

## A PLACE FOR BIRDS

Written by Melissa Stewart and  
Illustrated by Higgins Bond

ISBN: 978-156-145-4747 | HC | \$16.95  
Ages 6-10 | Nonfiction | Nature

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Birds fill our world with bright colors and sweet songs. But sometimes people do things that make it hard for them to live and grow. *A Place for Birds* clearly yet gently explains some of the ways human action and inaction can affect bird populations. This follow-up to the award-winning title *A Place for Butterflies* 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 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. More than just a book about birds, *A Place for Birds* opens readers' minds to a wide range of environmental issues. The book's concrete examples of cause and effect show young readers 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

### NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS

#### SCIENCE

[National Science Education Standards provided by the National Academies of Science.]

#### (Grades K-4)

##### NS.K-4.3 LIFE SCIENCE

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop an understanding of the characteristics and life cycles of organisms and organisms [in relation to] their environments.

##### NS.K-4.6 PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

As a result of activities in grades K-4, all students should develop understanding of personal health [in relation to] changes in environments.

#### (Grades 5-8)

##### NS.5-8.3 LIFE SCIENCE

As a result of their activities in grades 5-8, all students should develop understanding of a structure and

function in living systems; populations and ecosystems and diversity and adaptations of organisms.

### **MATH (Grades PreK-12)**

[National Mathematics Standards provided by the NCTM.]

#### **NM-PROB.PK-12.3 PROBLEM SOLVING**

Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.

### **LANGUAGE ARTS (K-12)**

[Language Arts Standards provided by the NCTE.]

#### **NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE**

Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

## **BEFORE YOU READ**

### **Grades K-2**

- Work with students to create a Know-Want-Learn (KWL) chart for birds on the chalkboard. Begin by asking students what they **Know** about birds and their environments. Write their responses on the board. Next, ask students what they **Want to learn** by reading this book. Record their answers in the chart. Leave the **Learn** column blank for now.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words from the book and discuss their meanings.
- Look at the range maps on the endpapers and have students identify birds that live in your area.

### **Grades 3-6**

- Have the students discuss the following questions in small groups. Before reading the book, compile the groups' answers on the chalkboard.
  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 in their habitats? Explain why or why not.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words from the book. Have students look the words up in a dictionary and write a definition. This may be done individually or in groups.

## **AS YOU READ**

### **Grades K-2**

- Ask students to listen for answers to the questions listed in the W column of the KWL chart and any other information they'd like to add to the L column.
- Ask students to look for differences in bird nests made by different species.
- Ask students to look for differences in bird eggs laid by different species.

### **Grades 3-6**

Ask students to think about the answers compiled on the chalkboard while listening to the book. 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**

- Fill in the **Learn** column of the KWL chart. Review the information in the **Know** column and change anything that is incorrect.
- Discuss any connections students see between nest materials, nest location, and egg appearance. Explain to students that nest type and egg pattern and coloration are meant to minimize predation (protect the nest from predators).

### **Grades 3-6**

- As a class or in smaller groups, have students add new information or erase incorrect information on the chalkboard.
- Choose two birds in the book and ask students to compare them. Students should consider the birds' body size and coloring as well as their ranges, habitats, food sources, egg appearance, nest location, and potential predators. Explain the usefulness of a Venn diagram (overlapping circles showing similarities and differences) and lead students in creating one.

## Interdisciplinary Connections (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.

#### Grades 3–6

Have each student research one of the birds discussed in the book and write a report. Each report should include unique or important body features, habitat and range, diet, and any fun facts the student discovers.

#### All Grades (GAMES)

##### Bird BINGO

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 [www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBird/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBird/). Older students should tell you a fact about each species in their winning lines.

##### Concentration

Make two sets of cards from the book or the website above for students to play Concentration. Older students may enjoy the added challenge of matching nests and/or eggs with the proper adult bird.

### 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, word families, and vowel sounds. They can also alphabetize the words.
- Work with students to create seesaw books about two different birds, such as piping plovers and common murrelets. On the first left-hand page, they might write:

“Piping plovers live on beaches.” On the facing right-hand page, they could write: “Common murrelets live on rocky shores.” The next page would read: “Both kinds of birds live near the ocean.” Subsequent pages should continue to compare the two species—size, food, range, etc.

