

Virtual Club Pelican

Project Title: Birds with Words

Theme: Lagoon Birds

Age Range: 7-12 years

PROJECT INTRODUCTION: Students will investigate and learn about the different bird species native to the Batiquitos Lagoon. They will compare two different birds and their characteristics. They will choose one to work with in creating an expressive art piece using descriptive words with intentional design details within their representation, creating a uniquely narrative work of art.



PROJECT MATERIALS:

- White Paper (size: 9"X12")
- White Copy Paper (size: 8.5"X11")
- Drawing Pencil
- Black Sharpie
- Colored Pencils

PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. If you were visiting the Batiquitos Lagoon, what types of birds do you think you would see there?
2. What do you think it would be like to be a hawk or a snowy egret? What would you do all day?
3. What do you think are some ways artists communicate through art?
4. Do you think art can be used to teach others about birds? How?

DISCUSSION (discuss or read):

Birds at the Batiquitos Lagoon: There are many different types of birds found at the Batiquitos Lagoon, and the overall bird population shifts dramatically with the seasons. Over 200 species have been recorded at the Lagoon at different times of year. Birds using the many wetland habitats of Batiquitos Lagoon can be divided into groups (or guilds):

- **Flying/diving birds** catch fish by flying low over the water to locate their food and diving to capture it (terns, skimmers).
- **Waterfowl** have webbed feet, long necks, short legs and flattened bills with tooth-like edges. They feed by dabbling in shallow water or by diving. Most are migratory (grebes, ducks)
- **Shorebirds** have long-pointed wings, long legs, and relatively narrow-pointed bills. Most are migratory. They feed along the shoreline (plovers and most sandpipers).
- **Wading Birds** have long necks and legs and long pointed bills, which they use to spear fish or other food. They feed along the shoreline (herons, egrets).
- **Raptors** have sharp, hooked bills and strong, curved talons. Most are all-year residents of the lagoon (Hawks, Osprey).

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- **Some land birds** use the wetland habitat around the lagoon (sparrows, yellowthroats).

Some of the more commonly seen birds throughout the year at the lagoon are the Great Blue Heron, the Snowy Egret, Hawks and Osprey. Herons and Egrets are large wading birds and can often be viewed stalking fish in the shallows of the Lagoon. Hawks and Osprey are raptors and are often seen flying above seeking prey on the shoreline surrounding the lagoon.

There are many other bird species seen at the Lagoon throughout the year. Another common wader is the American Avocet with its striking white and black body. During the winter, Killdeer and small shorebirds are often seen walking or running on the mudflats and beaches. Terns can be seen hovering and then plunging for fish. Common waterfowl include ducks like Mallards and Green-winged Teal. Hawks and Osprey are widespread hunting their prey along the shoreline and in the fields nearby the lagoon. The endangered California Least Tern is resident only in the late spring and summer. Batiquitos has the largest Least Tern population between Camp Pendleton and Mission Bay with active Least Tern nesting sites that have been established to protect this endangered species.

ART PROJECT KEY TERMS:

Guild is a group of species that have similar requirements and play a similar role within a community.

Artistic Expression is a way to express the imagination through a range of forms, symbols, and ideas with meanings that can be determined and expressed by the artist.

Impression is an artist's interpretation, rendition or representation of an object or a scene.

Descriptive Words are words that are seeking or serving to describe nouns.

Shape is an enclosed object and can be created by line or by color which define their edges, it is considered to be a two-dimensional element.

ART MAKING PROCESS:

STEP 1:

Take a moment to think about the many kinds of birds you would see out at the Batiquitos Lagoon. How many do you know of? What are the differences in how the birds look? How do you think they are different in how they behave and what they do? You will work with the shape of a lagoon bird to create an expressive work of art using descriptive words.

STEP 2:

Decide which bird shape you would like to work with. View and read informational facts about the Snowy Egret and/or the Hawk below in Fig. A. OPTION: you may choose a different lagoon bird and research details and facts about it online.

STEP 3:

Once you have learned more about the bird you have chosen to work with, use your copy piece of paper and write a list of 15-20 descriptive words about your bird. List any word that comes to mind and you feel relates to the bird that you have chosen. Examples might be; tall, fast, prey, keen eyesight, nests, talons, mice, screeches etc. (Fig. 1).

STEP 4:

Next, on your second piece of white paper use your pencil to draw an outline diagram of your chosen bird (an example is shown in Fig. A), leaving the inside of your bird blank and having no details.

Options: It can be flying, standing or any stance you'd like. You can add eyes to your bird too!

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Draw your outline as large as possible so your bird image fills the majority of your paper. Keep in mind that the shape of your bird does not have to be perfect or exact. You are creating your own expression and impression of the bird. It is ok if the proportions or scale look “off”. There is not an exact way, or one way, your bird should look. When your penciled outline is complete, go over your pencil mark with your black Sharpie, erase any pencil marks (Fig. 2).

STEP 5:

Across the inside of your bird figure, with your black Sharpie draw several lines, they can be straight, wavy or curved. The width between the lines can be the same or different, it is up to you. Go over the lines a second time with your black marker, making them a little thicker (Fig. 3). Using your list of descriptive words write them in between your lines with your black sharpie. You can use block letters, cursive, or make up your own lettering styles. Consider using a combination of different lettering styles and using thick and thin lines. Make sure the top and the bottom of some of the letters extend to the top and bottom of each line (Fig. 4). You do not have to use every word, just the ones that stand out to you in the moment.

