



Indian Land Tenure
FOUNDATION



Karuk Tribe: *Nanu'avaha*

Grade K

Lesson 6: TEK and Western Science - Birds

ELA Common Core Content Standards:

Writing Standards 2

Speaking and Listening Standards 1, 3, 4

Language Standards 1, 2, 5, 6

Estimated duration: one 45 min. session, with extra time for art activities

Optional Karuk Language: 45 min., with suggestions for follow up sessions

World Language Content Standards: The optional activities, lesson plan and materials found in the *Araráhíh – Karuk Language* supplements align with *Stage I: Content, Communication, Cultures, Structures, and Settings* categories adopted by the California State Dept. of Education.

Goal: Students will learn about some of the birds with which, like their Yurok and Hupa neighbors, the Karuk people use to make ceremonial regalia.

Teacher Background: The cultural heritage of most indigenous peoples, including that of the Karuk People, incorporates sophisticated Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into all components. The well-known ecologist, M. Kat Anderson, defines TEK as “rich knowledge of how nature works and how to judiciously harvest and steward its plants and animals without destroying them” and describes its development as “the product of keen observation, patience, experimentation, and long-term relationships with plants and animals...built on a history, gained through many generations of learning passed down by elders about practical as well as spiritual practices.”¹

Despite these strong cultural traditions, Native People are the most under-represented minority in scientific disciplines overall, especially in the natural sciences. While many people would agree that Native scientists would be likely to bring new perspectives and potential insights to environmental science and resource management, it appears that most Native American students, as well as many students from other cultural traditions, are intimidated by science and math courses.

Native American students also come up against an additional barrier--the tendency of western cultures to either ignore or make light of the principles and knowledge of indigenous peoples. This lesson will help students understand that these two forms of science – Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and western science – can augment each other when properly understood.

With content focusing on birds associated with medicinal and ceremonial practices, this lesson will help students understand the cultural beliefs underlying the use of their feathers and body parts: Birds and animals used in traditional ceremonies retain their spirits. Their spirits dance with the

¹ Anderson, M. K. (2005). *Tending the Wild*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press

people as one; the physical and spiritual join together to set the world in order, to create a balance between all things. Balance can be lost when bad things happen – when someone or something causes harm to someone or something. A person does not kill birds or animals for ceremonial use without first fasting and praying. These are integral aspects of the process of obtaining and preparing regalia items. Thanks are always given to the bird, animal, or plant for sacrificing their lives for “fixing the world,” which is to bring the world back into balance.

- Theme/Big Idea:** We will make the world better
- Big Questions:** Why is it important for Indian people to continue their cultural practices?
- Vocabulary:** ceremony, regalia
- Karuk Vocabulary:** *chúufish, thúuk, kachakâach, iktakatákaheen*

Materials:

- Birds and their Special Feathers**, PowerPoint (included in Kindergarten DVD)
- Bald Eagle Information
- Pileated Woodpecker Information
- Bald Eagle**, coloring worksheet (included)
- Stellar Bluejay**, coloring worksheet (included)
- Pileated Woodpecker**, coloring worksheet (included)

Preparation: Prepare the PowerPoint for projection or print out the slides to show the class. Write the following sentence on the whiteboard: *what bird is that*

Discussion Circle: Tell students that the Karuk people use the plants and animals around them for many different purposes. Today we will talk about some of the birds used to make ceremonial dance regalia, but that first, it is important to know that like their Yurok and Hupa neighbors, traditional Karuk people believe that the birds and animals used in traditional ceremonies are still alive in spirit. Ask them what they think this means. Tell students that in order for a traditional person to kill a bird or animal in the right way, they pray and keep their hearts and bodies “clean.” Ask them what they think this might mean (Suggested answers: they won’t be mean or steal; they don’t eat or drink too much, or be lazy). Tell them that it is absolutely essential to have a good heart when getting materials for and making regalia items. Thanks are always given to the bird, animal, or plant for sacrificing their lives for “fixing the world,” which is to bring the world back into balance.

Daily Language Practice and Vocabulary: Have children correct the sentence: *what bird is that*

Ask students if they know if they remember what *identity* means from their first Nanu’ávaha lesson (**identity** – the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others).

How about *respect*; do they remember what that means (**respect**– a feeling of admiring someone or something that is good, valuable, important, etc.)?

Ask them if they know the meaning of today’s vocabulary words: **ceremony** and **regalia**. Clarify meaning: you may choose to adapt your definitions to the ones provided below:

ceremony - a formal act or event that is a part of a social or religious occasion

regalia— special clothes, items and decorations for ceremonies

Discussion: Tell students that today we will use our new vocabulary to continue learning about tribal identity, because it is important to the community that we learn this. Ask students if they've ever attended a ceremony. Ask for examples of ceremonies (wedding, graduation, award ceremony, homecoming, Jump Dance, White Deerskin Dance, Brush Dance, Flower Dance). Pass around the "special item" and let students take turns talking about a ceremony they've been to.

