
Overview:

In “Birds, Art, and Conservation” at the Maumee Bay and Conference Center, Kenn Kaufman provides an overview of the history and importance of bird illustration.

Summary:

In “Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon in Bird Illustration History,” artist and conservationist Kenn Kaufman gives a brief background of ornithology and introduces bird painters Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon. He describes the impact of bird painting through their works. Kaufman emphasizes the connection between birds, ornithologists, the art community and their contributions to wildlife conservation efforts.

ODE 9-12 STANDARD 1: Science; Course, Biology; Section, *Diversity and Independence of Life*, Topics *B DI. 1, 2, 3* (*biodiversity, ecosystems, loss of diversity*)

ODE 9-12 STANDARD 2: Science; Course, Environmental Science; Section, *Earth Systems: Interconnected Spheres of Earth*, Topic 1, *ENV.ES.1 Biosphere (evolution, biodiversity, ecosystems, dynamics)*, Topic 2, *ENV.ER.5 Wildlife and Wilderness (management, endangered, invasive and introduced species)*

Discussion Questions:

1. Review Audubon’s pieces of now-extinct species (Carolina Parrots, Passenger Pigeon, Eskimo Curlew, Great Auk, etc.). These species’ legacies and images only live on through illustrations. What does this say about the importance of ornithology and bird painting?
2. How might ornithology and similar fields be important to conservation efforts in the United States? Globally?
3. What other industries could these branches of science partner with to strengthen conservation efforts or public support?

Activity:

Split the class into small groups, and within each group, identify one currently endangered animal. Use the example of Audubon and other conservationists to construct a call-to-action plan to increase public awareness about the endangered species and to protect its legacy. Present three or four methods that conservationists can use to support this species.

Resources:

Digital Samples of Audubon’s Art: <https://www.audubon.org/>

Grassroots Conservation Efforts for Bird Species: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation>

