

FLYING WILD

PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Prepared for the
Council for Environmental Education

By Edward J. McCrea



March 30, 2006

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Appendices (Included in a companion document)

- A: Summary of Flying WILD workshops
- B: Summary of answers to questions on the Flying WILD Workshop Evaluation Forms
- C: Summary of information provided on the Workshop Participant Information Forms
- D: Summary of Flying WILD Seed Grants
- E. Festival Feedback Form tabulation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

In 2002, the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) was awarded a three-year grant to develop the Flying WILD program. Funding was provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with matching funds from Phillips Petroleum, now ConocoPhillips. The purpose of the resultant Flying WILD Program is to engage middle schools in bird education efforts with the intent of encouraging increased environmental stewardship among youth. Special emphasis is placed on creating an approach that is readily adaptable for urban schools, often with underserved students who traditionally receive few opportunities to participate in environmental education initiatives. In July of 2004, *Flying WILD: An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds* was published, and to date, approximately 7,000 copies have been distributed for use in implementing the program. Since the guide was released, state coordinators for the program, CEE staff, and community partners have conducted extensive training. The goal of the training is to create a cadre of educators trained in the details and philosophy of Flying WILD who are capable and motivated to include Flying WILD in their educational activities.

The three-year grant that funded the original development of the program ended in January of 2006. At that time, an overall evaluation of the first years of the project was needed as a general review of program accomplishments and to ascertain the extent to which Flying WILD was meeting the objectives set forth in the original grant proposal. The following report uses data collected during the three-year period to reflect on overall program progress and the extent to which grant objectives were met.

B. General Findings

1. The workshop model for encouraging the use of Flying WILD materials was very well received by participants.
2. 452 or 97% of the educators who responded to a questionnaire evaluating Flying WILD trainings rated the Flying WILD activities excellent or good.
3. 353 or 82% of the educators who responded to a questionnaire evaluating Flying WILD trainings indicated they planned to help implement Flying WILD.
4. Participants responding to a questionnaire believed they learned new information about birds (424 or 91%) and bird related materials (438 or 94%) at the workshops they attended and were confident that they could use the Flying WILD materials (437 or 93%).

5. Organizations and agencies that received seed grants primarily used these funds for the following:

- bird trunks and kits
- more Flying WILD trainings
- support for Flying WILD Bird Festivals
- small grants to other groups to support Flying WILD activities

These uses of relatively discretionary funds indicated these materials and activities were perceived as high priority by grant recipients.

6. Educators from organizations and agencies receiving seed grants placed a high value on cooperation with other educators and organizations as evidenced by:

- activities and materials from other organizations that were consistently used in the bird trunks developed under seed grants
- partnerships formed for training and festivals
- grants given to encourage other organizations to become active in Flying WILD

7. Educators hosting festivals:

- were experienced teachers who believed that they knew quite a bit about bird related topics and bird related educational materials
- were very positive about the program and intended to continue using Flying WILD
- intended to recommend the *Educator's Guide* to a friend
- indicated that the Flying WILD training they had received was very helpful

8. Reports on Flying WILD Bird Festivals indicated:

- the average number of students participating in a Flying WILD activity at a festival was 159
- an average of 162 persons attended each festival
- extensions of the basic festival model and cooperative activities with other organizations and agencies were included in most festivals
- slightly less than half of the schools hosting festivals had significant minority attendance

C. Progress Towards Meeting Grant Objectives

The four objectives from the NFWF/ConocoPhillips grant along with related comments are summarized below.

Objective One: To ensure the nation's students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory birds

Although there is currently no significant data available that looks at student learning after exposure to the Flying WILD program, there are reasons to believe that the groundwork has been laid to accomplish this objective in the coming year:

- A training model has been developed that receives high marks from educators. The model educates participants about birds and bird resource materials and motivates them to participate in the program.

- An *Educator's Guide* has been developed that received very high scores from professional educators.
- Educators are being trained who appear dedicated to using Flying WILD with students and, to a lesser but significant extent, plan to host Flying WILD Bird Festivals.
- An instrument and a testing method have been developed that will allow accurate assessment of learning from Flying WILD.

Objective Two: To promote action projects whereby students become involved in school, community, and home activities that will benefit bird conservation

Again, direct measures of the success of activities to meet this objective are scarce at this early point in the program. However, there is evidence that this objective is also being met.

- Experienced, trained, knowledgeable educators are hosting Flying WILD Bird Festivals.
- The festivals include exposure to a variety of community resources such as live bird demonstrations.
- The festivals include components such as bluebird nest box construction that promote stewardship activities that benefit birds.
- Students develop and participate in action projects such as creating a school outdoor classroom with bird friendly habitat, preparing educational materials for festivals, creating new bird related education materials, improving habitat for migratory birds in a nearby park, leading bird walks and bird related education activities, etc.
- Over 40% of Flying WILD Educator Training Workshop participants indicate they intend to host festivals.

