

TEACHER'S GUIDE



A Place for Birds

Written by Melissa Stewart • Illustrated by Higgins Bond

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Ages 6–10 • Nonfiction • Nature

ABOUT THE BOOK

Sometimes people do things that make it hard for other creatures to survive. *A Place for Birds* clearly yet gently explains some of the ways human action and inaction can affect bird populations.

This book focuses on eleven North American bird species and shows each one in its natural habitat. Simple text describing each bird's struggle to survive is perfect for young children reading on their own. Sidebars with additional information extend the usefulness of the book to older children and to young children reading with a teacher or parent. Sections at the beginning and end of the book include information about bird flight, the place of birds in the food chain, and simple things readers can do to help protect birds and preserve their habitats. The endpapers feature range maps for all the bird species discussed in the book.

A Place for Birds introduces readers to a wide range of environmental issues, and its concrete examples of cause and effect show children how the choices we make can have far-reaching consequences for birds and the many other creatures that share our world.

SKILLS REINFORCED

- Observation
- Description
- Compare and contrast
- Sorting and sequencing
- Cause and effect

THEMES

- Birds
- Habitats
- Lifecycles
- Animal adaptations
- Interdependence of living things
- Food chains
- Plant and animal diversity
- Human impact on the environment

TEACHING SUGGESTION

The two levels of text in this book make it ideal for Reading Buddy programs, which are now popular at many schools. For more information, please see:

<http://www.melissastewart.com/pdf/scirdbuddies.pdf>
CCSS ELA RIT #1 & 2, NGSS PE K-ESS3-3

MEETING THE STANDARDS

The activities in this guide directly address a variety of standards across the curriculum. Following each activity, you'll find an abbreviation for the standard(s) it supports. For a complete list of the Common Core Math and English Language Arts Standards and Next Generation Science Standards addressed, please see page 6.

BEFORE YOU READ

Grades K–2

- After looking at the cover of the book and reading the title, ask students what they think *A Place for Birds* will be about. Write their responses on chart paper. **CCSS ELA RIT #2**
- Provide a list of vocabulary words and discuss their meanings. **CCSS ELA RIT #4**
- Look at the range maps on the endpapers and work with students to identify birds that live in your area.

Grades 3–5

- Ask students to predict the main idea of *A Place for Birds*. Write their responses on chart paper. **CCSS ELA RIT #2**
- Have the students discuss the following questions in small groups. Before reading the book, compile the groups' answers on chart paper.
 1. What human actions positively affect bird survival? Explain how.
 2. What human actions negatively affect bird survival? Explain how.
 3. List some different habitats where you might find birds.
 4. Does the survival of birds affect the survival of plants and other animals? Explain why or why not.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words. Encourage students to buddy up and work together as they look up the words in a dictionary and write definitions. **CCSS ELA RIT #4**

AS YOU READ

Grades K–2

Ask students to think about the main idea of the book. **CCSS ELA RIT #2**

Grades 3–5

- Encourage students to think about the main idea of the book. Do they hear details that can support that main idea? They may want to make notes on a piece of paper. **CCSS ELA RIT #2**
- Students should also think about the ideas you recorded on chart paper. Are there things they would like to change or add? They may want to make notes on a piece of paper.

AFTER YOU READ

Grades K–2

- Ask students to identify the main idea of *A Place*

for Birds. Work with them to find details that support that idea. List them on chart paper.

CCSS ELA RIT #1 & 2

- Choose two birds in the book and ask students to compare them. Students should consider each bird's body size and coloring as well as its range, habitat, and food sources. Explain the usefulness of a Venn diagram (overlapping circles showing similarities and differences) and lead students in creating one. **NGSS PE K-LS1-1 & K-ESS3-1**

Grades 3–5

- Ask students to identify the main idea of *A Place for Birds* and recall details that support that idea. List them on the chart paper. **CCSS ELA RIT #1 & 2**
- As a class or in smaller groups, have students add new information or erase incorrect information your recorded earlier on chart paper.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

