

Avian Adaptations Lesson Plan

Grades: 5 - 8

Length of Program: 1 - 1- ½ hours

Time of Year: Year round

Preferred Adult/ Student Ratio: 1/10

Summary:

When an owl eats its prey whole, where does it go? How does a hawk track rodents through tall grass? Learn the answer to these questions and more when your class examines the different ways birds deal with everyday life, whether through adaptation or behavior. This program is available at Horicon Marsh or in your own classroom.

Teacher Preparation:

None

Academic Standards Addressed:

Science

F.8.2 Show how organisms have adapted structures to match their functions

F.8.7 Understand that an organism's behavior evolves through adaptation to its environment

Environmental Education

B1.8.8 Explain interactions among organisms or populations of organisms

Special Instructions:

None

Materials:

- Bird Taxidermy
- Bird feathers, wings, feet, etc.
- Owl Pellets
- Slide Show

Procedure:

Review the concept of adaptation. Show the class slides of various waterfowl and songbirds. Discuss the adaptations different birds have and how they help the species to survive and prosper among other birds. Have them look at the hawk and owl taxidermy. Go over the adaptations that are specific to hawks and owls. Pass around the bird feathers, wings, feet, etc. so they can get a close-up view of these adaptations. Discuss owl pellets. Break apart an owl pellet, handing the pieces to people throughout the group. Have them dissect those pieces sharing the bones they find with those seated around them.

Wrap-up:

Discuss with the students what happens when bird adaptations are no longer enough to help them survive in a changing environment. Ask them what they can do to help preserve bird species.