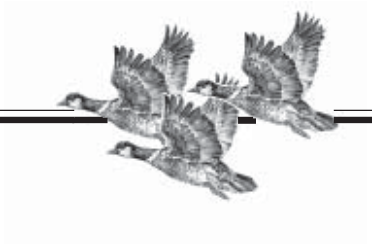
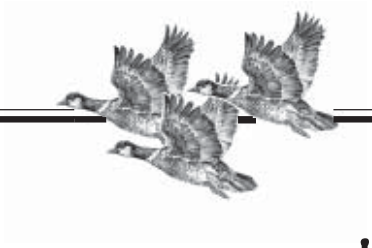


Section 5

Special Stories



Live or Let Die Puppet Show

DeeDee Dodo: (sobbing in corner) Boo hoo hoo

Woolly Wanda: Hey DeeDee – why are you so blue? Calm down and tell me what's the matter

DeeDee Oh Woolly – I have no friends left anywhere – I am so sad!

Woolly Wanda: It's OK DeeDee – I'm your friend, we're all your friends here.

DeeDee: Thank you Woolly but you don't understand – I mean there are really no friends or family of my kind left and I miss having them around. Boo hoo

Woolly Oh – I see what you are talking about now – but DeeDee – look at me – I haven't had any family or friends around for thousands of years! At least you have some memory of your relatives.

DeeDee I'm sorry Woolly – I'm not being very sensitive to your plight. At least you can feel some comfort in knowing your demise wasn't really preventable – I mean there's not a whole lot any of us can do about weather changing and food just NATURALLY disappearing.

Woolly Yes, yes I suppose that's true, once things began to really warm up about 10,000 years ago and the glaciers began to retreat and the vegetation started to change – we large mammals weren't really very well adapted to survive. I do find some comfort in visiting my old prehistoric friend the musk ox – they've somehow managed to hang out in the arctic and survive since the ice age – it's quite a puzzlement!

DeeDee: I know – it's so unusual – but I just can't understand why WE had to disappear – I mean – yes we are slow and yes we are ugly but OUR demise were the humans and that darned age of discovery and exploration – and the pigs…nasty little animals….we were quite happy minding our own business on our little island eating fruit and hopping around - thank you.

Woolly: It's a very sad thing to think about DeeDee

DeeDee: Yes – we were all so shocked - so many sailors came to our islands, and then they brought their animals and the rats who ate up all of our eggs from our dear old nests. We didn't know any better than to have our nests on the ground – we were so safe for so long.

Woolly: Yes it was hard to get away from those predators and since you couldn't fly I suppose that made it all the worse.

DeeDee: Other animals later on had it just as bad - like those poor big old slow turtles – things were really bad for them – and most of the sailors didn't even like the way they tasted! And the big beautiful birds – oh their feathers were such a prize for the ladies – we were so isolated and no one really cared what was happening to us.

Woolly: Things were bad back then DeeDee – but you know a lot has changed since you were a spring dodo. I have a friend I would like you to meet – her story will lift your spirits.

(Woolly leaves – Dodo sniffles and Gertie Goose comes in)

Live or Let Die Puppet Show *continued...*

Gertie Hey DeeDee – Woolly tells me your feeling blue today and I came to cheer you up.

DeeDee Thanks Gert – but I'm afraid I've worked myself into a tizzy by now – and you have had such a hard life just like me – we are practically kin what with all of our same situations – we lived and nested on islands, we enjoyed having nobody around and no predators to worry about and then everything changed – you had those nasty fox come and eat all your precious eggs as well – you almost lost all of your relatives!

Gert I know I know It was a very sad time – our numbers went down down down and pretty soon our special family of geese were all about gone – on the verge of extinction – just like what happened to you DeeDee. But our story is a little different because we had some humans who really cared about what was happening to us – and by then enough dodo-like animals had disappeared that there were actually laws in place to help us!

DeeDee Wow – you don't say! You are lucky. Tell me more about your story – how did you escape those fox and why didn't you just find some other place to go – you could at least fly!

