

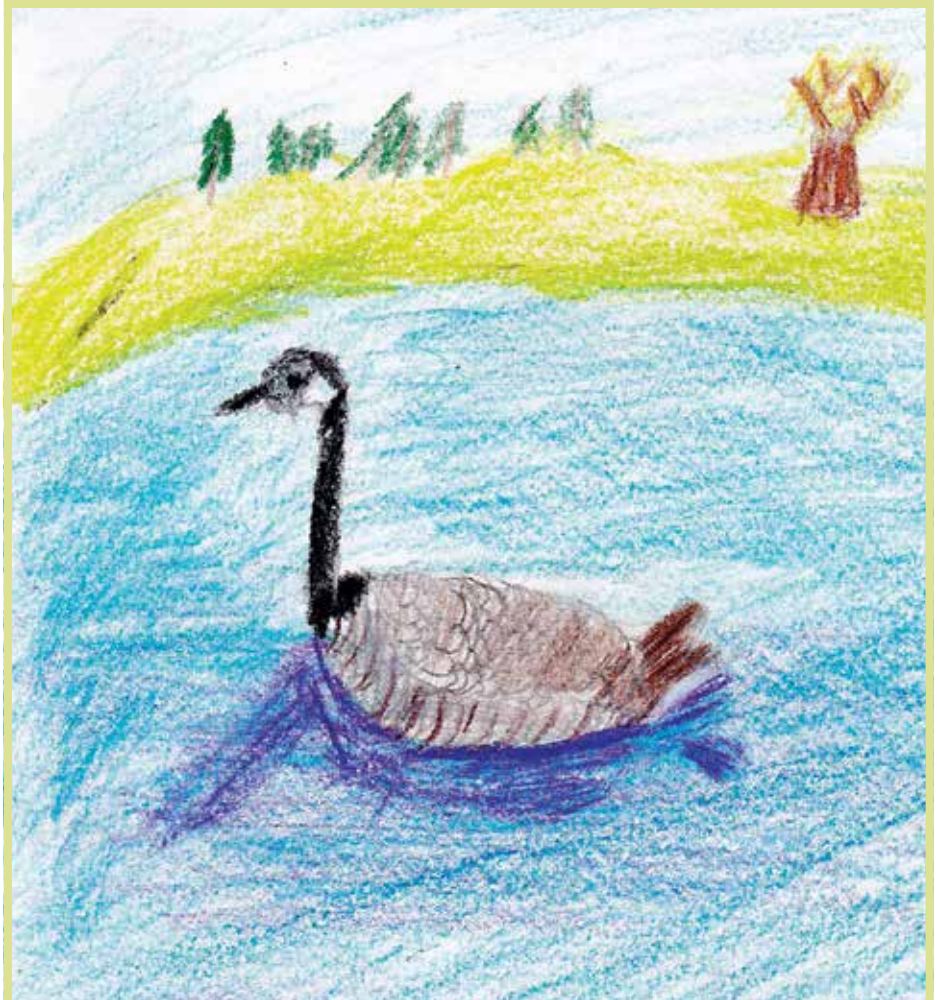
## My Day at the Wetlands

by Kolby, Grade 8  
Tualatin Valley Academy  
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Mr. Kahler

Suddenly Mr. Gatchet shouts... Look! Great Egret! We look down across the lake and sure enough there it is: tall, skinny, with bold white feathers, looking for fish in the water. It stands there just as if he is the king of the wetlands. It leaves its spot in the lake and soars over the crowd, attracting everyone's attention, catch of the day in its mouth. Great Egrets always catch my eye, as I see them lurk through the swamp or the lake to catch fish for their babies back at home.

The egret is in a different spot now across the lake, so I can still see it through my binoculars. I want to get a better look at this majestic bird, so I ask my teacher if we can start looking for birds as we walk around the trail. If I get lucky, the egret will still be there, and I can get a look at his long black legs, long feathers, and neck. Great Egrets are tall, pure white birds with a very long yellow bill. They are quite common at Fernhill Wetlands, and almost all of the time I see them they have some sort of a fish in their mouth. I think I know this bird's favorite treat. I walk in the front of the group so that I can get the best look at it before it flies off.

On the way around we see many other bird species that I admire very much, such as the Double-crested Cormorant. There were about 15 of them sitting on old tree snags, showing off their wings to everyone around. I think that the Double-crested Cormorants are like the jocks of the wetlands, showing off to everyone around while perched at the very top of a broken down tree. We get a look in the distance of a Peregrine Falcon, soaring above the clouds. We also see a couple of cool ducks at a pond in the back of



**Canada Goose**

by Haysie, Grade 4, The Prairie School of DuPage, Wheaton, IL, Ms. Westberry

Fernhill like the Bufflehead, Northern Pintail, and Ring-necked Duck. All of these birds are only warming me up to get a close up look at the Great Egret.

