



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

235 Promenade Street | Providence, RI 02908 | 401.222.4700 | www.dem.ri.gov | @RhodeIslandDEM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, August 23, 2019

CONTACT: Gail Mastrati, DEM: 401-222-4700, X2402

gail.mastrati@dem.ri.gov

REGISTRATION IS FULL FOR COMING YEAR FOR DEM PROGRAM THAT STRENGTHENS SCHOOLS' ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CURRICULA

PROVIDENCE – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announces that registrations are full for its [Wildlife Outreach Program](#) for the upcoming school year. More than 100 school programs will be presented throughout Rhode Island during the 2019-2020 school year. Sponsored by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the program offers a wide range of interactive, one-hour programs that introduce students to the state's wildlife resources and increase awareness of environmental conservation.



“It’s so gratifying that 20 schools across the state have signed up for the Wildlife Outreach Program,” said Mary Gannon, Wildlife Outreach Coordinator in DEM’s Division of Fish and Wildlife. “Rhode Island teachers recognize the importance of connecting children with nature right in their own backyards and fostering the growth of our next generation of environmental stewards. Not only will our wildlife benefit from this attention and care, but so will our children!”

The K-8 classroom programs cover a variety of topics that connect students to what is happening in nature outside their window during each session. Provided with grade-appropriate information, students participate in fun, educational activities related to the history of wildlife management, current conservation projects, and Rhode Island's diverse wildlife. Program topics correspond with the seasons, with different offerings in the fall, winter, and spring. Topics covered during the fall session include bobcats, bats, beavers, wildlife habitat, deer, and turkeys. Winter topics include coyotes, furbearers, deer, New England cottontail rabbits, vernal pools, and winter waterfowl. In spring, programs will be offered on bears, snakes, birds, pollinators, vernal pools, timberdoodles, and turtles. An in-depth classroom session, “Wildlife Management 101,” is offered for high school environmental science and biology classes. Students will take away ample information about local conservation and gain insight into what it’s like to work in the field of wildlife conservation.

Telephone 401.222.4700 | www.dem.ri.gov | Rhode Island Relay 711

In addition to the classroom programs, field trips to state parks and wildlife management areas are offered for grades 4-12; buses and a preliminary classroom visit are included with all field trips. For students in grades K-3, DEM instructors use local parks or the school yard to create outdoor learning experiences. Registration is available for field trips, although spaces are filling up quickly. To sign up for a field trip, contact Mary Gannon, Wildlife Outreach Coordinator, at Mary.Gannon@dem.ri.gov.



Gannon recalls an anecdote when she took a 4th grade class out to Neutaconkanut Park in Providence to go birdwatching this spring. “At the top of the hill, I asked everyone to close their eyes and silently count how many different birdcalls they could hear in a minute,” she said. “On the way back, as we were walking through the neighborhood, one little boy told me, ‘I like the sounds better at the park instead of the sounds here (on the street).’ This same boy had the most wonderful expression of quiet joy as he peered at a red-bellied woodpecker for the first time through binoculars. Little moments like these are the reason why I absolutely love coming to work every day to continue the efforts of the Wildlife Outreach Program!”

To view the 2019-2020 fall, winter, and spring program offerings, [click here](#).

[Wild Rhode Island Explorer](#), a free quarterly children’s magazine geared to students in grades 4-7, is available online and in public libraries throughout the state. The publication connects youth to Rhode Island’s wide array of wildlife resources; provides information about the many conservation, research, and management projects performed by the Division of Fish and Wildlife; and supports existing science and literacy curricula in the classroom. Each issue features an article about habitat, an interview with DEM biologists and staff, a species profile, puzzles and games, and recommendations for younger readers along with artwork and original writing submitted by readers. To request a printed copy of Wild Rhode Island Explorer, contact Mary Gannon, Wildlife Outreach Coordinator, at Mary.Gannon@dem.ri.gov.

Thanks to federal funding through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and the RI State Wildlife Grant, all outreach programs and field trips, including materials, are free of charge. Since its inception in 2017, the Wildlife Outreach Program has presented 150 educational programs to over 5,000 students at 42 public, private, and charter schools across Rhode Island.

For more information on DEM’s Wildlife Outreach Program, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow DEM on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM or Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) for timely updates.