Gert Well – it's true that we could fly – and we did move around the islands some – but the foxes were everywhere – there were hardly any islands left where you wouldn't find them – and besides – we are specially adapted to nest on those islands – it provided the right place to have our chicks and raise our young. So it took some humans at the Fish and Wildlife Service to help us out before we completely disappeared. We were actually put on a special Endangered Species list for the United States.

DeeDee Yeah yeah I'm on a special list too – the Extinct Species List! BooHoo

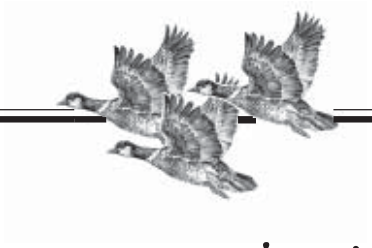
Gert So sorry – I hit a sore spot.. Anyway back to my story – the USFWS had a special way of helping us get rid of those horrible nest robbers – oh here he comes now!

Collie Hey gals – what's up – are you telling your special story again Gert?

Gert Well – I have a captive audience! DeeDee didn't have the same sort of help or protection I was lucky to have – so I'm trying to help her understand how things have changed since she lost all of her kind.

Collie Well – I was more than happy to do my part to help bring back the Aleutian Canada Goose! My job was to use my excellent sniffer here to sniff out those fox dens so the biologists could catch them and remove them from the islands. I'm really good at that sort of thing! But it was hard work and it took over 30 years and the Aleutians are a bit too windy and wet for my liking!

DeeDee So – all you had to do was get rid of the foxes and all was good?



Live or Let Die Puppet Show *continued...*

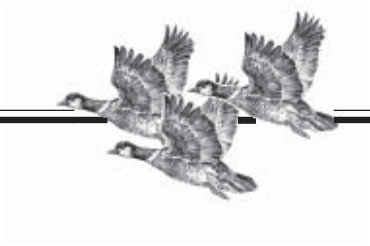
Gert Well – not exactly – our numbers were so low – they actually thought maybe we had gone extinct – but luckily a biologist found some of my relatives still nesting on one island and he was able to help move some of the eggs and chicks to other islands where we used to nest and try to help get the population up and going again. Plus – they protected us when we migrated to our winter eating grounds. The hunters in Washington and Oregon hunted other types of geese instead - that meant more adults would come back to nest.

DeeDee Wow – that is so great! It is so valuable to have those laws in place and to have biologist out there who understand what we need and how to help us.

Collie Yeah – and now more people are aware of the importance of having different plants and animals and are much more careful about what they do – so although your story is very sad DeeDee – I think humans have learned from you – and that is a good thing – it should make you happy to know that today's plants and animals have a much greater chance of NOT becoming extinct!

DeeDee I DO feel much better now – thanks so much telling me your story – you guys are great friends! I'll see you later – I'm off to share this great news with Woolly – he shouldn't be too hard to find!

Gert/Collie Bye DeeDee – We'll see you again soon!



The Story of the Aleutian Canadian Goose

It all started years ago way out on some islands far out on the Aleutian Chain. Home for many types of marine mammals, sea birds and special plants.

One special type of bird, the Aleutian Canada Goose used many of these islands as their only nesting spot in the summer.

For years they migrated to these islands, building their nests and laying 3-4 eggs each summer. Because the summers are so short, they only laid one clutch of eggs once a summer. So it was important that their chicks survived in order to be able to grow big enough for their long migration to their wintering grounds in Washington and Oregon.

Everything was going great for these birds for a long time as they continued in their way of goose life – returning to their nests on the Aleutian Islands every summer.

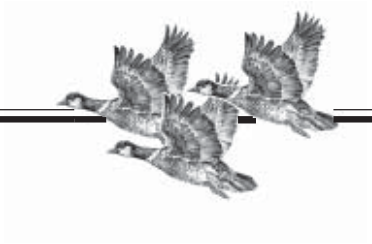
Until….

