

Sandy The Sandpiper (Rainy Day)

5 student leaders; 1 adult narrator

Rainy Day Activity (20 min), followed by Brine Shrimp Observation (10 min)

Key Concepts:

Objectives:

1. Define Shorebirds
2. Understand Shorebird migration
3. Understand that Shorebirds face many hazards, and they need places like refuges in order to rest and feed.

Grades: K-6

Materials:

1. 5 role cards for students
2. Script
3. Picture of Western Sandpiper with Fun facts on the back
4. Refuge sign

Method:

Do: Have all the students sit on the floor or at the tables, leaving room for the stage and actors. **Narrator reads the following:**

Ask:

? **Did anyone see any birds today?** Could you describe or name some of the birds that you saw? (*Ducks, geese, terns, swallows, hawks, egrets and shorebirds such as sandpipers are possibilities*)

Read: "Some of the birds at the refuge are shorebirds. Shorebirds are small birds that live by the water. They feed, rest and often raise their young near salt marshes, mudflats, salt ponds and beaches near the coast."

Ask:

? **Did anyone see any shorebirds today?** (*Allow students to answer, and then read the following*)

Read: "Shorebirds are usually speckled brown, white or grey. They blend well in the sand or muddy habitats where they live. Usually they have long legs for walking in shallow water or on mud and a long beak for feeding on small creatures in the water or mud."

Ask:

? **Does anyone know what migration means? What is a bird doing when it migrates?** (*Allow students to answer, and then read the following*)

Read: “When the seasons change, a bird migrates a very long distance in order to find the habitat it needs to survive. Today we are going to listen to a story about the migration of a Western Sandpiper, a bird that you may have actually seen on the refuge at the Salt Ponds. Here’s a picture of a Western Sandpiper.”

Do: Hold up a picture of a Western Sandpiper.

Read: “The Western Sandpiper is a very interesting bird. Did you know... (read the fun facts on the back of the Western Sandpiper picture). Now, I have a few more questions for you.”

Do: Hand out a role card to each student who answers these questions. Ask these students to stand in front of the group with their role cards.

Ask (take a few guesses, students may need some prompting):

1. **Where do western sandpipers spend their summers? (*Alaska*)**
2. **Where do shorebirds fly to in the winter? (*Here! Along the west coast, San Francisco Bay*)**
3. **What do shorebirds use to navigate their migration? (*The shoreline of the ocean*)**
4. **What do shorebirds eat? (*Small insects and tiny little clams*)**
5. **Why do shorebirds need a place like a refuge? (*They need a safe place to eat, drink, and rest*)**

Read: “All of you will help with this story. When I say these words in the story, the person with the card will hold up their sign. We ALL will say these words together:

If I say the word, **TRAINING**, Student 1 is the trainer. They will hold up their sign and we say, “*drop and give me twenty.*”

If I say the word, **HUNGRY**, Student 2 is the growling stomach. They hold up their sign and we say, “*Grgle Grgle Grgle.*”

If I say the word, **REST**, Student 3 is the tired bird. They hold up their sign and we say “*yawn and sigh-ahhhhh.*”

If I say the word, **FLY**, Student 4 is the Flight Instructor. They hold up their sign and we say, “*Fly Sandy Fly, Fly Sandy Fly!*”

If you hear the word, **REFUGE**, Student 5 is the refuge sign holder. They hold up their sign and we all *cheer.*”

Do: Make sure everyone understands their roles. Practice each word and response. The narrator will read the story, allowing enough time for the students to say their lines and laugh when appropriate. Read the story with much emotion so the students stay involved in the story.

Read: “We are now ready for the story.

Narrator: It was a bitter cold day in Alaska when Sandy, a young Western Sandpiper, decided that it was time join the rest of her/his family in their great migration south. This voyage will be very long and very tiresome. Sandy had been too young and too weak to leave with the other sandpipers in July; so, she/he spent most of her time **TRAINING** (pause for students response)...

Student 1: “*Drop and give me twenty*”

Narrator: ...exercising her/his wings and eating insects to build up enough strength for the long flight ahead. Now that it was beginning to get cold, Sandy knew that it was time to fly south. So, she/he joined a large flock of other Sandpipers, and they left with the first dawn. Even though she/he was with other sandpipers, Sandy was a little scared. She/he was unaware of what was ahead and she thought, “What if I am **HUNGRY** and unable to find food? (pause for students)”

Student 2: *GRGLE GRGLE GRGLE*

“What if I get tired and am unable to find a place to **REST**? (pause for students)”

Student 3: *Yawns and sighs, ahhhhhh.*

“What if I lose sight of the flock and I am left all alone? (use a sad voice)”

Narrator continues: But Sandy knew she/he had to try because if she/he did not, then she/he would freeze in the winter. So, she/he gathered up all the strength, courage and energy that she/he had, and she/he began to **FLY** with all of the other Western Sandpipers.

