



The Fly Away Home Game



This game demonstrates how migratory birds fly south for the winter and use wetlands as safe places to rest and find food and water. This activity has been used successfully with students of all ages!

BACKGROUND:

Wetlands provide critical ecosystem functions, including water purification, water storage, stabilization of shorelines, and processing carbon and other nutrients. They also provide and support plants and animals, including migratory birds. There are only 10% of wetlands left in California.

MATERIALS:

- 10 pieces of green construction paper
- 10 pieces of black construction paper
- Scissors



PROCEDURE:

Step 1: Cut all black and green construction paper into 6 inch diameter circles. Scatter the green circles approximately 5 feet apart from each other in a spacious area. One end of the play area will be the starting point and the other end will represent the southern migration destination. This game should be played in two or more rounds. Each round can be 3-5 minutes long depending on the size of your group.

Step 2: Have players start at one end of the room and go over rules.

- Players must make 3-4 stops at a green circle or wetland for 15 seconds each.
- Only 2-3 players on a green circle or wetland at a time.
- If you are not on a wetland, you must continue to flap your wings (arms) and if you stop you are out.

Step 3: Replace a few green circles with black circles for the second round. Explain that there are only 10% of wetlands left in California. Because birds have less places to stop, some of the green circles have been replaced with black, representing the removal of wetland habitat that no longer exists.

CONCLUSION:

At the end of each round, some players will not have made it south. Have students observe the amount who made it south with those who didn't and compare to the previous round. Have a discussion as to why there were differences in each round. Make sure to talk about habitat loss and its effect on wildlife.

Learn more at:



This work is supported by the Hispanic-Serving Institution's Education Grants Program, grant no. 2015-38422-24058/project accession no. 1007104, from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.