SCIENCE

Grades K–2

- Ask students to observe and draw birds in the schoolyard, around their neighborhood, or at a local park. The children should try to figure out what the birds eat and where they nest. Using a field guide, work with students to identify the birds in the pictures they bring to class. **NGSS PE K-LS1-1**
- Birds eat a variety of foods—insects, fruit, seeds, and frogs. As a class, do some research to find out what the birds in *A Place for Birds* eat. Then divide the class into small groups. Assign a different bird to each group and have students create a menu poster for their bird. Group members can work together to draw pictures of their birds or find photographs on the Web. Below these images, they can draw or glue cutouts of the foods they've selected for their bird to eat. **CCSS ELA Writing #7, NGSS PE K-LS1-1**
- Using information in *A Place for Birds*, invite students to work in pairs or small groups to create 11×17 inch posters that show how people in your community (including the students themselves) can help local birds live and grow. **NGSS PE K-ESS3-3**
- Young children can often see and evaluate the actions of others, but they may have trouble understanding the impact of their own behaviors. And yet, they need that awareness before they

can get involved in meaningful conservation.

To help students develop their thinking in this direction, encourage them to discuss how they might be harming the environment without even realizing it. They can use some examples from *A Place for Birds* as thought starters. Then encourage students to suggest ways they might change their behavior to help protect animals and preserve natural environments in your community. **NGSS PE K-ESS3-3**

- Invite students to pretend they are birds. Ask them to describe what it feels like to soar through the sky. Then ask what they wish people would do to help them live and grow. Consider recording a few children's responses with the video setting on a digital camera. These recordings can be replayed later on your interactive whiteboard. **CCSS ELA SL #2 & 3, NGSS PE K-LS1-1**

Grades 3–5

- Divide the class in half and have each team create a Book Fact Scavenger Hunt for the other team. Have students look through *A Place for Birds* and other books about birds. (See the Related Reading at the end of this guide for suggestions.)
Each team should choose a few interesting facts and turn them into questions. Here are some examples:
—In *A Place for Birds*, can you find a bird that flies at night?
—In *An Egg Is Quiet* by Dianna Hutts Aston (Chronicle, 2006), why do some eggs have a pointy end?
Type each team's questions, print them out, and cut them so each question is on a separate strip of paper. Place the questions in two bags or boxes, so the students can pick one question at a time and compete to see which team can answer the most questions. **CCSS ELA RIT # 9, Writing #7 & 8**
- Have each student research one of the birds discussed in the book and write a report. Each report should include the duration of each life stage, habitat and range, food sources of adult and young birds, the viability of the species, and any fun facts they discover. **CCSS ELA Writing #2, 4, 7 & 8**

All Grades

- To help students learn to identify the birds discussed in the book, have them play Bird Bingo.

Make the cards by photocopying the bird images on each page or go to

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/>. To win, older students should tell you a fact about each species in their "line." If you make two sets of cards, students can also play Concentration. Older students may enjoy the added challenge of matching nests and/or eggs with the proper adult bird.

MATH

Grades K–2

Find images of various birds drawn to scale, cut them out, and laminate them. Ask students to sort the birds by size. Then have the children re-sort the birds by color. You can do the same activity with images of bird eggs. **CCSS Math OA.A.1 & A.2**

Grades 3–5

Divide the class into teams of three or four and give each group a copy of Activity Sheet 1 at the end of this guide. Using a ruler and a map of North America with a key, have students determine the distances between the locations. Then ask the teams to calculate the total distance of the bird's migration and the average number of miles traveled each day. **CCSS Math MD B.4**

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grades K–2

- Have students create as many words as possible with the letters in *A Place for Birds*. Ask the children to sort the words by: number of letters in each word, vowel sounds, and word families, such as at, eat, ace, and ate (suggestions below). They can also alphabetize the words. **CCSS ELA FS #2**
First round: at, pat, fat, cat, cats, rat, rats, bat, bats
Second round: eat, seat, beat, bleat, bleats
Third round: ace, race, races, place
Fourth round: ate, fate, late, rate, date, plate
- Give students a copy of Activity Sheet 2 at the end of this guide and ask them to complete it. Answers: 1. D; 2. E; 3. A; 4. F; 5. B; 6. C. **CCSS ELA RIT #5**
- Work with students to create see-saw books about two different birds, such as piping plovers and bald eagles.