Objective Three: To ensure that teachers have the resources they need to prepare for, organize, and lead a school bird festival with their students and community partners

- Educators participating in the training workshops indicate they learned a significant amount about birds and about bird-related education materials.
- Educators participating in the training workshops indicate they are confident about using Flying WILD materials.
- Educators participating in the training workshops rate the festival planning portion of the workshop quite highly.
- Educators hosting festivals indicate they strongly believed that Flying WILD trainings were very helpful in conducting the festival.

Objective Four: To provide a vehicle to encourage schools to work cooperatively with community organizations and businesses interested in bird conservation

Most data related to this objective is qualitative and sparse, but there are significant indications that cooperation is an important part of the Flying WILD program:

- Seed grant reports indicate that seed grant funds are being used to train more educators. The training is often performed cooperatively with other organizations and agencies.

- Materials collected for bird trunks and kits under the seed grant program often go beyond the basic Flying WILD material and represent donations by other area agencies and organizations.
- Small grants provided to schools and other groups under the seed grant program are in and of themselves indicative of community cooperation. (The seed grant recipients had the option to retain all seed grant funds for their own direct use.)
- Most Flying WILD Festival Feedback Forms indicate that outside resources such as volunteers and representatives from various organizations and agencies helped with the festivals. Demonstrations by bird rehabilitators and other live animal displays were important components of several festivals.
- Anecdotal evidence from conversations with Flying WILD facilitators, emails, and discussions with CEE staff often included a cooperative, community-based theme.
- At least one seed grant recipient used funds to hold community planning efforts for Flying WILD and for Flying WILD-related environmental service projects.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) was awarded a three-year grant to develop the Flying WILD program. Funding was provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) with matching funds from Phillips Petroleum, now ConocoPhillips. The purpose of the resultant Flying WILD Program is to engage middle schools in bird education efforts with the intent of encouraging increased environmental stewardship among youth. Special emphasis is placed on creating an approach that is readily adaptable for urban schools, often with underserved students, who traditionally receive few opportunities to participate in environmental education initiatives. In July of 2004, *Flying WILD: An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds* was published and to date, approximately 7,000 have been distributed for use in implementing the program. Since the guide was released, state coordinators for the program, CEE staff, and community partners have conducted extensive training. The goal of the training is to create a cadre of educators trained in the details and philosophy of Flying WILD who are capable and motivated to include Flying WILD in their educational activities.

The three-year grant that funded the original development of the program ended in January of 2006. At that time, an overall evaluation of the first years of the project was needed as a general review of program accomplishments and to ascertain the extent to which Flying WILD was meeting the objectives set forth in the original grant proposal. The following report uses data collected during the three-year period to reflect on overall program progress and the extent to which grant objectives were met.

II. OBJECTIVES FOR THE GRANT FUNDED PROGRAM

The original grant proposal included four main objectives that the Flying WILD Program was intended to accomplish:

- To ensure the nation's students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory birds
- To promote action projects whereby students become involved in school, community and home activities that will benefit bird conservation
- To ensure that teachers have the resources they need to prepare for, organize and lead a school bird festival with their students and community partners
- To provide a vehicle to encourage schools to work cooperatively with community organizations and businesses interested in bird conservation

In subsequent sections of the report, specific aspects of data collected during the initial years of Flying WILD are analyzed and presented. From this analysis, the extent to which the four grant objectives were met are then discussed.

III. SOURCES OF DATA FOR THE REPORT

It should be noted that although the grant was awarded in late 2002, much of the first two years was devoted to planning and to writing/editing the *Educator's Guide* that is the heart of the overall program. Therefore, most data useful in evaluating the program is available only since the guide was printed in July of 2004. Initial distribution began in August of 2004. The active public phase began in the fall of 2004.

For each of the six sources of data noted below, an analysis is presented in the following section. Analyses of data sources A and B are based on more detailed data compilation sheets included in appendices of this report.

Data analyzed and interpreted in this report came from six main sources:

A. Workshop Evaluation Forms

Much of the data for this report was obtained from evaluation forms that were distributed at Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops. These Workshop Evaluation Forms primarily elicited feedback on the quality of the workshops.

B. Workshop Participant Information Forms

The second major source of data was Participant Information Forms also distributed at Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops. These forms elicited background information on those being trained.

C. Seed Grant Reports

The Council for Environmental Education, utilizing NFWF/ConocoPhillips funding, provided grants of \$2,000 to 20 organizations to be used to help implement Flying WILD. One of the conditions of the grant was that organizations obtaining the funds agreed to summarize their grant activities in a report to CEE.

