Welcome to the third issue of the Junior Observer, a publication created by PRBO Conservation Science for the teachers and students working with the STRAW watershed restoration and education program.

The next few pages are filled with student artwork, poems, questions, and stories about birds. We would like to thank all the students for the work they did to help restore habitat for birds and other wildlife, helping our watersheds all the way to the ocean! We thank you very much for the beautiful artwork and poetry.

Enjoy the newsletter, and keep watching birds!

Yours Truly,
Missy
PRBO Education Staff

The Common Murre
_Uria aalge_

**Description:**
- 15 - 17 inches (38 - 43 cm)
- Crow-sized seabird

**Favorite Food:**
- Small fish like baby Rockfish

**Habitat:**
- Open oceans
- Rocky cliffs on islands and coasts when nesting

**Nesting Facts:**
- Lays 1 egg, each is a different color or pattern
- Nests in large groups (colonies) from March through July

**Other Facts:**
- Their egg is shaped with a point at one end to keep it from rolling off the cliff edge!
Poetry & Art

Acorn Woodpecker

Your beautiful call
I know it’s just a loud
Waka waka waka,

But for me
It’s a beautiful chirp.
Your dark, black feathers
Camouflage in the pitch dark.

Your beautiful colors are
so colorful.

I love you Acorn Woodpecker
You’re my favorite bird.

Did you know?...

Acorn Woodpeckers love
to store acorns in holes
they drill with their
strong beaks in a tree
called a granary tree.
Some trees like this can
hold up to 50,000 acorns!

Northern Flicker by Jaime
4th grade Neil Cummins Elementary

Acorn Woodpecker
R. Rigney’s 1st grade
Park Elementary
Help Protect Marine Habitat!

Common Murre colony by Andrew

"Check out the video “A Murre’s Life on the Rocks” from PRBO’s Teacher Resource Library

Thank you for coming in to talk about birds and why it is important to keep the environment healthy. I learned a lot about murres. I especially thought that it was cool the way their eggs were shaped!

Sincerely,
Hannah

Some of the children created artwork after a marine habitat activity focusing on the threats to marine animals including seabirds—here’s a sample of the great work from Sue Sprye’s 5th grade class at Rancho Elementary

Prevent plastic pollution sign by Alyssa
Early spring brings signs that birds are beginning to nest. Pairing up, building nests, and raising young is the most important thing birds do all year—and the work you do to restore habitats helps birds breed safely. Here are some of the questions the students had this year about birds, their nests, and their habitat:

**How does restoration help seabirds and the ocean?**
Replacing non-native plants with native ones helps make the water and animals in the creeks and rivers healthy. The water flows from these places to the wetlands and bays around San Francisco and finally out to the Pacific Ocean. Restoration is helping to make the water traveling in to the oceans healthier and helping the animals that live in and use this ecosystem too!

**What type of nest do Common Murres build and where do they put them?**
Some seabirds like Common Murres lay their eggs on rocky cliffs on islands and coasts along the ocean, with only a bit of seaweed for a nest.

Common Murres lay only one egg that can be white, tan, green or blue with many different patterns on it. The shape of the egg is so pointed on one end that if it is bumped it will roll in a circle and not fall off the narrow cliff ledge!

**What if I find a bird nest?**
Find your parent or teacher and make sure it is ok to go near it! If the nest has an adult bird who is incubating, you may watch it from a safe distance, perhaps from inside your house or from behind bushes that are more than 50 feet away.

If you find baby birds on the ground, please do not pick them up. Baby birds leave the nest before they can fly and sometimes will need to spend time on the ground while learning this. Their parents are probably still feeding and caring for them, and may even be watching you look at their babies!

**Question of the Day:**
How does a Common Murre chick leave its nest for the first time to reach the ocean below?

It jumps 30 to 50 feet from the cliff ledge!
Educational Resources

Here’s a list of kits and resources that you can check out to use in your classroom, in addition to the STRAW bird curriculum. To check them out, contact Ruth Hicks at The Bay Institute, (415) 506-0150, or email hicks@bay.org.

Shorebird Sister School Program (SSSP) Trunk:
- Contains activities, puppets, and videos focusing on shorebirds and wetland habitats.
- Get information on shorebird i.d. and research updates, and contact classes in Mexico, and Central and South America through the SSSP pen pals at http://fws.sssp.gov

Songbird Blues Kit:
- Contains activities, puppets, and videos on songbirds

“The Life of Birds” 3-disc, 10-part series (new in PRBO’s library!):
- Narrated by David Attenborough, includes remarkable footage on the tools and techniques unique to birds

“Web Under Waves” by USFWS (marine food web activity visit with PRBO!)
- A hands-on activity centered around the San Francisco Bay and local ocean food webs

Learn about PRBO Marine biologists and their work on the Farallon Islands
- www.losfarallones.blogspot.com

PRBO Educational Opportunities

- Hands-on Classroom Activities
- Restoration Day Activities
- Bird Field Trips
- NEW! Teacher Resource Library in Petaluma

Dear Missy,
I really enjoyed the visits you made to our classroom. Learning about watersheds, habitats, food chains, and different species of birds...

Alyssa, S. Sprye’s 5th grade

Reflections on Birding at Rush Creek
A lot of walking,
Really hot.
Muddy-marshy,
A lot of learning
Sore legs!
A lot of fun!

Steff,
B. Tjernell’s 5th grade

To schedule a visit to your classroom, a field site or our teacher resource library, please contact the PRBO Education Program:
Phone: (707)-781-2555, ext. 302
Email: mwipf@prbo.org

PRBO Conservation Science is dedicated to conserving birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through innovative scientific research and outreach.
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