On the first left-hand page, they might write: "Piping plovers live on beaches." On the facing right-hand page, they could write: "Bald eagles live near lakes or rivers." The next page would

read: “Both kinds of birds live near water.”

Subsequent pages should continue to compare the two species—size, food, range, etc. Students can use webs to help them organize their thoughts. **CCSS ELA RIT Writing #2, NGSS PE K-LS1-1 & K-ESS3-1**

Grades 3–5

- Have students pretend they are birds. Ask them to describe how it feels to soar through the sky and what they see as they fly over their town or city.

Encourage the students to use examples from the book (spraying of pesticides, cutting down dead trees, oil spills etc.) to explain the challenges of surviving. In a concluding paragraph, students should suggest ways humans can help birds and improve their habitats. **CCSS ELA Writing #3, NGSS PE3-LS4-4 & 5-ESS3-1**

- Read and discuss the following poem with your students. Then ask them to observe a bird and write a poem about it. **CCSS ELA RL #4, NGSS PE K-LS1-1**

A Bird

A bird came down the walk,
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angleworm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.
And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

—Emily Dickinson

- Create an *A Place for Birds* nonfiction text structure class book. Make eleven copies of the map and one copy of the cover sheet (at the end of this guide, between Activity Sheets 2 and 3). Then bind all twelve pages into a book.

Divide students into pairs or small groups. Using *A Place for Birds*, students can write down the name of each bird species as well as the human **cause** that's helping that bird and the specific **effect** on the animal. **CCSS ELA RIT #5, NGSS PE5-ESS3-1**

Note: Even though the endpapers contain twelve maps, the great blue heron does not have an accompanying cause and effect page. So, it's best not to include this bird in your students' books.

- As an alternative to the nonfiction text structure class book, you could have each student create an individual book. For each student in your class,

make eleven copies of the map and one copy of the cover sheet (at the end of this guide, between Activity Sheets 2 and 3). Then bind all twelve pages into a book.

Using *A Place for Birds*, students can write down the name of each bird species as well as the human **cause** that's helping that bird and the specific **effect** on the animal. **CCSS ELA RIT #5, NGSS PE5-ESS3-1**

Note: Even though the endpapers contain twelve maps, the great blue heron does not have an accompanying cause and effect page. So, it's best not to include this bird in your students' books.

- Activity Sheet 3 asks students to compare and contrast how humans interacted with birds in the past and present. Give students a copy of the worksheet and ask them to complete it. **CCSS ELA RIT #5**
- Have students write letters to author Melissa Stewart, telling her what they liked best about *A Place for Birds*. Send the letters to Author Fan Mail, Peachtree Publishers, 1700 Chattahoochee Ave., Atlanta, GA, 30318-2112. If you include an e-mail address, Melissa will send an e-mail to your class. If students send drawings, she will choose a few to post. **CCSS ELA Writing #1**
- Divide the class into teams of three or four for a game of Bird Boggle. Choose one bird species name and give students three minutes to think of as many words as possible from the letters in the name. One member of each team should record the answers while the others manipulate the letters.

As each group reads its words, other teams cross off any repeats. The team with the most original words wins. Repeat the game with other species names, so that each student has a chance to be the recorder. **CCSS ELA FS #3**

ART

Grades K–2

Have students create an image of one of the birds in *A Place for Birds* and its habitat, highlighting what the animal needs to live and grow. Make materials with a variety of textures available, including paints, magazines, and fabric. Some students might like to use plastic wrap for water or cotton balls for clouds. Encourage them to use their imaginations. **NGSS PE K-ESS3-1**

Grades 3–5

Have students look carefully at the background art on

each two-page spread of *A Place for Birds*. As a class, list all the questions the book's illustrator, Higgins Bond, had to ask herself about each spread before beginning her paintings.

Possible questions include: Where is the habitat? What plants grow there? What time of day is it? What time of year is it? What other animals should be shown? How many birds should be shown? What are the birds in the illustration doing?