D. Festival Feedback Forms

The *Educator's Guide* contains a form that educators conducting a Flying WILD Bird Festival are requested to complete and return. Thirteen of these forms were available for analysis.

E. Pilot Test for Information Gained During Workshops

Stephen F. Austin University has developed a pre- and post-test that can be used in Flying WILD Educator Training Workshop and activity evaluation. The tests and overall evaluation design examine the extent of learning taking place with educators participating in Flying WILD trainings and students engaged in Flying WILD activities. While this effort was primarily a pilot to develop the methodology for determining information gained in workshops and by activity participants, it did produce data of use in this evaluation.

F. Miscellaneous Information

A report that the Houston Audubon Society prepared on their Flying WILD efforts was a useful tool in this evaluation for comparisons and for certain specifics of workshops. In addition, emails, notes, photos, flyers and agendas were submitted by Flying WILD trainers to CEE. Personal observations from the report writer's involvement with training workshops and discussions with CEE staff played a minor role in development of this report.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Workshop Evaluation Forms

One of the main program activities since the *Educator's Guide* was published has been conducting training workshops for educators. The basic premise of this approach is that in order to implement the program, a nationwide cadre of trained educators must be available to work with students and other youth. The trainers conducting the workshops are individuals who have themselves been trained in Flying WILD. Many of these individuals are trainers for Flying WILD sister programs—Project WILD and Project WILD Aquatic. Trainers from Flying WILD Community Partners were also involved.

The actual number of Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops conducted is not known since many trainers do not submit summary reports to CEE as requested. However, since approximately 7,000 guides were distributed between July of 2005 and Mid-January of 2006, and each workshop participant received a guide, we can safely state that no more than 7,000 educators have been trained. If, as is the case with workshop reports that were returned to CEE as requested, each workshop had an average of 13 participants, the number of workshops presented to date is approximately 385. Adjusting for the fact that a number of guides are in storage for use later in 2006, a figure of 5,000 trained through 385 workshops is a reasonable estimate for the 17-month period following the publication of the guide.

As noted below, reports from 46 workshops were returned. Thus, we have reports from approximately 12% of workshops held.

To summarize--

- 46 basic Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops were held in 5 states (NY, TX, ID, TN, ME) and the District of Columbia.
- Training occurred at 30 different sites.
- The workshops occurred from October 23, 2004, to February 25, 2006, over a period of 17 months.
- A total of 588 individuals attended the workshops and returned a usable Workshop Evaluation Form, the Participant Information Form, or both.
- The average attendance at a workshop was 13 participants with a low of 2 and a high of 47.
- DC, IA, and ME held one workshop each. TN held 2 workshops. TX held 20 workshops. NY held 21 workshops.

Each trainer conducting a Flying WILD Educator Training Workshop was requested to submit two forms to CEE. One was a basic Workshop Evaluation Form and the other was a Participant

Information Form. Theoretically, the number of Workshop Evaluation Forms and Participant Information Forms should be the same. However, at times one form and not the other was obtained and in some cases in the early days of the program, forms were used at a workshop that differed from the other forms being used by the majority of trainers. 479 useable Workshop Evaluation Forms were returned. 540 usable Participant Information Forms were returned.

Answers provided to each question on the Workshop Evaluation Form:

1. By attending the Flying WILD Workshop, I learned a lot of new content in the subject area(s) I teach:

459 or 96% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on whether they had “learned a lot of new content in the subject area(s) I teach.” Of those 459—

23 or 5% indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement

29 or 6% indicated that they slightly disagreed with this statement

229 or 50% indicated that they slightly agreed with this statement

178 or 39% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement

Note: Because of the pattern of checking the entire column and the fact that other comments on the evaluation were positive, it was highly likely that a substantial number of the 23 persons who marked “strongly disagree” thought they were marking “strongly agree,” but misread the options.

2. By attending the Flying WILD Workshop, I learned new information about birds and their conservation needs:

470 or 98% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on whether they had “learned new information about birds and their conservation.” Of those 470—

26 or 6% indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement

20 or 4% indicated that they slightly disagreed with this statement

200 or 43% indicated that they slightly agreed with this statement

224 or 48% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement

Note: Again, because of the pattern of checking the entire column and the fact that other comments on the evaluation were positive, it was highly likely that a substantial number of the 26 persons who marked “strongly disagree” thought they were marking “strongly agree,” but misread the options.

3. By attending the Flying WILD Workshop, I learned new information I can use in my classroom:

460 or 96% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on whether they had “learned new information I can use in my classroom.” Of those 460—

21 or 4% indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement

9 or 2% indicated that they slightly disagreed with this statement

164 or 36% indicated that they slightly agreed with this statement

266 or 58% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement

Note: Again, because of the pattern of checking the entire column and the fact that other comments on the evaluation were positive, it was highly likely that a substantial number of the 21 persons who marked “strongly disagree” thought they were marking “strongly agree,” but misread the options.