I look out where the egret was and there he still is, fishing just as before. We get closer and closer when someone in the group spots a Great Blue Heron, a distant family member of the Great Egret. We all "ooh" and "aah" when the Great Egret flies away. I try and look through my binoculars to get a close look, but I can't spot it as it is too far away and just too hard to see. I am disappointed I didn't get that close look because I dedicated this trip to seeing the Great Egret! We finish the trail and see lots of other bird

species like the Song Sparrow, Canada Geese, and a lot of Red-winged and Brewer's blackbirds.

We are about to end our Fernhill wetland trip when we see what may be the most majestic bird of them all, the Bald Eagle. It soared over us, when out of nowhere a Canada Goose flies up to the Bald Eagle and stirs up a fight. The Bald Eagle strikes back and doesn't stop. The Canada Goose doesn't realize how strong this Bald Eagle is, and he knows he's not going to win this fight, so he quickly dives down into the water. He hides like this for quite a long time, and the Bald Eagle ends up flying back to its nest to feed its young.

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I'm happy I got to see this awesome sight as we start to head back to the bus. I am still somewhat disappointed I didn't get to see that close up look of the Great Egret, but I thought it was OK because I saw a lot of other cool birds. We're getting really close to the bus now, and out of the blue a Great Egret is on the shore for just a split second, and I get my close up look. I am ecstatic, I thought I wasn't going to be able to see it close up, but I did! I finally actually got a good look at the long yellow bill, long white neck, and the awesome white feathers of the Great Egret!

I finish this trip on a high note, and I fulfilled my goal of the day. My day at the wetlands was definitely awesome! I ended up seeing 28 species, and my class and I planted 250 plants for Clean Water Services at Fernhill Wetlands. I can't wait to see new birds at Fernhill Wetlands, and hey maybe next time I go birding I can make my goal to see a "Little Egret!" Can't Wait!



**Bald Eagle**  
by Jackson, Grade 7  
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Mrs. Mueller

Eagle's nest was, so I was excited to see that. While we were on the trail you could see the Bald Eagle flying back and forth to its nest. We saw a lot of neat birds on our way around the trail, but I was waiting to see the Bald Eagle. When we got to the closest point of the nest of the Bald Eagle I was excited. But sadly we came too late and it wasn't there. So we kept along the trail to finish our journey.

In the afternoon we came back to the undercover place and ate lunch. After lunchtime was over our guide, Christian, took us to this part of the trail that had plants all over but were not planted. I knew then that we were going to be the ones to plant them. On the inside I didn't really want to do it, but I knew it would be a good thing to do. During the community service we all got in groups and started to plant. To my surprise I actually enjoyed the planting; it made me feel good to know that I was helping out a community but also that I enjoyed the work. On our way back, Christian told us about the neat project they are working on to help the wetlands. After our adventure was over and we were walking back through the wet and muddy trail, something caught my eye. The majestic Bald Eagle swooped down over the lake to catch its prey! The Canada Goose just minding his own business, dived down into the lake to avoid being an afternoon snack. The Bald Eagle missed it by a fraction of a second, but to the goose's surprise the eagle was coming back for another go. It amazed me that I was lucky enough to see this magnificent sight. When the scene was over and we had to get going, it made me upset we couldn't stay longer. At the end of the day I got to see some awesome species I have never seen before and got to help out the community and now I have some good memories of Fernhill Wetlands. All I can say is that it was both a fun and productive day.

## The Day at Fernhill

by Corey, Grade 8  
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On our journey to Fernhill Wetlands, I was on the bus thinking of what birds I wanted to see. I kept hearing interesting stories about the Bald Eagle and its nest it has there, and I knew I wanted to see it. When we got there I was thrilled to see what kind of birds I could see right away. I didn't see any birds that really caught my attention, just the typical kind of birds. We stayed at an undercover structure when we got there because we were waiting for the weather to

clear up. While we were there we saw about 10 to 15 species! John Gatchet, the former superintendent of our school, came to go birding with our class. During our wait under the covered area he brought his spotting scope for the birds that were off in the distance. I was still waiting to see the Bald Eagle but there was no luck. Then I heard John Gatchet say that he spotted one through his scope. I wanted to be the first to see, and when I came to the scope and saw the Bald Eagle in its huge nest I was so amazed at how big and majestic it was.

What makes the Bald Eagle one of my favorite birds? For one it is a symbol of our nation. How it soars majestically through the air just takes my breath away. We finally got on the trail when the weather cleared up. The trail moved around the lake and by where the Bald