Using their list of questions, have students research and create a mural that depicts a natural bird habitat in your community. **CCSS ELA RIT #7**

GEOGRAPHY Grades 3–5

Have students study the range maps shown on the endpapers of the book. Ask them to list all the birds that live in your area. Emphasize that the birds discussed in this book represent only a fraction of the 2,000 species that live in North America. Have the students do research to find out about additional species in your area.

ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

- Have students research organizations that support the protection of one of the bird habitats mentioned in this book. They should contact one organization and find out about its recent work. Students should write a report and deliver an oral presentation about what they have learned. **CCSS ELA Writing #6 & 8, NGSS PE, 5-ESS3-1**
- Have students make a list of some of the things people do to harm the birds discussed in this book. Then have them list ways people could change their behaviors to help birds.

Next, ask students to list some things they do every day that could harm the environment or the animals that share our world. (Possibilities include wasting electricity; wasting water; forgetting to recycle; littering; using straws, Styrofoam cups, and heavily packaged foods, such as drink boxes; and throwing out old clothes, games, toys, and bicycles instead of donating them to charities.) Can they think of ways to modify their behavior? **CCSS ELA RIT #5**
- Have students write a letter to a school or town official asking them to change a policy that will positively impact a habitat where birds live. **CCSS ELA Writing #1 & 4, NGSS PE 3-LS4-4**

- Divide students into teams of three or four and ask each group to pretend it is a news team. Each team should make a video of a mock news report about a local effort to protect birds or other creatures and/or open space. **CCSS ELA Writing #7 & 8, NGSS PE 5-ESS3-1**

RELATED READING

Alderfer, Jonathan. *National Geographic Kids Bird Guide of North America*. Washington, D.C. National Geographic Society, 2013.

Aston, Dianna Hutts. *An Egg is Quiet*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2006.

Henkes, Kevin. *Birds*. New York, NY: Greenwillow, 2009.

Stewart, Melissa. *Feathers: Not Just for Flying*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2014.

Stockdale, Susan. *Bring on the Birds*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree Publishers, 2011.

AWARDS

- Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year
- Chicago Public Library Best of the Best, Nature Connections
- Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices List
- Green Earth Book Award, Honor Book
- Kansas State Reading Circle Primary Reading List
- Pennsylvania Keystone to Reading Book Award Nominee
- NSTA / CBC Outstanding Science Trade Book, Selector's Choice
- Natural History Recommended Title for Budding Scientists
- Society of School Librarians International, Honor Book, Science

**THE ACTIVITIES IN THIS GUIDE
DIRECTLY ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING
STANDARDS:**

**COMMON CORE FOR ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS**

- Reading Informational Text #1 and 2: Identifying Key Ideas and Details
- Reading Informational Text #4: Craft and Structure
- Reading Informational Text #5: Identifying Text Features and Structures
- Reading Informational Text #7: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Reading Literature #4: Craft & Structure
- Writing #1, 2, and 3: Text Types and Purposes
- Writing #4 and 6: Production and Distribution of Writing
- Writing #8 and 9: Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Foundation Skills: Phonological Awareness #2
- Foundation Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition #3
- Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration #2 and 3

COMMON CORE FOR MATH STANDARDS

- Operations & Algebraic Thinking A.1, A.2
- Measurements & Data B.4

**NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS
PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS**

- K-LS1-1. Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.
- K-ESS3-1. Use a model to represent the relationship between the needs of different plants or animals (including humans) and the places they live.
- K-ESS3-3. Communicate solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water, air, and/or other living things in the local environment.
- 3-LS4-4. Make a claim about the merit of a solution to a problem caused when the environment changes and the types of plants and animals that live there may change.
- 5-ESS3-1. Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.

REVIEWS

“Beautiful illustrations and clear, concise text...a fascinating look at a variety of birds...”

—*The Science Teacher*,
STARRED REVIEW

“An accessible introduction to environmental issues. ...effective and engaging... Put this one in the hands of budding scientists, environmentalists, and nature lovers.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“With its emphasis on conservation, this is a useful addition to science collections.”

