

CLASSROOM STUDIES

The following activities have been designed for use in the classroom. They cover various concepts in the biology and ecology of peregrine falcons, raptors in general, as well as exercise in math, science, geography and writing. They were designed to be adaptable to a broad range of age levels, and many of the activities or follow-up questions can easily be modified to meet specific objectives. Students can use this website, or links provided on this site, to obtain detailed information on peregrine falcons as an aid in completing the activities. Format includes an introduction followed by the activities and a series of follow-up questions.

RAPTORS OR BIRDS OF PREY

Introduction

Falcons are considered to be "raptors" or "birds of prey" referring to the fact that they are carnivores that feed exclusively on other animals. Because of this, they are adapted to catch and kill prey. Other birds of prey include hawks, eagles, owls, vultures and kites. One of the distinguishing characteristics of falcons is the presence of a "notch" on their beak.

Raptor Identification

Print out copies of the peregrine falcon coloring page that can be found on this website. Provide a copy to each student and have them circle and label the following: (A) Hooked beak and (B) Talons. These are two of the primary characteristics that identify raptors. Have your students answer the following:

- Name three other animals that are carnivorous.
- Name one other raptor or bird of prey besides a falcon.
- Look closely at the falcon's beak. Do you notice anything unusual about it?

Next, print out pictures of the adult peregrine falcons from the website and pass these out to students and have them color in their falcon as accurately as possible.

Have your students answer the following:

- Are there any features of the peregrine falcon (colors, shape, etc.) that would help you in identifying this bird from others?

Finally, collect a series of photographs of different birds including raptors (owls, hawks etc.) and non-raptors (songbirds, ducks etc.) and have your students see if they can identify which are raptors and which are not. Photographs can be obtained by searching the web or from a variety of magazines. A good source for images and drawings is www.fws.gov/educon.html (search the national image library link and the line drawings of wildlife link.)

Have your students answer the following:

- How were you able to tell the difference between the different birds?
- What were some features that all of the raptors had in common?
- What were some differences between the raptors?