

Flying WILD on National Wildlife Refuges



Would you like to see your Refuge as the center of an innovative, award winning, easy to use education program—one that fits exactly with the philosophy and management of the National Wildlife Refuge System? Then Flying WILD is the program for you. Flying WILD introduces students to bird conservation through structured learning activities and environmental stewardship projects.

Flying WILD was created specifically to reach youth who traditionally receive few opportunities to participate in environmental education initiatives and have less firsthand experience with the natural world. The program combines three important characteristics that research has shown are necessary for creating an informed and active citizenry—environmental knowledge, early experience with and in the natural environment, and participation in designing and participating in conservation activities where participants see that they can make a difference.

WHY SHOULD WE IMPLEMENT FLYING WILD ON OUR REFUGE?

Flying WILD focuses on migratory birds in order to inspire young people to discover more about the natural world. Birds are a natural point of interest for most people and through this interest in birds, Flying WILD opens a door to learning about habitat conservation and management. And, where better to learn about birds and wildlife management than on a National Wildlife Refuge? Flying WILD provides activities and resources within a structure that can be adapted to meet educational objectives and to support management objectives on any Refuge.

Flying WILD is an effective tool that complements habitat management, land acquisition, enforcement, and research in order to achieve your refuge's conservation goals. With a Flying WILD program on your refuge, you can become a hub for bird education. Opportunities include:

- Provide Flying WILD workshops for educators at your Refuge.
- Provide the Flying WILD Educator's Guide to each educator who attends a Flying WILD workshop.
- Provide "train the trainer" Flying WILD workshops on your Refuge to train other educators who, in turn, can conduct Flying WILD workshops for educators.
- Teach visiting school groups about birds and conservation using Flying WILD activities.

WHO ADMINISTERS FLYING WILD?

Flying WILD is brought to you by the Council for Environmental Education, the same organization that originated and manages Project WILD. Flying WILD builds on the success and lessons learned from Project WILD to create a fantastic science-based, interdisciplinary and cross curricular education program focused on birds and their conservation. It is correlated to the National Science Standards and, in many states, to the state standards in science and other disciplines. The program is targeted at middle school students, but can be adapted for use with higher and lower grades. The program is also quite easy to use with youth in nonformal settings—scouts and 4-H, for instance.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

In order to use Flying WILD most effectively on your Refuge, you will need to attend a full day Flying WILD Workshop. After attending the workshop, you will be able to train other educators in the use of the program's activities and resources and introduce them to the unique learning opportunities that your Refuge offers. With this approach, you will quickly see educators in your area coalesce into a network of enthusiastic and knowledgeable "consumers" who will bring students and other youth to your refuge and lead them in Flying WILD activities while there. By working with educators rather than the students directly, you will have more time available to coordinate the program and insure proper implementation on your Refuge.

If you can organize approximately twelve or more participants to attend a workshop for USFWS employees and other educators in your service area, and have a budget of approximately \$3,000 to cover training expenses, CEE's experienced trainers will come to your Refuge to conduct your certification training. Or, you can attend training conducted by Flying WILD Partners around the United States at little or no cost (maximum \$15.00 workshop fee). Check the Flying WILD website www.flyingwild.org to see if there is a Flying WILD Partner near you.

WHAT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT WILL I RECEIVE?

Educators attending Flying WILD workshops receive "An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds." This Guide includes learning activities, resources, and guidance on how to conduct classroom activities, bird festivals and other service learning projects. Refuge Partners also receive the Flying WILD Leader Handbook that contains a wealth of information on administering and organizing Flying WILD offerings. In addition, when you become a Flying WILD Partner, you become part of the Flying WILD Network and are able to share resources and collaborate with other educators in the network through an annual meeting, listservs, bulletins, and newsletters.

WHAT OTHER RESOURCES WILL HELP IN MY BIRD EDUCATION EFFORTS?

Be sure to check out BEN—the Bird Education Network. It provides a variety of new tools and strategies that you can employ to be more effective with your bird education efforts. The network will allow you to exchange information on materials, resources, and programs for bird related education effectively and efficiently with other bird educators. It will help ensure that recommendations by fellow professionals in the field are substituted for blind searches on the Internet. And, it will help prevent waste of energy and funds on new development when existing materials and programs can fill a particular need. Both the BEN and Flying WILD networks serve as a link between management and education as bird educators document their successes in the use of education as a powerful tool in conservation efforts. Join BEN free of charge at www.birdeducation.org.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FLYING WILD?

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