4. By attending the Flying WILD Workshop, I learned new teaching concepts and instructional strategies:

463 or 97% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on whether they had “learned new teaching concepts and instructional strategies.” Of those 463—

20 or 4% indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement
8 or 2% indicated that they slightly disagreed with this statement
178 or 37% indicated that they slightly agreed with this statement
257 or 54% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement

Note: Again, because of the pattern of checking the entire column and the fact that other comments on the evaluation were positive, it was highly likely that a substantial number of the persons who marked “strongly disagree” thought they were marking “strongly agree,” but misread the options.

5. By attending the Flying WILD Workshop, I learned about materials available for my classroom:

466 or 97% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on whether they had “learned about materials available for my classroom.” Of those 466—

21 or 5% indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement
7 or 2% indicated that they slightly disagreed with this statement
176 or 38% indicated that they slightly agreed with this statement
262 or 56% indicated that they strongly agreed with this statement

Note: Again, because of the pattern of checking the entire column and the fact that other comments on the evaluation were positive, it was highly likely that a substantial number of the persons who marked “strongly disagree” thought they were marking “strongly agree,” but misread the options.

6. In terms of usefulness to your classroom, rate the quality of the activities from *Flying WILD: An Educator’s Guide to Celebrating Birds* you experienced today:

464 or 97% of those completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on their impression of the quality of activities from Flying WILD. Of those 464—

359 or 77% indicated that they thought the activities were excellent
93 or 20% indicated that they thought the activities were good
12 or 3% indicated that they thought the activities were average
0 or 0% indicated that they thought the activities were poor

7. In terms of usefulness to your classroom, rate the quality of the festival planning portion of the training:

438 or 91% of the 478 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on the quality of the festival planning portion of the training. Of those 438—

197 or 45% indicated that they thought the festival planning portion was excellent

185 or 42% indicated that they thought the festival planning portion was good

47 or 11% indicated that they thought the festival planning portion was average

9 or 2% indicated that they thought the festival planning portion was poor

8. How appropriate was the level of work expected during the workshop:

466 or 97% of those completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information on the level of work expected during the workshop. Of those 466—

4 or 1% indicated there was way too much to do

5 or 1% indicated there was a little too much to do

418 or 90% indicated that the amount to do was about right

39 or 8% indicated that there could have been a little more to do

9. How confident are you that you can use Flying WILD activities with your students:

468 or 98% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided a response to the question: “How confident are you that you can use Flying WILD activities with your students?” Of these 468—

2 or fewer than 1% indicated that they were not at all confident

29 or 6% indicated that they were slightly confident

225 or 48% indicated that they were confident

212 or 45% indicated that they were very confident

10. Do you plan to help implement Flying WILD:

432 or 90% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop answered the question: “Do you plan to work with schools or other groups to help implement Flying WILD?” Of these 432—

353 or 82% answered “yes”

79 or 18% answered “no”

11. List one activity that you plan to use with your students:

Of the 442 responses, 31 distinct Flying WILD activities were named by respondents. In addition, 8 activities were provided with descriptive titles that could not be matched up to the specific activity in the *Educator’s Guide* that they referred to. Four sections of the guide that provided background, but which were not really activities, were also named.

The top five activities in frequency of mention—

The Great Migration Challenge—100
Jeop-birdy—88
Bird Olympics—40
Hidden Hazards—34
Bird Bingo—32

For a complete list of activities mentioned, see Appendix B.

12. Do you plan to conduct a Flying WILD festival:

327 or 68% of the 479 completing evaluation forms for their workshop provided information indicating whether or not they planned to conduct a Flying WILD Bird Festival. (A substantial number wrote in “maybe” or that they were not sure but would like to.) Of the 327 who responded—

145 or 44% indicated “yes”
182 or 56% indicated “no”

13. If there was one thing you could change about the workshop it would be:

147 suggestions and comments were indicated for this question. This number included 47 who responded “nothing.” The responses were widely scattered and did not tend to form identifiable groups. Most items were single responses on a subject with only 9 items having more than one response. Of the answers that did tend to group, 22 responded that the workshop should be longer and 14 indicated that the workshop should include more activities. For analysis purposes, responses were grouped within related areas. Identical or nearly identical responses were aggregated. However, since many similar responses contained slightly different content or intent, aggregation of responses was not pursued aggressively.

For a complete list of suggestions, see Appendix B.

14. The best thing about the workshop was:

368 responses were received to this question. Again, the responses were widely scattered although more grouping did occur than with the previous question. For analysis purposes, responses were grouped within related areas. Identical or nearly identical responses were aggregated. However, since many similar responses contained slightly different content or intent, aggregation of responses was not pursued aggressively.