Tell them today they are going to learn about regalia items that are used in traditional ceremonial dances of the Karuk Indians, and also by the other local Tribes, the Hupa and Yurok. Bird feathers are used in the regalia students learn about today.

Visual and Listening Competency: Display the **Birds and their Special Feathers** PowerPoint. Using the following informational material, explain to students that:

Slide 2: Bald Eagle

- Female bald eagles are a bit bigger than males. Their bodies can be three feet long, and their wingspan can be eight feet across.
- Eagles build their nests at the very top of tall trees so the eggs will be safe. Some parents come back year after year to the same nest, adding more sticks, twigs and grass each time.
- Bald eagles are birds of prey, meaning they eat meat.
- A bald eagle isn't bald at all. They are called that because of their white heads.
- Bald eagles can soar over 10,000 feet high, and their great eyesight lets them see a fish up to a mile away.
- When they attack, they drop down at up to 100 miles an hour! then they glide just above the water, snag a fish with their feet, and fly off to eat it.
- During courtship they lock their talons and spin cartwheels in the sky. They let go before they hit the ground and soar back into the sky.
- Once they are a couple, the two birds will mate for life. Only in the case where one eagle dies or disappears will the other one find a new mate.

Ask them if they know what it is and how their feathers are used traditionally (*Suggested answers: men/boys wear them in the Brush Dance, Jump Dance, and White Deerskin Dance*). Show **Slide 3** and tell students that these are a matching pair of eagle feathers that are used in the Brush Dance, which is a healing ceremony for a sick child. They are pinned on either side of a dancer's headroll and are called "Mourning Feathers." Show **Slide 4**.

Ask them if they can guess why eagle feathers are used in such ceremonial dances (*Suggested answers: they signify strength, protection and love of their families. The dances are held during ceremonies that serve to heal sick children and the earth so that it can be healthy again. Eagles are loyal, dependable, passionate and caring for their family*). Show **Slide 5**.

Slide 6: Pileated Woodpecker

- The pileated woodpecker is one of the largest woodpeckers in North America.
- The sound of the pileated woodpecker’s hammering carries a long distance through the woods where they live. They drum to attract mates and to establish the boundaries of their territory—warning other males away.
- They use their beaks to peck and dig under bark to find carpenter ants, beetle larvae and other insects.
- A nesting pair of pileated woodpeckers usually makes a nesting hold in a large, older tree. During the day, both parents take turns incubating, or sitting on, the eggs to keep them warm. At night, only the male incubates the eggs. They generally lay four eggs at a time, which take about two weeks to hatch

Point out its brilliant red scalp. Ask them if they know what it is, and how it is used in traditional dance regalia. (*Suggested answers: Jump Dance headdress, Brush Dance head roll, Brush Dance quiver.*) Show them pictures of these items in **Slides 7 – 8**, explaining that these are Jump Dance headdresses, and **Slide 9** is a headdress from the Brush Dance. **Slide 10** depicts a jump stick that can be used in either the Brush Dance or the War Dance, which is one of the dances in the World Renewal Ceremony. Ask them if they can see both eagle feathers (the fluffy ones from the underbelly of the Bald eagle) and the woodpecker (the head of the staff).

Next, show students the flicker bird depicted on **Slide 11**. Ask if they know what it is and how it is used. (In the Jump Dance at *ameekyáaraam*, the woven mesh that goes over the top of the men’s head and down their back, and also on the Jump Dance basket that the men hold). Ask them if they can remember that it is one of the so-called Doctor Birds and ask them if they can remember another Doctor Bird (Bluejay and Hummingbird, but tell them we will just look at Bluejay again this time – **Slide 12**). Tell them that all these birds have different feathers, and certain ones are used for specific purposes. Show Slide 13 and tell them that the Flower Dance girl has what is called a visor, or blinder, that is made from the feathers of the Bluejay. They are to help her learn to see with the eyes of a healer, which is one of her roles as a new woman. The photo of the feather shows a flicker feather, and you can see many of these on the right: this is a like a scarf or a boa that is draped around the neck of who? Students should guess that this regalia item belongs to a type of doctor, signified by the type of feathers used: flicker feathers along the sides and bluejay feathers on the fringe.

Art Activity: Assign Coloring Worksheets.

Optional: Arrange for a guest speaker who has knowledge about ceremonial dances and regalia, possibly a student’s, parent, grandparent, or other relative. Encourage speaker to bring regalia items and provide a small demonstration of the cultural and/or ceremonial uses of feathers. Before the speaker arrives instruct the students to respect the speaker. Remind them that people may have different feelings and/or understandings about the topic, and that it is important to respect others’ views, interpretations, and their willingness to share. All information is valuable. Remind them of the appropriate classroom behavior and protocol for active listening and possible interaction during the presentation.

