying WILD program and upcoming workshops. You will also want to find out whether your workshop can be included in professional development days or used for continuing education credits.

As you begin to introduce Flying WILD to teachers, you may want to partner with a local school and use it as a Flying WILD flagship. In this way, many teachers in your area can see the educational innovations that are possible with Flying WILD. Perhaps you can hold your first Flying WILD Teacher Training Workshop at your adopted school. You could also visit your school to talk about bird conservation and the Refuge System, and then help the students and teachers there design a wildlife habitat area on school grounds with bird feeding stations or develop an outdoor classroom nearby. Birding clubs, Ducks Unlimited chapters, gardening clubs, and other groups can all be invited to lend a hand with Flying WILD school activities and events.

## **WILL FLYING WILD BE USEFUL AS SCHOOLS VISIT MY REFUGE?**

Your Refuge can become a powerful extension of Flying WILD learning opportunities. Once they are trained in Flying WILD, teachers can visit the Refuge and conduct Flying WILD activities with their students while they are there. Their visits provide a good opportunity to talk about birds and bird conservation programs on your Refuge.

## **BIRD FESTIVALS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF FLYING WILD. HOW CAN I USE THIS IMPORTANT TOOL?**

Hosting a Bird Festival on your Refuge, perhaps in connection with International Migratory Bird Day, is a great way to introduce teachers to Flying WILD and the potential your Refuge has for class visits. The Flying WILD Educator's Guide has many ideas and step by step suggestions for conducting a successful festival. Or, you may want to help teachers conduct a festival at their school. The format is very flexible and provides a great way to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and experience they will need to become active in conservation efforts in the future.

## **HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FLYING WILD? [www.flyingwild.org](http://www.flyingwild.org) or**

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