Student 4: “*Fly sandy fly, fly Sandy fly*”

Flapping her/his long wings, Sandy flew at an amazing speed of 50 miles per hour! However, after 250 miles of travel, she/he needed a place to **REST**, and she/he was very **HUNGRY**. The other Western Sandpipers flying with her were tired too. So the flock landed on what looked like a mudflat filled with food. But when Sandy landed she/he realized that she/he could not move, and that her tiny webbed feet were stuck in a gunky mess. “Help, help,” she/he cried, but none of the other Sandpipers came to her/his rescue because they were stuck, too. And Sandy began to cry (*use sad voice*) because she/he was so **HUNGRY**, and this was no mudflat. This place was polluted! There was no food to be seen in the black, sticky, slippery gunk. Sandy continued to cry because she/he was so tired and needed a place to **REST**.

Narrator continues: But she/he feared that if she/he lay down she/he would never be able to get up. Sandy was so scared for all of her/his sandpiper friends, too. And she/he thought:

“What am I going to do? I can’t move in this icky sticky mess, but I can’t give up either!”

Sandy thought of all the **TRAINING** and hard work that she/he had done for this flight and she/he realized that all of her/his strength was in her/his wings. So, she/he flapped and she/he flapped her/his tired wings, harder and harder, until she/he felt her/his tiny webbed feet free themselves from the gunky ground. She/he was off again into the sky on her/his great migration south.

Now the flock was becoming weaker and weaker. They had all been afraid to stop and land on another mudflat for fear that they would find more pollution and not have enough energy to flap their way out. So they continued to **FLY**, until they could not flap their wings anymore. It was time to land.

Sandy descended from the sky and hesitantly placed her/his feet on what she/he hoped to be a mudflat, and, luckily, it was. Sandy shouted with joy, telling the other sandpipers to join her/him. Immediately, Sandy stuck her/his long slender beak into the moist salty ground that was full of small insects and nutrients. And she/he ate and ate, until she/he could eat no more. And she/he slept and slept, until she/he could sleep no more. When she/he woke up, she/he realized how wonderful this place was. She/he was no longer **HUNGRY**; and she/he had a place to **REST**. Sandy felt protected and safe here. She/he began to explore the wetlands and she/he found that every area she/he explored was free from pollution and construction. Sandy came upon a large sign that said:

“*Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife REFUGE!*” (Pause for student 5 to hold up sign and everybody should cheer)

Narrator: **REFUGE**, she/he said again pondering the word as if she/he had heard it before.

Narrator: And then she/he remembered, before she/he left on her great migration south, her/his parents had told her/his to look for these special areas when she/he needed a place to **REST** or when she/he was tired and **HUNGRY**. **REFUGES** were pieces of land that humans protect from pollution, construction and other activities that are harmful to wildlife. Here, on refuges, wildlife, like Sandy the Sandpiper, can find food, water, shelter, and space. Sandy thought about how lucky she/he was to have found this place. She hoped to find other **REFUGES** on her great migration south. Sandy was very happy as she began to **FLY** away.

ALL: “*Fly Sandy fly, fly Sandy fly!*”

THE END”

Ask:

? **Where did Sandy fly in her/his great migration?** (*To the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge on her/his way to Mexico, or further into South America*)

? **What hazards did Sandy encounter on her/his trip?** (*oil, polluted mud*)

? **What other hazards might Sandy encounter on her/his trip?** (*air pollution, lack of available feeding grounds, introduced species/competition, water pollution, etc...*)

? **What would happen if there were no refuges available for sandpipers and other migratory birds?** (*They would have fewer safe places to eat and rest, they may get sick from having to stay in polluted areas, etc...*)

? **What can you do in order to protect the habitats that sandpipers and other migratory birds need to survive?** (*Reduce, reuse, and recycle; not dumping anything down storm drains; participating in coastal clean ups...*)

Read: “Some of the birds that we saw today were also migrating south with the sandpipers. Would any of you like to know where they are migrating to? There are many new ways to track migrating birds. Students are helping scientists by tracking their own observations of birds and posting their observations on the internet. In this way, scientists can find out where the birds are going and what the birds are doing. We call these kinds of projects “Citizen Science.” It’s a great way to learn more about birds and help out the scientists.”

Do

Put story and role cards away. Continue with Brine Shrimp Observation.