



Raptor Resource Project Lesson Plans

To find more plans, go to www.raptorresource.org

Lesson Plan: Bald Eagle vs. Peregrine Falcon

Grade/Level	Elementary, Intermediate, could be adapted to several grade levels
Time Allotment	1-2 class periods, possible homework
Content Area(s)	Life Science, Raptors, Animal Behavior, Language Arts (compare and contrast)

Objectives

- Observe and understand similarities between bald eagles and peregrine falcons
- Observe and understand differences between bald eagles and peregrine falcons
- Summarize findings in an organized way, e.g. Venn Diagram

Curricular Connections

LS1: Structure and Processes
 LS2: Ecosystems
 LS3: Heredity and inheritance

Instructional Materials

- Background information on Great Spirit Bluff falcons
- Background information on Decorah eagles
- Live Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon cams
- Materials for note taking and finished product

Resources

- All about Peregrine falcons:
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Peregrine_Falcon/lifehistory
- Background information on the falcons nesting at Great Spirit Bluff:
<https://www.raptorresource.org/2020/03/22/peregrine-falcons-great-spirit-bluff-lifestyles-of-the-fast-and-furious/>

- Live Great Spirit Bluff falcon cam: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/gsb-falcons/>
- All about Bald eagles: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Bald_Eagle/lifehistory
- Live cam and background information about the Decorah Eagles: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-eagles/>
Read "About the Decorah Eagles" and "Quick Facts".
- Eagle video library: <https://raptorresource.education/video-libraries/eagle-videos/>
- Peregrine falcon video: <https://raptorresource.education/video-libraries/664-2/>

Background Knowledge

What defines a raptor? A raptor is a carnivorous or meat-eating bird. All raptors share at least three main characteristics:

- Keen eyesight
- Eight sharp talons
- A hooked beak

There are approximately 482 species of raptor worldwide, 304 diurnal (day-active) species and 178 nocturnal (night-active) species. Bald eagles and Peregrine falcons are both raptors. While the two species share at least three main characteristics, they are very different from one another.

Opener

What is a raptor? Students first write their own definition, being as specific as possible. Then students check the accuracy of their definition and modify it as needed.

Procedure/Method/Activity

Students could do this as an entire class, in pairs, or individually.

1. Read the information on peregrine falcons and watch some of the videos listed in the resource section.
2. Watch the falcons at the Great Spirit Bluff nest box.
3. Record information in some type of notes format and add to/include with the previous information from the opening activity. Students could organize their notes into subcategories. Some examples: Physical traits: size, male vs female, coloring, talons, beaks, eyesight, life span. Behaviors: nest building, egg laying, diet and food getting, parenting, and so on.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 with the Decorah bald eagles.

Assessment

Students will summarize what they have learned about similarities and differences between bald eagles and peregrine falcons in an organized and possibly visual way. Students could be given a choice: a well-organized and descriptive Venn Diagram, a well-organized and detailed chart, or an oral presentation with students taking on the role of an eagle and a falcon.

Extension

Choose other raptors and continue comparing and contrasting.