

The Lake Trip

Every Fourth of July, Stephen and his family go to a lake close to their home, for a family vacation. This year things were different. Their camp site was fairly close to the lake and Stephen and his sister were able to fish and play in the water. Stephen and his sister, Angelica, decided to take a hike to the lake for a swim. When they approached the water, they saw a bird lying on the ground with its head caught in a plastic bag.

The bird looked tired as Stephen and Angelica raced over to its rescue. They pulled and tugged at the bag and were finally able to free the bird. The bird quickly flew away squawking angrily at them as it left.

Stephen felt sorry for the bird and wondered why someone would have just thrown a bag on the ground instead of cleaning it up before they left. They looked around and saw a few small bottles, a few pieces of fruit and some small pieces of trash scattered on the ground. Stephen and Angelica said they needed to pick it up before they left so that the bird wouldn't get stuck again. The water looked beautiful from where they were standing and they were really hot in the sun.

SCIENCE FACT #1

BIODEGRADABLE means that an item can be broken down under natural conditions. So, is a plastic bottle or a piece of fruit biodegradable? Plastic bottles do not normally break down under natural conditions, but they can be reused by recycling them and allowing them to be made into something else.

Angelica yelled, "*Hey Stephen, I'll race you to the water.*" They both jumped in and swam and played for hours. Their mom called them as the sun started to go down and they rushed up to their camp site for dinner.

SCIENCE FACT #2

Lakes contain fresh water. This is the water found in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and other small bodies of water all over the earth. Other sources of fresh water are the ice caps and glaciers near the poles. These however are not useable for drinking water for humans or animals.

Angelica told Stephen that they were having hot dogs for dinner. Stephen was so excited because he loved hotdogs. Stephen and Angelica told their parents about freeing the bird as they ate. Their Mom told them that everyday animals die from pollution. She told them that it is not just the pollution that you see on the ground that is a problem, but also the pollution that we put into the dumpsters and into the air and water as well.

After dinner, Stephen was sad and just could not stop thinking about the bird and the pollution. He decided to go to sleep so that he would be ready for their boat ride the next day.

Name _____

Date _____

As Stephen drifted off to sleep, he heard a strange sound. He jumped as he heard the noise, and he saw the bird that they had rescued earlier standing behind him. The bird seemed larger than before and was staring straight at him. Stephen heard his name called again and he looked to see where the voice was coming from. All that he could see was the bird.

Then suddenly he realized that the voice was coming from the bird. The bird was calling his name! “*Stephen*” the bird said, “*Stephen wake up!*” Stephen quickly jumped to his feet and backed away from the bird. The bird came closer to him and told him not to be afraid. He was beautiful with a blue head and blue wings. His chest was reddish-brown in color and it had a small white patch on its belly. He was larger and more brilliant than Stephen had remembered from earlier that day. The bird told Stephen that he was sorry that he had squawked angrily at him earlier. He told Stephen that he wanted to show him something so Stephen followed him to the lake.

The night was cool and the sky was clear. The stars were sparkling in the background of the fully lit sky. The moon was beautiful and round in the sky and lit their path as they walked to the edge of the lake.

The bird took Stephen to a tree that was standing tall in the woods near the lake. The wood’s edge was filled with trees and grass. There were broken trees that seemed to have been blown over by a storm. There were insects and creatures all around them as they walked into the woods that night. Mosquitoes and flies and other crawling and flying creatures were all around them. Lightning bugs lit the sky as they flew by. The woods looked so much busier than Stephen had ever noticed before. As the bird walked Stephen over to the tall tree, another bird flew out of a small hole in its trunk. The bird that flew out looked a little like his rescued bird, only smaller and not quite as bright in color.

The bird said, “*When I was little, I lived in the woods across the lake. Every winter other birds would fly south where it was warmer, but my family would stay here near our nest because there was plenty for us to eat. The lake was peaceful during the winter. I remember long winter nights snuggled closely in our tree with my mother and father. I remember splashing in the water and singing in the morning as the sun came above the horizon. I spent most of my time finding seeds, berries and insects to snack on. I would scout out small holes in the dead and living trees and dream of one day having my own hole to call home. Those days were soon gone. One afternoon, I came back from a trip to the woods to see my home being pushed down by a big machine. I cried as I watched that home that I loved being destroyed. My mother and father told me not to worry and they moved me to the other side of the lake. We found another tree with a hole carved by a woodpecker and we settled into it quickly. We once again snuggled together as the cooler days approached. We sang songs as the sun came up and we enjoyed our new lives on the other side of the lake. I was a little sad after the move, and I missed my old home a great deal. One day I looked out and there was a very large box made of wood in the place where my tree used to be. The box was a house for a family of people. They played in the water and rode around the lake in their boat. I was glad to see the children playing and having a good time, but deep inside I was upset that they tore down my home for theirs.*”

Name _____

Date _____

Each time I see trash or trees removed for a home or building, it makes me a little angry. This is the reason that I snapped at you today when you helped me. Sometimes it feels like the people do not care.”

