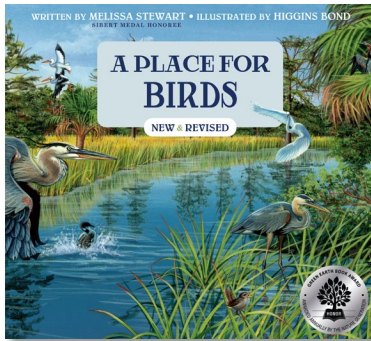


TEACHER'S GUIDE



A Place for Birds (Third Edition)

by Melissa Stewart | illustrated by Higgins Bond

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Ages 7-11 | Informational | Series: A Place for . . .

AR • RC • Lexile • GRL: P; Gr 3

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 role 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
- Life cycles
- 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 visit

<https://melissa-stewart.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/scirdbuddies.pdf>

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.
- Provide a list of vocabulary words and discuss their meanings.
- 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.
- 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 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 and write definitions.

AS YOU READ**Grades K–2**

- Ask students to think about the main idea of the book.

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.
- 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 the idea. List them on chart paper.
- 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.

Grades 3–5

- Ask students to identify the main idea of *A Place for Birds* and recall details that support the idea. List them on the chart paper.
- As a class or in smaller groups, have students add new information or erase incorrect information you 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.
- Birds eat a variety of foods—insects, fruit, seeds, and frogs. As a class, do 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. Below these images, they can draw or glue cutouts of the foods they've selected for their bird to eat.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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 video of a few children's responses with your phone and then sharing them with the whole class.

Grades 3–5

- Divide the class in half and invite each team to 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.

- 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.

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.

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.

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*. (See suggestions below.) They can also alphabetize the words.

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.
- Work with students to create seesaw books about two different birds, such as piping plovers and Kirtland's warblers.

On the first left-hand page, they might write: "Piping plovers build their nests on sandy beaches." On the facing right-hand page, they could write: "Kirtland's warblers build their nests in grasses below jack pine trees." The next page would read: "Both kinds of birds build their nests on the ground."

Subsequent pages should continue to compare the two species—size, food, range, etc. Students can use webs to help them organize their thoughts.

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, flying into windows, etc.) to explain the challenges of surviving. In a concluding paragraph, students should suggest ways humans can help birds and improve their habitats.

- Read and discuss the following 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 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.

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.

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.
- Have students write letters to author Melissa Stewart, telling her what they liked best about *A Place for Birds*. If you email photos of the letters to melissa@melissa-stewart.com, Melissa will respond.
- 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.

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.

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.

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 two thousand 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 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?

- 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.

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

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.

Jenkins, Steve and Robin Page. *The Bird Book*. New York: Clarion Books, 2022.

Page, Robin. *The Beak Book*. New York: Beach Lane/Simon & Schuster, 2021.

Richmond, Susan Edwards. *Bird Count*. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree, 2019.

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

REVIEWS

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

—*The Science Teacher*,
 ♪ STARRED REVIEW ♪

"With its emphasis on conservation, this is a useful addition to science collections."—*Booklist*

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

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"An attractive picture-book format . . . this 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 two hundred 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 schools and conferences for educators.

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.

HigginsBond.com

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR VISITS

We have authors and illustrators who visit schools and libraries.

**For information regarding author appearances, please contact
800-241-0113 or
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Melissa Stewart's A Place for... series:

A Place for Bats
A Place for Birds
A Place for Butterflies
A Place for Fish
A Place for Frogs
A Place for Turtles

Also available from Melissa Stewart:

Beneath the Sun
Under the Snow
When Rain Falls
Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers:
Celebrating Animal Underdogs
Mega-Predators of the Past

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for
A PLACE FOR BIRDS (Third Edition)
prepared by Melissa Stewart

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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 build 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: _____

Golden Eagle

Then: _____

Now: _____

Bonus Question:

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