The top six responses were—

The activities—55
Doing hands on activities—25
Instructors—22
Educator’s Guide—16
Materials given to participants—16
Everything—15

For a complete list of comments, see Appendix B.

15. Comments:

161 comments were provided by participants. Most were positive comments on the workshop and instructors (Thanks—19, Excellent—11, Very good—4, etc.) Only 10 of the 161 comments were indicated by more than one respondent (although more aggressive aggregation would have increased the group slightly and added a significant number of responses to the positive comments on instructors and on the overall workshop).

B. Participant Information Forms

As noted above, 540 usable Participant Information Forms were returned by instructors conducting basic Flying WILD training.

Answers provided to each question on the Participant Information Form:

1. Please indicate your gender:

537 of 540 (99%) who responded indicated their gender. Of that number—
425 or 79% were female
112 or 21% were male

2. Please indicate your ethnicity:

512 out of 540 or 95% indicated their ethnicity. Of that number—
443 or 87% were white
40 or 8% were Hispanic
22 or 4% were African American
6 or fewer than 1% were Other (including one “mixed” and one “American Indian”)
1 or fewer than 1% was Asian

3. My current position is best described as:

530 out of 540 or 98% indicated their current position. Of that number—
205 or 39% were nonformal educators
116 or 22% were Elementary teachers
79 or 15% checked the Other category
66 or 12% were College students (because of confusion by participants, the college student and pre-service categories were lumped for these calculations.)
52 or 10% were Secondary teachers
8 or fewer than 2% were Curriculum specialists
4 or fewer than 1% were School administrators
0 or 0% were Industry representatives

4. Subject areas taught:

351 out of 540 or 65% indicated the subjects they teach. Of that number—

116 or 33% taught science
90 or 26% taught elementary subjects
38 or 11% taught some other subject
25 or 7% taught math
23 or 7% taught social studies
16 or 5 % taught language arts
15 or 4% taught special education
11 or 3% taught art
10 or 3% taught physical education
4 or 1% taught technology or computers
2 or fewer than 1% taught music
1 or fewer than 1% taught industrial arts

5. I am most likely to use Flying WILD materials with the following number of students during one year:

348 of 540 participants or 64% estimated how many they would train in Flying WILD within a year. Of that number—

131 or 38% indicated that they would train between 1 to 30
78 or 22% indicated that they would train between 31 to 60
56 or 16% indicated that they would train between 61 to 120
18 or 5% indicated that they would train between 121 to 150
12 or 4% indicated that they would train between 151 to 210
53 or 15% indicated that they would train more than 210

Note: If a mid-range is used for estimation purposes, over 26,000 more educators will be trained by workshop participants in the next year.

6. Estimate the percent “minority” (African American and/or Hispanic) students in your classes:

323 of 540 participants or 60% estimated the minority students in their classes. Of that number—

125 or 39% indicated that their classes were less than 10% minority
40 or 12% indicated that their classes were between 11 to 25% minority
53 or 16% indicated that their classes were between 26 to 50% minority
33 or 10% indicated that their classes were between 51 to 75% minority
22 or 7% indicated that their classes were between 76 to 89% minority
50 or 15% indicated that their classes were more than 90% minority

C. Seed Grant Reports

1. Summary

Twenty agencies and organizations received grants of \$2,000 each from CEE. The grants were to be used to implement Flying WILD.

Training. The primary use of the grants was for additional Flying WILD training sessions. (At least 53 workshops were held or will be held with partial or complete support from seed grant funds.)

Trunks or kits. A second important use of the funds was for the creation of Bird Education Trunks or Kits. These items contain bird education resources and Flying WILD materials that educators can use for programs with their classes or youth groups. Having materials assembled and ready to go is a solid asset in promoting the program to today's busy teachers. Over 30 trunks and kits were completed with seed grant money.

Festivals. Seed grant money was also used to support Flying WILD Bird Festivals. At least seven festivals were held with support funds from seed grants.

Grants. Grants were given to organizations and educators for support of Flying WILD activities such as festivals. Approximately 18 grants were disbursed for this purpose.

Other activities such as development of a bird/Flying WILD-oriented website, planning for correlation of Flying WILD to state education standards, holding public meetings to build support and obtain resources for Flying WILD, etc., were also conducted with grant funds.

A more detailed summary of grant activities is provided in Appendix D.

2. Grant recipients

1. California Department of Fish and Game
2. Dallas Zoo (report not received yet)
3. Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife
4. District of Columbia Fisheries and Wildlife Division
5. Edinburg Scenic Wetland and World Birding Center, Edinburg, Texas
6. Environmental Education and Conservation Global, Rochester, New York
7. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
8. Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division
9. Houston Audubon Society
10. Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife
11. Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
12. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
13. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
14. New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
15. Pennsylvania Game Commission
16. Tennessee Wildlife Federation
17. Texas State Aquarium
18. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
19. West Valley Outdoor Learning Center, Spokane, Washington
20. Wyoming Game and Fish Department

D. Festival Feedback

A form is provided in the *Educator's Guide* to encourage educators to provide feedback on Flying WILD Bird Festivals that they conducted. Thirteen educators returned Festival Feedback Forms.