SCIENCE FACT #3

The Eastern Bluebirds' habitat is usually found in an open, clear area. They rely on other things to form a hole or cavity in a tree for them to nest. A woodpecker is a great bird to help the bluebirds out. A habitat is a place where an animal or bird finds food, shelter and water.

Stephen thought about what the bird was saying and he felt a little guilty. He felt guilty for things he had done in the past to spoil the homes for the birds. He knew that he too had littered and wasted before and that this was not fair to the animals living in the woods.

The bird told Stephen about the pollution in the water and the times that he has seen other animals harmed. He told Stephen that the water over the last few years had become dirtier and sometimes it was much harder for him to breathe during the warmer months because the air is so thick with smog.

While Stephen was walking back to his camp site he thought about the bird. He realized that he too had done things to harm the land by wasting water and by creating too much garbage. He remembered his teacher telling him about ways to conserve and reduce garbage to help protect the land. He realized that he had some work to do when he got home, but the job seemed too big for one person, he thought.

All of a sudden Stephen heard his name being called again. He didn't jump this time, because it was his mother calling him to breakfast. He wondered if this was just a dream. He crawled out of his tent and rushed to the table to tell his family of his adventure.

At the lake that fourth of July, Stephen, Angelica and their family made a decision to make a change for the animals. They worked that weekend to clean up the area they were camping in, and they set up a plan for when they got home.

Stephen and Angelica went to the library and searched out ways to conserve water and electricity in their home. They made flyers to pass out to their neighbors, telling them of different ways to cut down on the amount of garbage they throw away. The next fourth of July, Stephen and Angelica took their trip to the lake with their family, but this time they brought people with them to help clean up the pollution. They worked the entire weekend to clean up the trash from the camp sites and the water.

As Stephen and Angelica were picking up the last bit of trash from the ground before leaving, they looked up and saw a small bird with blue wings and a blue head. The bird almost looked as if it were smiling at them as they were leaving. Stephen and Angelica realized they had made a small difference that summer for the animals and birds that live in the woods.

Name _____

Date _____

Lesson Plan: Pollution and Animals

Designed for students in grades 3, 4, and 5

Students will learn:

- How pollution affects our freshwater resources and animal habitats.
- How to establish reasons for a recycling program.

Example: Student Task #1:

- Students read the story about Stephen and his family and answer the questions on the worksheet included. Students should then work to construct a poster or flyer to pass out to their neighbors and friends telling ways to stop some of the pollution in their area.

Example: Student Task #2:

- Students read the story about Stephen and his family and answer the questions on the worksheet included. The students can then work in pairs or small groups to make a power point slide show explaining the different types of pollution that can harm animals and birds living in or around fresh water. Presentations should include:
 - the meaning of the following terms; organic, inorganic, biotic, habitat, and pollution;
 - ways that pollution can affect animals, including humans, that live near water sources;
 - five facts about pollution of land, water and air in their area;
 - ten helpful hints to clean up a water source in their area.

Example: Student Task #3:

- Students read the story about Stephen and his family and answer the questions on the worksheet included. Students take a trip to the local water treatment plant and learn how water is cleaned and turned into the water we drink.

Two Great Web Sites:

1. Listen to Eastern Blue Bird song, and view a webcam of their babies in a nesting box.
http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Eastern_Bluebird_dtl.html#habitat
2. Website for kids created by the Environmental Protection Agency.
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/kids.htm>

The Lake Trip

Directions: Use the story “The Lake Trip” to answer the following. Try to answer as many questions as you can without looking back for the answers. Remember to answer in complete sentences and to watch your spelling.

1. In the story, Stephen and Angelica take a trip with their family to the lake. What holiday are they celebrating with this family vacation?

2. A lake is considered to be a resource for humans and animals. What type of resource is it?

3. In the story Stephen and Angelica rescue a bird. After they rescue it, they looked around and saw some garbage (land pollution) scattered on the banks of the lake. Name one piece of garbage that was biodegradable and one piece of trash that was not biodegradable from what they saw at the lake.

Biodegradable: _____

Not Biodegradable: _____

4. What does it mean to recycle? (2 sentences)

5. What is a habitat?

6. Name three things that make up the bird’s habitat in the story. Be specific.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Lake Trip

ANSWER KEY

1. In the story, Stephen and Angelica take a trip with their family to the lake. What holiday are they celebrating with this family vacation?

The family is celebrating the fourth of July

2. A lake is considered to be a resource for humans and animals. What type of resource is it?

A lake is a freshwater resource.

3. In the story Stephen and Angelica rescue a bird. After they rescue it, they looked around and saw some garbage (land pollution) scattered on the banks of the lake. Name one piece of garbage that was biodegradable and one piece of trash that was not biodegradable from what they saw at the lake.

Biodegradable: **Pieces of Fruit**

Not Biodegradable: **Plastic Bottle**

4. What does it mean to recycle?

To recycle is to reuse an item or to make it into another usable item.

5. What is a habitat?

A habitat is the area where an animal has access to water, shelter and food.

6. Name three things that make up the bird's habitat in the story. Be specific.

1. **Tree with a hole carved by a woodpecker**
2. **Berries and seeds or insects**
3. **Lake for water**