



Lesson 2: Wetland Wildlife - Wood Ducks

Theme

Wood duck populations declined in the past, but thanks to human ingenuity, they have made an amazing recovery.

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding of the relationship between different species of wetland animals and how the habitat supports them. Students will learn how animals have adapted to live in wetlands in Rhode Island and the definition of a keystone species.

Corresponding Activities for this Lesson

- Duck Detectives
- Two Ducks and a Merganser (Two Truths and a Lie)

Materials

- Wetland Wildlife PowerPoint
- “Fieldwork Feature: Wood Duck Boxes” video on our YouTube channel (RI Department of Environmental Management > Playlists > Home Sweet Habitat: Freshwater Wetlands)

Lesson

- 1. Explain to students that today we will be learning about the animals that use freshwater wetlands in Rhode Island and how biologists at the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife are helping them.**
- 2. Ask students if there are any activities that people might like to do in wetlands? Collect answers from students to get them thinking about their personal connection.**
 - Examples might include swimming, kayaking, fishing, boating, catching frogs etc
- 3. Ask students what humans need water for.**
 - Examples might include drinking, bathing, washing, watering crops, brushing teeth etc.



4. Ask students which animals use wetlands. Why would animals use wetland habitat?

- Many animals use water as a home (fish and frogs), as a resource for drinking (deer, bobcats), or as a place to find food (otter and mink). Raccoons even use water to wash their hands! Water is one of the four resources that all living things need to survive, so it is very important for us to protect it however we can!

5. Review background of wood ducks.

- What do wood ducks eat? Seeds, fruit, aquatic insects and acorns and nuts on land
- Where do wood ducks live? Swamps, freshwater marshes and beaver ponds
- Wood ducks stay in the south during the wintertime and migrate north to nest in Rhode Island. Some wood ducks stay in the same place all year round.
- What preys on wood ducks? Birds of prey, black rat snakes, red foxes, and raccoons are all nest predators and will eat their eggs

6. Review nesting behavior and play video of leaping chicks embedded in the PowerPoint.

7. Go over the historical declines in the wood duck population and the methods the RIDEM Division of Fish and Wildlife and other states implemented to help boost their population.

- Ask students if anyone has ever seen a wood duck nesting box.
- Follow up with the Duck Detectives and Two Ducks and a Merganser activities.