—*Booklist*

“...an attractive picture-book format... [T]his title will most likely find use in sparking classroom discussion.”

—*School Library Journal*

“...the book's tone is spot on: practical, informed, and optimistic.”

—*Natural History*

“...an excellent title for all library shelves, as it is fun and educational, with great illustrations and relevant, yet simple information.”

—**A Patchwork of Books blog**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than 150 books for children. She has a B.S. in biology from Union College in Schenectady, NY, and a M.A. in science journalism from New York University.

Melissa speaks frequently at conferences for educators and serves on the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators' board of advisors. Melissa has taught fiction and nonfiction writing classes for children and adults, and is available for school visits.

www.melissa-stewart.com



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Higgins Bond, who has illustrated books for children for more than twenty-five years, attended Phillips University in Oklahoma and received a BFA from the

Memphis College of Art. She has also created illustrations for magazines and posters, calendars, ads, brochures, figurines, dolls, and individual paintings for various companies. Her school visit presentation, "Yes, It Is Possible to Make a Living as an Artist," is perfect for aspiring artists of any age.

www.higginsbond.com

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR VISITS

We have authors and illustrators who visit schools and libraries.

For information regarding author appearances, please contact Christine Baum at 800-241-0113 or Christine@peachtree-online.com

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for
A PLACE FOR BIRDS
prepared by Melissa Stewart

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PEACHTREE
PUBLISHERS

A Place for Birds

Math: Activity Sheet 1

HERMIT THRUSH MIGRATION

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. Use a map and ruler to find out how far a migrating hermit thrush travels each week.
2. Calculate the distance of its entire northward journey.
3. Determine the average number of miles a hermit thrush travels each day.

Week 1: New Orleans, Louisiana to
Jackson, Mississippi

Miles: _____

Week 2: Jackson, Mississippi to
Nashville, Tennessee

Miles: _____

Week 3: Nashville, Tennessee to
Chicago, Illinois

Miles: _____

Week 4: Chicago, Illinois to
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Miles: _____

Week 5: Winnipeg, Manitoba to
Atikaki Wilderness, Manitoba, Canada

Miles: _____

Total miles: _____

Average miles flown daily: _____

A Place for Birds

Language Arts: Activity Sheet 2

NONFICTION TEXT FEATURES MATCH

Name: _____

Date: _____

Text features help readers understand a text. Read the name of each text feature included in *A Place for Birds* in the left-hand column. Then, find the correct definition in the right-hand column. Write the letter of the correct definition next to each text feature.

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------|----|--|
| 1. | Bibliography | _____ | A. | This text helps reader learn more about the topic. |
| 2. | Close-up | _____ | B. | This large type contains the most important information in the book. |
| 3. | Text Box | _____ | C. | Gives readers visual geographic clues that help readers know where animals live. |
| 4. | Heading | _____ | D. | Helps readers understand how the author gathered the book's information. |
| 5. | Main Text | _____ | E. | Helps readers see details in something small. |
| 6. | Maps | _____ | F. | Gives readers clues about what he or she will learn from the text. |



Name of Bird: _____

Cause: _____

Effect: _____

A
Place
for
Birds

by: _____

A Place for Birds

Language Arts: Activity Sheet 3

NONFICTION TEXT STRUCTURES, COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Name: _____

Date: _____

Author Melissa Stewart uses a cause and effect nonfiction text structure in the main text of *A Place for Birds*, but in the text boxes, she compares and contrasts past human actions to present human actions.

Directions: Find the text boxes listed below. For each text box, compare and contrast then to now.

Example: Piping Plover

Then: Piping plover eggs are hard to see. They blend in with the sand. People stepped on the eggs by accident.

Now: People built fences to protect the places where piping plover lay their eggs.

Grasshopper Sparrow

Then: _____

Now: _____

Hermit Thrush

Then: _____

Now: _____

Kirtland's Warbler

Then: _____

Now: _____

Florida Scrub Jay

Then: _____

Now: _____

Bald Eagle

Then: _____

Now: _____

Bonus Question:

Look at the names of the birds in the book. Are they written in bold or italic print?