

San Francisco Nature Education School Program

3rd Grade

Summary

Our 3rd grade program offers science and environmental education through an in-depth and hands-on look at the local birds of San Francisco. The program is designed to align with the California Department of Education Content Standards and the variety of program activities engages students' multiple intelligences.

The program includes a total of 10 hours of guided activities: three in-school visits and two field trips. We supply textbooks and additional teacher resources including pre- and post- classroom and field trip activities. The school year culminates in an optional bird calling contest with student performances and presentations.

Content Standards Alignment

Our program aligns with the Life Sciences and Language Arts content standards.

*California Department of Education Content Standards for Life Sciences, 3rd Grade
Adaptations in physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival. As a basis for understanding this concept:*

Content Standard	SFNE Program Coverage
a. Students know plants and animals have structures that serve different functions in growth, survival, and reproduction.	We study structures and function on different birds.
b. Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments, such as oceans, deserts, tundra, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.	We cover the differences in bird adaptation to water, land, and air by studying examples like ducks, quail, and hawks.
c. Students know living things cause changes in the environment in which they live: some of these changes are detrimental to the organism or other organisms, and some are beneficial.	We study the food chain and its effects on insects, rodents, fish, etc. We also study human's effect on bird habitat.
e. Students know when the environment changes, some plants and animals survive and reproduce; others die or move to new locations.	We discuss adaptation and habitat destruction.
f. Students know that some kinds of organisms that once lived on Earth have completely disappeared and that some of those resembled others that are alive today.	We study extinction examples like the dodo bird.

California Department of Education Content Standards for Language Arts, 3rd Grade

Content Standard Area	SFNE Program Coverage
Reading	Our textbooks, <i>Birds of San Francisco</i> and <i>What is a Bird</i> provide opportunities for reading comprehension and practice in the use of structural features of informational materials, i.e. tables of contents and indexes.
Writing	Our program includes written pre- and post- field trip reports; species reports and poster presentations for the bird calling contest
Listening & Speaking	Throughout the program presentations and activities, our naturalists interact with students providing many opportunities to engage them in active listening and speaking.

Program Structure

Classroom and Field Studies:

Winter

- Eighty minute classroom visit – Introduces students to the habits and anatomy of the birds around them. Students see and touch real wings, bones and beaks, and learn to draw birds. Through our interactive visit, they learn about how birds fly, what birds eat, and what makes birds so unique. Students create their own local bird field guide with San Francisco Nature Education journals.
- Two hour field trip in at the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park – Students participate in a naturalist-led nature walk through the garden's exciting microhabitats. We maintain a 6 to 1 student to naturalist ratio to provide each student with a personal experience on the trip. During the trip, we provide each student a pair of high-quality binoculars to observe nature firsthand. They document their rich and memorable experiences in their field journals by recording and drawing the birds that they see. Some of the birds we see at the Botanical Garden are California Quail, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Song Sparrow, Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows, Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds and a wide variety of migrating ducks.

All SF Nature Education field trip locations are served by MUNI.

- Sixty minute classroom visit – This January visit/slide show concentrates on the history and wildlife of Golden Gate Park.

Spring

- Eighty minute classroom visit – This final in-classroom visit focuses on the exciting activity of mating season. Students observe, measure, and draw real nests and eggs of local birds, and listen to recorded local birdcalls on hand-held Birdsong Identifyers. Five Identifyers are loaned to students so that they can easily become familiar with local birds' calls.

Spring (continued)

- Two hour field trip at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park – At Stow Lake, students use high-powered spotting scopes in addition to their high-quality binoculars to observe the dramatic nesting colony of Great Blue Herons. Students then set off on a nature walk to observe a variety of local birds that also nest at the Lake, including Red-tailed Hawks, Brown Creepers, American Robins, Mourning Doves, and Mallard Ducks (partial list). Students record their observations in their field journals and sketch the birds that they have observed in the field.
- Poster exhibits at school and Bird Calling Contest – Students create posters on topics chosen by their teacher.

Bird Calling Contest

The Contest usually features two, three, or four classes from different schools. Five teams of four students in each class choose a local bird to study, and prepare a skit showcasing the local bird's call or song, the bird's movements, and unique and cool facts about their bird.

This program engages the students through dance, music, and theatre. Students dress in costumes representing their bird's plumage and present their skit in front of an audience at the beautiful Mercy High School Theatre. The Contest occurs on the fourth Friday in May. San Francisco Nature Education naturalists help coach students on their cool facts, calls, and movements, and provide teachers, parents and students with costume ideas. The first place team from each class receives binoculars. All contestants receive a book on birds. Each school receives the same trophy.

The Bird Calling Contest is always a hoot!

Please visit our website for more information: www.sfnature.org

Or call Nancy DeStefanis at 415-387-9160