

Team Flight: Migration Mapping

- Summary:** During the fall exploration visit, students observed habitats and made inferences about the types of birds and other wildlife that could meet their basic needs from them, and thus inhabit them. Students also began to realize that the changing seasons also strongly impact the habitat, forcing some species to meet their needs elsewhere. For birds, this is accomplished through migration. Students will follow the progress of the spring migration using the internet to track their species' locations.
- Objective:** Students will track the spring migration via the internet, map the process, and research their team's focus species.
- Grades:** Middle School
- Subject:** biology, geography, sociology, language
- Skills:** writing, communication, public speaking
- Materials:** large color map of Western hemisphere, push pins of different colors, art supplies, Migration Tracking Field Journal, access to internet
- Time:** March-May
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Activity

1. This activity will be implemented through groups and specific roles within each group. Divide the class into groups of five; each group will study one particular species' migration. Each student should have a copy of the Migration Tracking Field Journal, which also details the process.

Focus Species
(One per Group):

Wood thrush
Ruby-throated
hummingbird
Tree swallow
Catbird
Baltimore oriole



2. The group can then choose who will serve in each of the following roles.

Group Roles

1. Gatherer—creates the identification tags for the pushpins of their focus species (photos, drawings, other methods, their choice), gathers supplies needed throughout the project, gathers information on the species.
2. Meteorologist—tracks the weather conditions along the migration route
3. Spokesperson—communicates to class the status of their focus species.
4. Tracker—records the migration data as retrieved from the web and other sources.
5. Mapper—maps the locations of the focus species based on the tracker's data.

3. Using the large, color map of the western hemisphere and the field guides, each group will track the migration of their focus species. Data will be collected from the internet via the resource links on the Team Flight page, scientist e-mails, and sightings. All links and contacts are on the Wings website, under Team Flight, at <http://trfn.clpgh.org/wings>.
4. Weekly the students should gather their data and post the information on the map and in their field guides. After posting, the spokesperson from each group will show the other groups where their species is at, the weather conditions during its travel, and any special issues. Also, the student may mention something about the nearest town, such as population, characteristics, claims to fame, etc. During the tracking process, the Gatherer should research information on the team's species and prepare a report on its natural history.
5. As the species nears the breeding grounds in the school's area, each group should begin to contact the staff at the wildlife habitat they have been studying, to alert them that they are approaching, and ask for updates when they are seen on site. Once the species reaches the partner's location, the activity will end. The class may wish to conduct the Spring Field Visit to compare the birds seen in fall, the habitats, and search for returning migrants. May is a peak time to see these birds in the mid-Atlantic region.



6. Topics for discussion and research throughout the tracking, either through e-mail with the migration experts, research, and/or inquiry include, but are not limited to:

Mechanics of long-term flight

Issues during migration such as bright lights, power lines, development, weather

Strategies during migration such as nocturnal flight and flocking