Of the 13 festivals that information was received on, seven were held in Kentucky, two in Indiana, two in Texas, one in Tennessee, and one in Virginia. All festivals for which dates were given were conducted in the spring of 2005.

A complete listing of responses to questions on the Festival Feedback Form is included in Appendix E. A summary of responses to questions is provided below:

- The educators holding the festivals appeared to be experienced (the average length of teaching being 16 years).
- The educators rated their knowledge of bird related educational materials and of bird related topics as above average.
- Most schools holding festivals were public with about half being rural and half being urban.
- Over half the schools had mostly white students while slightly less than half had significant minority attendance.
- Most festivals were conducted school-wide or within a portion of the school rather than being held in a single classroom.
- Students were a majority of the audience for festivals but the general public and parents were also included.
- The average number of students participating in the Flying WILD activities at a festival was 159.
- The average number of people participating in a Flying WILD Bird Festival was 162.
- Most festivals included extension activities, invited guests and service learning components. Special guests served as presenters, ran demonstrations (particularly with live birds) and led activities.
- Almost three quarters of the festivals included activities from sources other than the *Educator's Guide*. The mixture of activities includes—building bird nest boxes, bird of prey demonstrations, activities from other organizations, student created activities and others.
- When asked if they would use the *Educator's Guide* again, the average response was 5.4 out of a possible 6.
- When asked if they would recommend the *Educator's Guide* to a friend, the average response was 5.8 out of a possible 6.
- When asked about the helpfulness of the Flying WILD training they had received, participants gave the training a 5.5 out of a possible 6.

E. Pilot Test of Information Gained at Workshops

Overview

Since the *Educator's Guide* was published in July of 2004, the Flying WILD National Office has overseen distribution and training efforts while working with consultants to develop and test an

instrument that could help ascertain how well educators participating in training workshops and students participating in Flying WILD activities learn.

The resultant test instrument has not yet been employed with large numbers of educators and students and therefore cannot provide detailed insights about knowledge gained after exposure to Flying WILD. However, the development and field testing of the survey instrument have been completed and will receive wider distribution in the coming year. This holds considerable promise for a standardized, precise, and reliable method for seeing how well educators and students are learning.

The following steps were taken to develop the test instrument:

- Consultants from Stephen F. Austin University developed a standardized model workshop that included a set itinerary and specific activities to be used.
- The consultants then wrote test questions that elicited what workshop participants learned about guide and workshop components and structure and what participants and students learned about the content of Flying WILD activities. The same set of questions was used for both pre- and post-tests.
- Questions were reviewed and improved based on input from CEE staff and others.
- An iterative process of actually implementing the test with groups who participated in the model workshop was employed and revisions to questions and structure were made.
- Final test questions were developed in cooperation with the consultants and are ready for use.

Note: By the end of the development process, those taking the test showed an average 25% gain in correct answers after participating in the model workshop.

F. Miscellaneous Sources of Information to Inform the Evaluation Process

In addition to the six sources of information detailed above and in the appendices, additional sources of data with a less formal collection process were reviewed for this report as follows:

- An evaluation of their Flying WILD program conducted by the Houston Audubon Society
- A summary report on the Flying WILD program written by a CEE intern
- A variety of email messages and sample materials submitted to CEE by those using Flying WILD materials
- Personal discussions by the report writer with CEE staff
- Personal observations by the report writer as primary teacher for six Flying WILD workshops

While these sources did not yield any quantitative data for the report, they did serve to inform the overall process followed in organizing the report and compiling data from other sources. They also were the source for some anecdotal data that helped focus discussion and observations in the following section.

V. Discussion of Findings and Implications for the Program

Summaries of data collected for this evaluation report and detailed tabulation of findings are presented in Section IV and Appendices A-E of this report. The sections below present some generalizations from the data and implications for the overall development of the Flying WILD program.

A. Quality and Quantity of Data from Participant Information Forms and Workshop Evaluation Forms

The preponderance of data available for this evaluation report is from Workshop Evaluation Forms and Participant Information Forms completed by educators attending Flying WILD workshops. As indicated earlier, the forms submitted to CEE may represent responses from more than 10% of the total number of educators who participated in Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops since the program's inception through the end of February of 2006. While this sample is large enough to allow us to make some generalizations from the sample to the program as a whole, this must be done with caution because of other factors:

- Geographic range. Although 46 workshops were held in the period covered by this report, 41 of them or 89% were conducted in only two states—Texas and New York. Possible geographic differences in responses to the two forms should be considered in future evaluation efforts.
- Early adopters. Since the first workshop participants included in this evaluation are likely to be those educators who are particularly interested in environmental education and supplementary curriculum materials such as Flying WILD, this group may be different from those educators who take part in training later in the program's development.

