
Team Flight: Think about it...

Summary: This activity is designed to stimulate thought about what students have learned regarding migratory birds over the course of the module, and provides a medium to link self with society. In the process of encouraging problem-solving and creative writing, the teacher may also use the resulting story to probe the students' understanding and content knowledge regarding birds and their habitats.

Objective: Students will write a creative essay documenting a wood thrush's individual migration, including important points such as habitat and issues. The essay will encourage creative thinking about the issues facing migratory birds and draw on the students' knowledge.

Grades: Middle School

Subject: Language

Skills: writing, communication, public speaking

Materials: pencil, paper

Activity

Students:

You have pondered the magic and mystery of migration, the habits and habitats of migratory birds. Despite the incredible feats and long-distance strength of these animals, however, many species are declining at an alarming rate. Some of the reasons are known, while others are not.

The Situation

You are an ornithologist studying the issues facing migratory birds. Thanks to a large grant and advancing technology, you can now implant a tiny videocamera onto a wood thrush in order to witness firsthand the amazing journey. You have been watching the film via satellite, and have been transcribing the results. The Discovery Channel wishes to make a film from it in order to raise awareness of the plight of these birds. You've decided to write a story from the thrush's viewpoint to best illustrate the great migration. Based on your journey this year with Team Flight, write this story of a wood thrush's migration, including as much detail of it's habits, habitats, navigation, and perils as



possible. All aspects should be based on facts you have learned, although some may require educated guesses, such as how it navigated from Pittsburgh to Costa Rica. Issues and conflicts facing the thrush will be particularly exciting, catch the audience's attention, and help them realize what needs to be done to protect them, so be sure to include these in your story as well. The Discovery Channel awaits your story.

(Optional) Public Forum:

The teacher may wish to have all students read their essays, and then allow students to ask questions about their suggestions. Or the teacher may wish to choose 3 stories that are very different, and have the students read them to the class for discussion and comparison.

Teacher's Notes

Some of the major Factors that affect migratory birds include:

- Habitat loss in breeding and/or wintering grounds
- Pesticide use
- Nighttime lights from large buildings, towers, airports, etc.
- Powerlines
- Extended bad weather
- Airplanes
- Roaming cats
- Exotic birds (house sparrows)

