



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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SCIENCE LEARNING GONE WILD! DEM OFFERS FREE “CRITTER KIT” LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) [Division of Fish and Wildlife \(DFW\)](#) is excited to announce that for the third year in a row, [Rhody Critter Kits](#) are back and ready to roll! DFW’s [Wildlife Outreach Program](#) staff have curated a collection of educational resources for K-5 educators that contain lesson plans, activities, videos, and hands-on learning materials. The kits have been designed to connect students to the wildlife resources right in their own backyards and communities, as well as spread awareness about wildlife conservation work in the state. Materials were developed and selected to correlate to the [Next Generation Science Standards](#).



With this Critter Kit, students can learn about native pollinators, the conservation issues they face, and how we can all get involved in helping our pollinator pals!

“We included video interviews with our biologists and fun virtual field trips to give kids a behind-the-scenes look at conservation work in action,” said Mary Gannon, Wildlife Outreach Coordinator for DFW. “We’ve also included resources and suggestions on how teachers and students can get involved and help wildlife right in their own schoolyards, backyards, and communities. Whether it’s submitting an observation of a frog through the [HerpObserver app](#) or planting native plants in your school garden, there are lots of ways educators can create direct connections to our wildlife and contribute to conservation. These resources aren’t just for classroom teachers – we encourage informal educators, homeschooling families, Scout groups, or other groups interested in Rhode Island’s wildlife to check them out! We also have partnered with the [RI Office of Library and Information Services \(OLIS\)](#) to provide a set of kits for children’s librarians.

A total of six kits have been developed: Feathered Friends, Bat Chat, Keeping the Balance, Scales & Slime, Pollinator Pals, and Home Sweet Habitat. Kits are available to borrow, free of charge, for two weeks at a time. A freshwater wetlands habitat kit is also on the horizon for 2024!

To reserve a kit, visit www.dem.ri.gov/critterkits to view available dates and then fill out the reservation form to request a kit. Once your reservation has been confirmed, your selected kit can be picked up any time during your reservation period. Educators can choose to pick up their kit at the Washington Park Library in Providence or the Louttit Library in West Greenwich. Librarians should reserve kits through the OLIS Equipment Catalog. All written resources are always available online at the [Critter Kits webpage](#).

The Rhody Critter Kits Program is made possible through support from the [Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program \(WSFR\)](#) and [State Wildlife Grants \(SWG\)](#), Federal Aid programs administered by the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). Funding from hunting licenses, permits, and excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment is allocated each year to DFW through the WSFR Program to fund wildlife research, monitoring, habitat acquisition and restoration, wildlife outreach programs, and aquatic resource and hunter education courses. Additional funds from the SWG Program are allocated to support conservation and outreach efforts for Rhode Island's [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#). For additional questions about Rhody Critter Kits and Wildlife Outreach Program, email mary.gannon@dem.ri.gov.

For more information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow [DEM on Facebook](#), Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM), or Instagram (@rhodeisland.dem) for timely updates. Follow [DFW on Facebook](#) and Instagram (@ri.fishandwildlife) to stay up to date on news, events and volunteer opportunities. You can also subscribe to DFW's monthly newsletter [here](#).

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