An examination of the 479 workshop Evaluation Forms and the 540 Participant Information Forms submitted by the 588 individuals participating in Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops indicated that responses to most questions were clear and consistent. As is likely to be the case with any information gathering instruments that are used widely for the first time, adjustments and improvements can be made in the forms for future use. However, no serious problems that were likely to invalidate aggregated replies were noted.

B. Qualitative Data

The other data reviewed for this evaluation could not be compiled and tabulated as could the quantitative data from the workshops. (The exception to this is the Festival Report Form, but the number of forms was too low to allow generalization even with caution.) However, qualitative data did provide interesting insights into the early development of the program, and adjustments for the future can be made based on these data as long as caution is shown.

C. Summary of Results

1. Who attends Flying WILD workshops? If they participated in a Flying WILD training since the guides were released in July of 2005, they are likely to be female (79%), white (87%), and involved in nonformal environmental education (39%) or with the formal school system in some

capacity (33%). However, they might be a college student (12%) or consider themselves to be outside the typical occupation categories (15%).

If they are a teacher with the formal school system, they are most likely to teach science (33%) or teach elementary subjects (26%). (However, 11% of them indicated that they taught subjects or subject areas that were outside traditional areas in the formal system.) Almost half of them taught at schools that were over 25% minority (48%) and 15% of them taught at schools that were 90% minority. Note: There were indications that some nonformal educators not affiliated with the formal schools system also answered questions about subject areas taught which distorts these findings slightly.)

They indicated that they were likely to use Flying WILD material with 76 students over the next year. When they and all of their fellow workshop graduates were considered, they were likely to teach Flying WILD materials to over 25,000 students over the next year.

2. What did participants think about Flying WILD workshops? If they participated in a Flying WILD training since the guides were released in July of 2005, they are likely to believe that they learned a lot of new content in the subject areas they taught (87%) and learned new information about birds and their conservation (91%). They also believe that they had learned new information that they could use in their classroom (94%), or had learned about new material available for their classroom (94%). Overall, they believe that the Flying WILD activities contained in the *Educator's Guide* are good or excellent (97%) but are a little less sure that the material on planning and conducting festivals in the guide is good or excellent (87%). They believed that the amount of work included in the workshop was about right (90%).

They also believed that the best things about the workshop were the use of hands-on instruction or the activity approach as the main instruction technique and the extensive use of activities from the *Educator's Guide* during the workshop. Although they liked the workshop and provided few negative comments about it, there was some concern that the workshop should be longer and that it should include even more activities.

After taking the workshop, they were confident or very confident that they could use Flying WILD materials with their students (93%) and over four-fifths of them planned to help implement a Flying WILD program (82%). 44% of them indicated that they intended to host a Flying WILD Bird Festival.

3. Who conducts festivals? (Note: The following analysis is based on 13 forms.) If they sent in a form after concluding a Flying WILD Bird Festival, they are likely to be a classroom teacher with over 15 years of experience and think that their knowledge of bird-related educational material and of bird related topics was above average. They most likely teach in a public school with slightly less than half minority students. About half of their colleagues hosting festivals teach in rural school and about half in urban schools.

Their festival was conducted school-wide or for a portion of the school rather than for a single class or for the public. Their main audience for the festival was students. Their festival included extension activities, invited guests and service learning components. They included a live bird demonstration in the festival. For their festival, they augmented the Flying WILD materials with materials from other sources.

They are strongly inclined to use the *Educator's Guide* again, and would be very inclined to recommend the guide to a friend. They also feel that the Flying WILD training they received was very helpful in conducting their festival.

4. What is seed grant money used for? (The following comments are based on 19 reports.) From these reports, it appears that if their organization or agency received a grant from CEE they used this “off budget” money for bird trunks and kits, more Flying WILD Educator Training Workshops, support for Flying WILD Bird Festivals and/or small grants to support Flying WILD activities. Since voluntary use of “discretionary” dollars often indicates high priorities within a program, they are telling us that these four areas are their highest priorities at this time beyond, perhaps, basic salary and program support supplied by their organization or agency. Because of the number of partners named in their report and the wide variety of materials from different sources included in their trunk, they are also telling us that partnerships and synergistic use of materials and resources are important to them.

