

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Chapter 18
Birds of a Feather

Grade Level

Upper Elementary: Third Grade through Fifth Grade

Subject

Literacy and Language Arts, Science

Common Core Standards

W.4.1

Next Generation Science Standards

4-LS1-1

Background Information

In chapter 18, spring has sprung as Karana describes the flowering environment around her. Heavy winter rains have caused new plants to blossom and bloom all over the island, but those aren't the only colorful life-forms around; Karana also takes time to observe and interact with the local bird species. How does her interaction with the birds bring change to the animals' normal behavior and lifestyle?

In this activity, students will act like scientists, investigating birds that are native to San Nicolas Island. The students will complete data charts while conducting research, using print or online sources.

Materials

- Copy of activity sheet for each student (provided)
- Research materials for each student, including links provided below if Internet access is available:
 - Interactive Maps
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/islandofthebluedolphins/map.htm>
 - Channel Islands National Park:
<https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/nature/seabirds.htm>
 - Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary:
<https://www8.nos.noaa.gov/onms/park/Parks/?pID=3>
- Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

Procedure

1. Give each student a copy of the activity sheet.
2. Give students the directions and resources for the activity.
3. Monitor the students as they look up information and complete the activity sheet.
4. Ask facilitating questions as necessary to get students thinking about the similarities and differences between species.
5. To shorten this activity: Divide students into groups of three and have them each research one of the bird species on the activity sheet. Each member will be

responsible for filling out a portion of the chart. All findings can be discussed within the small groups or as a class.

6. To lengthen this activity: Have students choose one of the species they investigated and write a paragraph describing a day in the life of that bird. The paragraph should include details about its habitat, eating and sleeping habits, and other behavioral traits.