

Avian Adaptations Lesson Plan

Grades: K-4

Length of Program: 1 hour

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:

Review the concept of adaptation

Academic Standards Addressed:

Science

F.4.1 Discover how each organism meets its basic needs

Environmental Education

B1.4.6 Cite examples of how different organisms adapt to their habitat

Special Instructions:

None

Materials:

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

Procedure:

Ask the students what adaptation means. Ask them for examples of human adaptations. Explain that today, you are going to look at the adaptations found on birds. Show them slides of various waterfowl and songbirds. Help them discover adaptations the different groups of birds have and how they help that animal. Then 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.