As early as 1750 fur farmers and trappers began introducing fox to the islands on the Aleutians. By the early 1900s fox farming became a very important industry and the Aleutian Islands farming business was a perfect place to raise fox – isolated islands, relatively mild weather and no real competition for resources - so business was booming. Fur coats and hats were all the rage so the demand for fox fur was very high. So, the fox farmers continued to use the Aleutian Islands and did really well as long as people still wanted to wear fur coats. During this time the geese continued to come to their nesting grounds but found many of their areas were disturbed by the farms.

But then the fashions changed and people no longer wanted fur and there was no money in the fur farming business anymore - so the farmers moved out - but the fox stayed. For many years the fox ran freely having a heyday with all of the prey available on the islands. Since there were never any natural predators, all the sea birds laid their nests on the ground unprotected - an easy target for a hungry fox. Adults survived the breeding season - but not very many chicks and the population began to dwindle. Increased pressure on the population from hunting on their wintering grounds reduced the numbers of the adults as well. The goose population declined steadily from 1938 until 1962, when biologist found no Aleutian Canada Geese on the nesting grounds.

Then in the early 1950s a wildlife biologist named Bob "Sea Otter" Jones became the Wildlife Refuge Manager on the Aleutian Islands, he set about trying to save these birds as best he could. He began trying to remove fox from Amchitka Island since their presence was hurting other sea birds as well and,

> on the off chance that a few Aleutian Canada geese remained somewhere and could be saved from extinction. With little more than his dory (a relatively small



The Story of the Aleutian Canadian Goose

wooden boat) and his amazing energy and persistence, Bob spent most of 10 summers removing every last fox from Amchitka. He suspected a few birds might be left on Buldir Island, the most isolated spot in the chain, so rugged and unprotected from the sea that fox farmers would not have been able to regularly land their boats on the beaches. In 1962, Bob got the Coast Guard cutter *Winona* to load his dory onto her decks and drop him off near Buldir. A few hours after landing, he confirmed that a remnant breeding population indeed existed! During the next five years, he removed introduced foxes from islands near Buldir and captured goslings at Buldir to form a captive flock at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center for future reintroductions. His work provided the basis for the formal recovery program that was to come.

Those years of effort that removed foxes from former nesting islands and reintroduced Aleutian Canada geese also benefited other bird species, including puffins, murres, auklets, and a variety of land birds. Other management actions that have led to recovery of the Aleutian Canada goose include banding birds on the breeding grounds to identify important wintering and migration areas; closing wintering and migration areas to the hunting of Canada geese; acquiring, protecting, and managing important wintering and migration habitat in California and Oregon; and releasing families of wild Buldir Island geese on other fox-free islands in the Aleutians.

The USFW Service made the goose one of the first species protected under the Endangered Species Act, passed in 1973. The first accurate count of the birds in 1975 revealed only 790 individuals. Now their numbers have reached more than 30,000 today.

The population of Aleutian Canada geese is now four times larger than the Service's recovery goal. Because of this tremendous success story the USFW Service has proposed that the Aleutian Canada goose be removed from the Endangered Species List.

Work still remains to be done on the islands to rid them of invasive predators that are brought in from visiting boats such as the Norway rat. Rat predation is a number one problem for sea bird nesting colonies on many of the islands and work continues to resolve this problem.

Excerpt from: Sea Otter Jones and the Aleutian Canada Goose by Vernon Byrd

The Short-tailed Albatross Story

Once there was a volcano – a single volcano that rose above in the Pacific Ocean as a small island off the coast of Japan. It was a special island because it was the perfect nesting spot for a special seabird – the Short-tailed Albatross.

This special sea bird spends almost all of its year at sea, using its long beautiful wings to soar effortlessly for hours and miles over the ocean – circling for food. The only time the albatross comes to land is to nest and the only place it wants to nest was this one special island – which just happens to be an active volcano!

Hundreds of years ago this went on without much ado – the Short-tailed Albatross soaring and fishing for squid and other fish that might come close to the surface of the ocean in the summer, and nesting and raising a single chick each year in the fall and through the winter. But, unfortunately for the Short-tailed Albatross and other albatross as well, their beautiful long feathers were just the thing to make beautiful hats for fashionable women in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Their feathers were used for pen plumes and feather beds as well. Because they are such a large bird, weighing almost 15 pounds, they were killed for their meat too. Almost 5 million Short-tailed Albatross were killed until almost no birds were left and they were close to extinction.