#### Grades 3–6

- 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 (Attn: Melissa Stewart)  
Peachtree Publishers  
1700 Chattahoochee Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
If you include an e-mail address, Ms. Stewart will send an e-mail to your class. If students send drawings, she will choose a few to post on her website.
- Read and discuss the following verses from this poem with your students. Then ask them to observe a bird and write a poem about it.

##### A Bird

A bird came down the walk:  
He did not know I saw;  
He bit an angle-worm 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

#### All Grades

Have students pretend they are birds. Ask younger students to write what it feels like to learn how to fly. Ask older students to describe how it feels to soar through the sky and to write about what they see as they fly over their town or city.

### 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.

### **Grades 3–6**

Divide the class into teams of three or four and give each group a copy of the worksheet 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 North American birds' migration and the average number of miles traveled each day.

## **ART**

### **Grades K–2**

Let students use old socks or lunch-sized paper bags to create their own bird puppets. They can decorate their puppets with yarn, paints, crayons, scrap paper, and egg cartons. Some children may need help using glue or scissors.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES (Geography)**

### **Grades 3–6**

Have students study the range maps shown on the endpapers of the book. Ask them to list 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.
- Have students make a list of some of the things people do that harm the birds discussed in this book. Then have them list ways people could change their behavior 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.

**[Possible responses may be:** 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, or bicycles instead of donating them to charities.]

Have students think of ways they can modify their behavior to help save our planet and these creatures.

- 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.
- 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.

## **RELATED READING**

*Aliens from Earth: When Animals and Plants Invade Other Ecosystems* by Mary Batten, Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 2003.

*Birds: Nature's Magnificent Flying Machines* by Caroline Arnold, Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, MA 2003.

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

*Birds, Nests, & Eggs* by Mel Boring, Minnetonka, MN: NorthWord Books, 1998.

*Wings* by Sneed Collard, Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, MA, 2008.

*Backyard Bird Watching for Kids: How to Attract, Feed, and Provide Homes for Birds* by George H. and Kit Harrison, Minocqua, WI: Willow Creek Press, 1997.

*Peterson's First Guide to Birds of North America* by Roger Tory Peterson, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**MELISSA STEWART** is the award-winning author of more than 100 nonfiction books for children. Her lifelong fascination with the natural world led her to earn a BS in biology

from Union College and a MA in science journalism from New York University. When Melissa isn't writing or doing research, she enjoys speaking about science, literacy, and the writing process at schools, libraries, nature centers, and conferences throughout New England. She offers school programs, including Birds, Butterflies, and More; Bringing Science to Life with Readers Theater; and The Nature of Nonfiction. For more information about Melissa Stewart's programs, visit her website at [www.melissa-stewart.com](http://www.melissa-stewart.com).

**(Intended audience: Grades K-5)**

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



**HIGGINS BOND** has illustrated books for children for over twenty-five years. Her titles include **WHO HAS A BELLY BUTTON?; HEY DADDY! ANIMAL FATHERS AND THEIR BABIES; and A PLACE FOR BUTTERFLIES.**

Bond 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. She offers a slide show presentation, entitled *Yes, It Is Possible to Make a Living as an Artist*, aimed at aspiring artists and art students of any age. It lasts approximately thirty to forty minutes and concludes with a Q&A session. For more information about Higgins Bond's programs, visit her website at [www.higginsbond.com](http://www.higginsbond.com).

**(Intended audience: Grades 1-12)**

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## Migration ~ Birds in Flight

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Sample: Hermit Thrush Migration

#### Directions

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Migration of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of bird)

#### Directions

1. Choose another North American bird and track its migration.
2. Calculate the distance of its entire northward journey.
3. Determine the average number of miles the bird travels each day.

Week 1: Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 5: Miles: \_\_\_\_\_

(If you need more space use the back of this page.)

Total miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Average Miles Flown Daily: \_\_\_\_\_