D. Generalizations from the Data

1. The workshop model for encouraging the use of Flying WILD materials was very well received by participants.
2. 540 or 97% of the educators who responded to a questionnaire evaluating Flying WILD trainings rated the Flying WILD activities as excellent or good.
3. 90% of the educators who responded to a questionnaire evaluating Flying WILD trainings indicated they planned to use Flying WILD with their youth audiences.
4. Participants responding to a questionnaire believed they learned new information about birds (89%) and bird-related materials (92%) at the workshops they attended and were confident that they could use the Flying WILD materials (93%).
5. Organizations and agencies that received seed grants primarily used these funds for the following:
 - bird trunks and kits
 - more Flying WILD trainings
 - support for Flying WILD Bird Festivals
 - small grants to other groups to support Flying WILD activities

These uses of relatively discretionary funds indicated these materials and activities were perceived as high priority by grant recipients.

6. Educators from organizations and agencies receiving seed grants placed a high value on cooperation with other educators and organizations as evidenced by:
 - activities and materials from other organizations that were consistently used in the bird trunks developed under seed grants
 - partnerships formed for training and festivals
 - grants given to encourage other organizations to become active in Flying WILD

7. Educators hosting festivals:

- were experienced teachers who believed that they knew quite a bit about bird-related topics and bird related educational materials
- were very positive about the program and intended to continue using Flying WILD
- intended to recommend the *Educator's Guide* to a friend
- indicated that the Flying WILD training they had received as very helpful

8. Reports on Flying WILD Bird Festivals indicated:

- the average number of students participating in a Flying WILD activity at a festival was 159
- an average of 162 persons attended each festival
- extensions of the basic festival model and cooperative activities with other organizations and agencies were included in most festivals
- slightly less than half of the schools hosting festivals has significant minority attendance

C. Progress Towards Meeting Grant Objectives

The four objectives from the NFWF/ConocoPhillips grant along with related comments are summarized below.

Objective One: To ensure the nation's students are knowledgeable about the conservation needs of migratory birds

Although there is currently no significant data available that looks at student learning after exposure to the Flying WILD program, there are reasons to believe that the groundwork has been laid to accomplish this objective in the coming year:

- A training model has been developed that receives high marks from educators. The model educates participants about birds and bird resource materials and motivates them to participate in the program.
- An *Educator's Guide* has been developed that received very high scores from professional educators.
- Educators are being trained who appear dedicated to using Flying WILD with students and, to a lesser, but significant extent, plan to host Flying WILD Bird Festivals.
- An instrument and testing method have been developed that will allow accurate assessment of learning from Flying WILD.

Objective Two: To promote action projects whereby students become involved in school, community, and home activities that will benefit bird conservation

Again, direct measures of the success of activities to meet this objective are scarce at this early point in the program. However, there is evidence that this objective is also being met:

- Experienced, trained, knowledgeable educators are hosting Flying WILD Bird Festivals.
- The festivals include exposure to a variety of community resources such as live bird demonstrations.
- The festivals include components such as Bluebird nest box construction that promote stewardship activities that benefit birds.

- Students develop and participate in action projects such as creating a school outdoor classroom with bird-friendly habitat, preparing educational materials for festivals, creating new bird-related education materials, improving habitat for migratory birds in a nearby park, leading bird walks and bird related education activities, etc.
- Over 40% of Flying WILD Educator Training Workshop participants indicate they intend to host festivals.

Objective Three: To ensure that teachers have the resources they need to prepare for, organize, and lead a school bird festival with their students and community partners

- Educators participating in the training workshops indicate they learned a significant amount about birds and about bird related education materials.
- Educators participating in the training workshops indicate they are confident about using Flying WILD materials.
- Educators participating in the training workshops rate the festival planning portion of the workshop quite highly.
- Educators hosting festivals indicate they strongly believed that Flying WILD training was very helpful in conducting the festival.

Objective Four: To provide a vehicle to encourage schools to work cooperatively with community organizations and businesses interested in bird conservation

Most data related to this objective is qualitative and sparse, but there are significant indications that cooperation is an important part of the Flying WILD program:

- Seed grant reports indicate that seed grant funds are being used to train more educators. The training is often performed cooperatively with other organizations and agencies.
- Material collected for bird trunks and kits under the seed grant program often goes beyond the basic Flying WILD material and represents donations by other area agencies and organizations.
- Small grants provided to schools and other groups under the seed grant program are in and of themselves indicative of community cooperation. (The seed grant recipients had the option to retain all seed grant funds for their own direct use.)
- Most Flying WILD Bird Festival forms indicated that outside resources such as volunteers and representatives from various organizations and agencies helped with the festivals. Demonstrations by bird rehabilitators and other live animal displays were important components of several festivals.
- Anecdotal evidence from conversations with Flying WILD facilitators, emails, and discussions with CEE staff often included a cooperative, community-based theme.
- At least one seed grant recipient used funds to hold community planning efforts for Flying WILD and for Flying WILD-related environmental service projects.