To make matters even worse, the volcano erupted in the 1930s, causing extensive damage to their nesting site. Typhoons would also flood the volcano's crater, washing volcanic ash over the eggs and chicks as the storm water cascaded down to the sea. For a while it looked like the species was extinct. But against all odds, ten albatross were discovered on Torishima Island in 1951. The Japanese government declared the bird a national monument! But that was not enough to help these birds recover. Then along came a young man named Hiroshi Hasegawa, who decided to make it his life mission to save these birds from extinction. He studied the birds and began a Short-tailed Albatross conservation study.

One thing he learned was that the bird's eggs, which were laid on the steep slope of the volcano, would often roll into the sea. So he planted native grasses on the slope to help keep the eggs from tumbling into the ocean. He had great success in just one year – egg survival went from 30 percent to 60 percent!

But…in 1987 a giant landslide happened on the upper slope of the colony. Mud flows buried the chicks and washed away eggs.

This time the Japanese government stepped in and helped Hasegawa and he terraced the slopes and built barriers to slow down erosion. This helped some, but the problem of the volcano still was looming in the background.

Hasewaga decided to try to help the birds set up a new colony on the OTHER side of the island – where the slope was not so steep and there was more vegetation. He painted decoys and set them up in various courting poses – he even broadcasted mating calls over a loud speaker to fool the birds into thinking this was an active breeding site. His trickery worked and mating pairs arrived and set up nests.

The Short-tailed Albatross Story

Hasewaga has worked for nearly 30 years to help bring the population back and his effort is paying off. In 1996 more than 100 new chicks were counted at two nesting sites.

The Short-tailed Albatross is not out of danger though, it still remains on the Endangered Species list because its population numbers are not strong enough, it still is threatened by the possibility of a volcanic eruption at any time, and increased amounts of plastic pollution floating in the ocean pose a real threat to their safety.

But the news is good – the birds went from having fewer than 50 birds in the late 1940s to having almost two thousand soaring over the ocean off the coast of Alaska and Japan!

Excerpted from: Arctic Science Journeys – Radio Script, 1997. Bird Man for the Albatross, University of Alaska Fairbanks Sea Grant Program.

Trade Book Connection

Target Grades: K-6th

Objective:

To help student become aware of keystone species and their importance to ecosystems and to introduce students to the reasons behind protective legislation for plants and animals.

Concept:

Sea Otter Inlet: Some animals represent keystone species in an ecosystem and removal of them from this ecosystem can have drastic and long-term negative impacts.
She's Wearing a Dead Bird On Her Head: Many early species if plants and animals were driven to extinction because of overharvesting prior to the establishment of laws and regulations protecting them and management plans for natural resources.

You Will Need:

- *Sea Otter Inlet Book*
- *Sea Otter Inlet Felt Board Pieces*
- *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head Book*

What to Do:

Grades K-3: Read the story ***Sea Otter Inlet*** to your students using the felt board and felt pieces to provide extra illustration and reinforcement of concepts. Once you have finished reading the story, have your students either retell the story with the felt board pieces, or have them create a food marine food chain with the pieces. Discuss impacts of removing one of the links in the food chain. Introduce the notion of another level of predator - the killer whale. Discuss what might happen if killer whale predation reduced the number of sea otters. Make connections between the impacts of the human hunting overharvest to the impacts of the natural hunting overharvest.

Follow up with the ***Kelp Bed Food Web Activity*** for reinforcement of the marine food chain/food web concepts.

Grades 3-6: Read the story ***She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head*** to your students. Once you have finished reading the story, discuss the events that led up to the near extinction (and in some cases - extinction) of sea birds. Discuss the importance of laws and regulations that have been put in place over the past 50 years that will help protect plants and animals in the future. Discuss the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (or introduce it if you have not already) and ask why it is an important law.

Follow-up with the ***Albatross Alert Activity*** to learn more about these endangered sea birds and their special adaptations.