STEP 6:

Add detailed design work, using patterning of shapes, in various spaces within the lines and around your descriptive words. Think about the different shapes and how they might relate to your bird and effect the design in your work of art (Fig. 5). Take your time and enjoy this art process.

STEP 7:

Notice the shapes created in between the letters and around any patterned designs that you added. Use your colored pencils to color in solid areas of specific shapes, being mindful of the color palette you choose. Consider leaving some areas white or filling in your entire bird with color (Fig. 6). When you are pleased with your descriptive bird, your artwork is complete.

POST PROMPT QUESTIONS (reflect and share):

1. What makes your bird an expressive work of art?
2. What do you think your work of art communicates?
3. What do you like best about the art you created?
4. What did you learn from creating this work of art?

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ART PROJECT STEP BY STEP EXAMPLE:

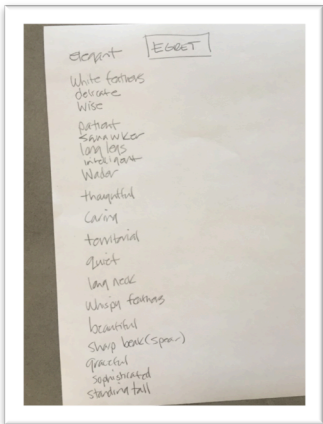


FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5

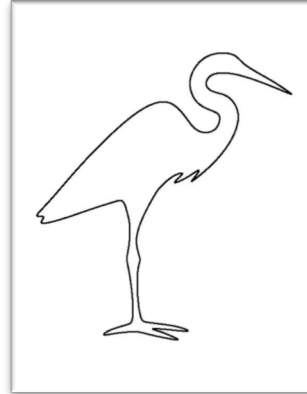


FIG. 6

LESSON PLAN

Fig. A - Learn more about two lagoon birds:

SNOWY EGRET



The snowy egret is a small, elegant heron, about two feet in length with a wingspan of about three feet. They have completely white feathers, a yellow patch of skin around its eyes, a black bill, and black legs with bright yellow feet.

They feed in the shallow areas of ponds and marshes. Snowy egrets use one foot to stir up the bottom of the water, flushing prey into view. They spear their food with their long sharp bill most of the time by standing motionless and allowing the prey to come within striking distance. Snowy Egrets feed while standing, walking, running, or hopping. They may vibrate their bills, sway their heads, or flick their wings as part of prey gathering. They eat fish, fiddler crabs and other crustaceans, snakes and other reptiles, amphibians, snails, and insects.

Egrets breed in colonies in trees close to large lakes with reed beds or other extensive wetlands. Egrets mate with one mate each season. Males are in charge of finding a home and attracting a female. Nests are a platform made of sticks, twigs, and stems built high up in a tree. Females lay 2-6 pale greenish blue eggs. Male and female Snowy Egrets take turns incubating their eggs, which takes 20-26 days. As one mate takes over for the other, it sometimes presents a stick, almost as if passing a baton. Both parents continue caring for the young when they hatch.

Egrets are very territorial, and will defend their nests, mates, and young. Egrets are not normally a vocal bird; it gives a low, hoarse croak when disturbed, and at breeding colonies, it often gives a loud croaking and higher-pitched squawk. Its delicate appearance is contradicted by its harsh and raucous calls around its nesting colonies.

The egret is partially migratory, with northern hemisphere birds moving south from areas with colder winters. While in flight, the snowy egret holds his or her neck in an "S" curve. The species was slaughtered for its plumes in the 19th century, but protection brought a rapid recovery of numbers, and the Snowy Egret is now more widespread and common than ever.

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HAWK



Hawks are a group of medium-sized birds of prey. Generally, the female hawk is larger than the male. There are more than 200 species of hawks worldwide. They are found on all continents except Antarctica. Hawks dwell in different types of habitats: marshes, forests, rainforests, prairies, open savannas, grasslands, mountains, coastal regions and deserts. Hawks are characterized by sharp talons, large, curved bill, and muscular legs.

Hawks have a lifespan between 10 and 20 years in the wild. Hawks hunt during daylight hours. Hawks have excellent eyesight. They can see up to 8 times more clearly than the sharpest human eye. Hawks can see colors, like most humans can, as well as those in the ultraviolet range. This means that hawks can perceive colors that humans cannot see. Eyesight is primarily used for hunting. Their hearing is acute, but their sense of smell is poor. Hawk species are known for their speed, particularly when chasing prey. During the hunt, some species of hawks can dive 150 miles per hour through the air.

Hawks can catch a prey both in the air and on the ground. They use their sharp talons to both catch and kill their prey. Hawks eat small mammals such as mice, rats, squirrels and rabbits. They also eat insects, smaller birds, frogs, turtles and reptiles. Some hawks will even eat snakes and crustaceans. They may eat on the ground or carry its kill to a feeding spot, often a fencepost or tree limb. When a hawk screeches, it is defending territory or communicating. They most often screech in flight.

Hawks tend to be solitary birds, living with a mate during the spring but otherwise surviving alone – except the birds that fly to warmer climates in the winter, when they create large flocks during the migration. When hawks flock, it is called a kettle of hawks. A kettle might contain thousands of birds, depending on the type of hawk and the time of year. After migration, hawks typically prefer to live alone.