

Tom Bennett Art and Environmental Science Contest 2010  
San Bernardino County Museum Association

## **Migration Madness**

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### **Family Poster Design Guidelines**

#### **The Basics**

Decide which kind of poster your family would like to create – an informational piece, an invitation to attend an event, or a persuasive piece to encourage taking action. Consider the abilities and interests of the members of your family when deciding how to design your poster. Choose a topic within the subject of migratory birds that will be fun for your family to learn about and illustrate.

Poster entries must contain references to migratory birds that winter, breed or pass through southern California. Posters can contain or promote either real or make-believe events or actions. If you invent an event to promote, make sure it sounds realistic. Persuasive posters should present and support an action or concept that your own family can relate to.

#### *Informational poster*

Posters may be used to share or provide information. They can be simple or complex, depending on their purpose. Either way, they are most effective if they are presented simply and clearly. Graphics and images help get the message across, illustrating what the written part describes.

Information poster entries should contain real and accurate information related to one or more migratory birds. A field guide gives quick access to which birds migrate here via range maps for each species. Keep your focus small and local, and you will increase your success with an informational poster.

#### Examples of Topics for Informational Posters:

- A poster may tell about a bird species, or perhaps it may tell about how a near-by nature preserve helps one or more bird species make their migration flights successfully.
- The life history of white-crowned warblers – where they migrate to, what they eat and how they raise their young – is relevant to anyone who sees them in their yard or garden.
- Some migratory birds fly hundreds of miles non-stop to get from wintering to breeding grounds.
- A city park or nearby nature preserve provides refueling opportunities for birds during migration.

### *Invitation to attend an event*

Bird festivals occur all over the world. People get together to celebrate nature, learn about birds and other wildlife in their area, and have fun. An event poster addresses these basic questions: what, where, when, event purpose and details like admission fees and special attractions. Event posters convince people that the event will be worthwhile to attend, and give all the information needed to get people there.

Invitation posters should make the event sound like fun. Your family may design a poster to promote a real event that will be happening soon, or even one that has recently passed. Or, you may invent an event that celebrates migratory birds. A good way to find an event, or to get inspiration for a make-believe event that sounds like fun, is to search the Internet for “migratory bird festivals” and surf from there. Remember that the event, either real or invented, must somehow relate to or take place in southern California.

In addition to events that people can attend, consider events from the bird’s perspective:

- Being the first yellow-rumped warblers to arrive in spring
- Birds molting the year’s plumage before starting their migration back to their wintering grounds
- Birds locating a new nature preserve in their breeding range and spreading their territory because of the new habitat

Be creative – how about a party for birds to come and fatten up on the autumn bounty before starting out on their southerly migration!

[http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2010/05/happy-international-migratory-bird-day.html?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/unleashed/2010/05/happy-international-migratory-bird-day.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

This site contains an example of an event that can be promoted with a poster.

### *Persuasive position poster*

Persuasive posters attempt to change people’s behavior. Many people are aware of and take action on behalf of the environment. Bird watching is a fun and popular activity, and a poster might entice people to take it up as a hobby. A poster might offer easy steps for people to take at home to lessen their impact. Migratory birds depend on healthy habitat in their breeding and winter ranges as well as all along the way during migration, so a poster might encourage people to preserve natural areas so the birds have reliable stop-overs for their long journeys. Leaving lights on in multi-story buildings helps keep birds from hitting windows, and a persuasive poster may explain the details and ask people to take action.

Persuasive arguments are most effective if they are simple and clear. Too much information can make the topic or issue confusing. Too little information will

not convince the viewer to change their behavior or take up a new activity. Select a topic that your family is already familiar with, or that you already take action for. This will help members express why they take their position. A simple action on behalf of migratory birds can be as effective as a complex action or major lifestyle change. Remember – think simple for this endeavor!

### **Artists Statement**

Each poster entry must be accompanied by an “artist statement.” This is the artists chance to describe what motivated them to create the art work, in this case a poster. A brief description of the family’s interest in the topic and why you chose the type of poster you created help museum visitors and the judges understand the content. Each family member’s name and the ages of participating children should be included in the artists statement.

### **Some hints for researching migratory birds:**

Start with the resources given in this program guide. Online sources are helpful for locating bird species of your region, especially those websites of local and state agencies and wildlife organizations such as Audubon Society or California Fish and Game Department. Many birds live in multiple habitats, so be sure you can identify the specific range of the any species you are including on your poster. Also, many good birding locations have specific bird lists of those species that occur there; some are available on-line. Be aware that many popular reference books and websites are very generic, and will not give specific information about birds that winter or breed in, or migrate through, southern California.

### **Designing your poster**

Once you have decided on a topic and which type of poster you will be creating, do a little brainstorming. What sort of graphics will help illustrate your topic? How much information is needed to get the point across? To be effective, information should be clear and straight forward. Illustrations support the topic by including elements that are best understood through visual presentation, such as what a bird species looks like or migration maps.

Write out the information, event details or persuasive argument first. Then talk about what illustrations you could use. Next, sketch a few layout ideas. Balance the amount of written information with illustrations, and balance elements across the page.

Once you have your sample design, begin creating your poster. Make sure that each family member contributes something to the poster. Handwritten work is acceptable and with some fancy lettering, adds to the overall look.

### **Poster requirements and parameters**

- Your poster may not exceed 30” in either direction.
- Posters should be 2-dimensional, but may have 3-dimensional elements added as long as they rise less than three-quarters of an inch off the poster surface.
- Make sure all 3-dimensional or add-on elements, if used, are securely adhered to the poster. Some posters will be displayed vertically.
- NO ORGANIC MATERIALS may be used on the poster, such as real feathers or leaves. Feathers purchased at a craft store are acceptable.
- Posters must be accompanied by the family “artist statement.” This includes the names of family members, ages of children under 18, and a brief description of why the poster subject is meaningful to your family.
- Paperclip the family artist statement to the front of the poster for submission. The statement may be type- or hand-written, but must be legible.

### **Judging criteria**

Judges will evaluate poster entries based on accuracy of information and creativity in presentation. They will also be looking for the contributions of each family member based on the names and ages given on the artist statement, to ensure that all members have contributed to the entry. Remember, simplicity is effective in a poster – simple designs and simple messages make a good presentation that is easy for the reader to follow and absorb. Poster entries that exceed maximum size requirements or that contain organic materials will be scored but will not be displayed during the Wildlife Art Festival.