Audubon adventures

Activity 2

For the Birds

Teacher-led Classroom Activity
Science/Research Skills/Writing/Art

Why is this particular place a good place for birds?

Objective
Students research birds' needs and habitats and use this knowledge to create fact-based "travel posters" for birds.

Students will need:
• Reference materials (field guides to North American birds, online access)
• Art materials: paper, pens, pencils, markers, paints

Suggested Time:
Three or more class periods to research Important Bird Areas, habitat, and birds and to create travel materials

What to do:
1. Talk with students about what birds need in their habitats (such as food, shelter, water, nesting sites). Ask if anyone in the class has visited bird sanctuary or other place where birds and wildlife are protected. Ask for volunteers to describe what they saw. Introduce the concept of Important Bird Areas (IBAs), which are defined as "sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of bird," including sites used by breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds.
2. Have students work in pairs or small groups to research IBAs in your state or region. See the interactive map for IBAs in the U.S. on Audubon's website (**http://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas**). (All but a very small number of states have IBAs, but if your state does not, students can research parks and other refuges.)
3. Ask students to imagine that they are advertising one of these sites to northbound migrating birds in springtime as a great place to stop over or nest. What would they boast about that would appeal to these tired, hungry migrants who are looking for a safe place to raise their young? (Consider sharing travel advertisements from magazines with students so they can see how destinations market themselves to human travelers.)
4. Have students use their information and their imagination to create travel posters, ads, or brochures for Important Bird Areas or other bird sanctuaries. Encourage them to use humor and creativity in their efforts.
5. If an IBA or refuge is close by, consider taking a field trip to it.