Encourage students to ask family members about their understanding of the dances.

Name _____

chúufish – Bald Eagle Coloring Worksheet



Bald Eagle

The bald eagle's wing feathers are used in making head dresses. The small, fuzzy white ones on their underbelly are used to decorate many regalia items, such as a jump stick.

Name _____

thúuk – Flicker Coloring Worksheet

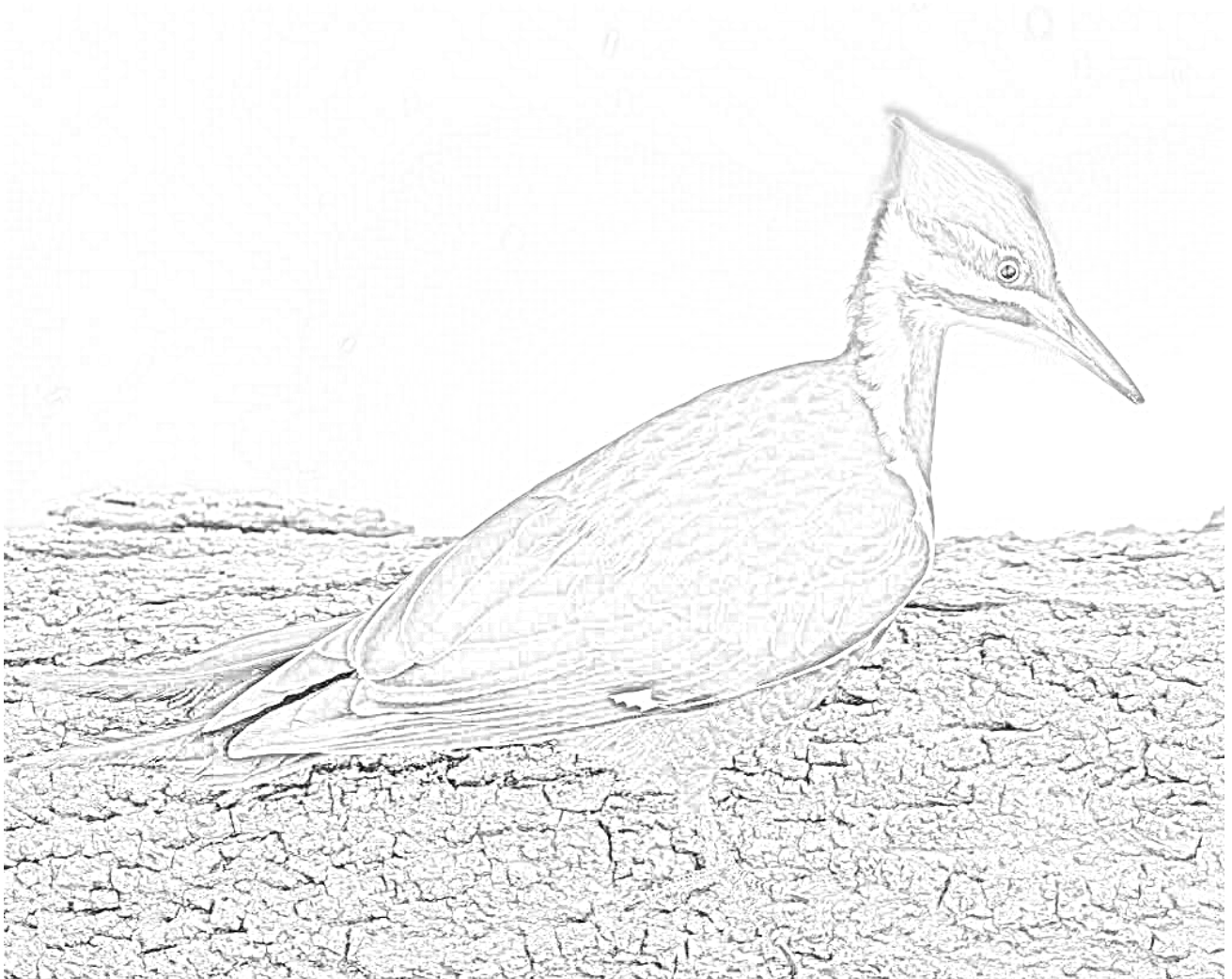


Flicker

Flicker has colorful feathers used in dance regalia. As one of the Doctor birds, its feathers are often used in medicine people's regalia.

Name _____

iktakatákaheen -- Pileated Woodpecker Color Worksheet



Woodpecker

This woodpecker's brilliant red scalp is highly prized among tribes. It takes many scalps to make a single dance head dress.

Araráhíh: Karuk Language

Introduction:

Vocabulary: chúufish, thúuk, kachakâach, iktakatákaheen

Visual Literacy:

Grammar:

Activity:

Closing:

Visual Literacy: Show the PowerPoint and tell them that

Music Activity: