

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Waubay National Wildlife Refuge. As part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, our mission is to preserve wildlife and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations. Activities on a refuge must be compatible with this mission. Environmental education is a wildlife dependent activity that is supported by and instrumental in helping us achieve our mission. If people don't understand or know about our natural resources, they cannot or will not care about whether or not they are preserved and protected.

Migratory Bird Discovery Packs were developed in an effort to expand environmental education efforts on the Refuge. Oftentimes, teachers may wish to bring students to the Refuge, but a scheduling conflict will not allow any staff to direct activities. These Backpacks will allow teachers to teach about migratory birds without needing the assistance of staff.

Many people are not aware of migratory birds, their impacts on our lives, their roles in the environment or the perils they face. These Backpacks are designed to answer some of these questions. There are a total of 14 activities in the Teacher's guide: 3 pre-visit, 5 on-site and 6 post-visit. One or all of these activities can be used to help spark an interest in migratory birds. Most of these activities are geared towards 3rd-6th grade levels but teachers are invited to alter them to match their needs.

Teachers that are interested can reserve the Backpacks by calling the Refuge. When you arrive at the Refuge, pick up the Backpacks at the office/visitor's center. Most of the activities will be completed at the picnic area and around the Headquarters building. One activity will have to be conducted near the Tower site since you will need more space. When you are done, please use the checklists to make sure all items are returned. If something is broken or damaged please notify someone before leaving the Refuge. We would also appreciate it if you would fill out an Evaluation form. We won't know if the items are useful unless you tell us. Also, if you have other ideas for educational courses, please let us know. Maybe we can develop them together.

The best time to use the Backpacks would be either May, June or September.

Migratory birds will just be arriving in May, with breeding birds remaining until August. Passerines (song birds) will pass through again in September, although some migrants may come through as early as August or as late as October. Resident birds are here all year and it may be interesting to bring students throughout the year to compare bird lists collected during different seasons. Every year around Christmas, we conduct a Christmas Bird Count - a national survey spearheaded by the National Audubon Society. Students (and teachers) who would like to learn more about the birds present in winter are welcome to join us. A call to the Refuge will let you know when it is scheduled.

The Migratory Bird Discovery Packs were developed with funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with backpacks donated by the National Audubon Society. Special thanks go to Rebecca Goche and the Green Point Environmental Learning Center at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge for sharing ideas and activities from their Bird Migration Trekking Packs. Other materials used are listed in the resources section of this guide.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

PRE-VISIT

1. Watch a video: "Never a Silent Spring" : 10 or 20 minutes
2. Schoolyard Search: 30 minutes to 1 hour or classroom period
3. Matchmaker Game: 15 minutes for game, longer for extensions

ON-SITE

1. How to Use Binoculars: 10 minutes
2. Find That Bird - learning to use a field guide: 20 minutes
3. Becoming a Birder - birdwatching: 60 minutes
4. What Would Life Be Like Without Birds? - writing activity: 30 minutes
5. Shattering Habitats - interactive game for the whole group: 30 minutes

POST-VISIT

1. Origami Bird
2. Wild Bird Feeder
3. Adopt-a-Bird
4. Shorebird Sister Schools Program or Journey North - interactive web sites
5. Pennies for the Planet
6. Schoolyard Habitat Survey