



Project OspreyTrack

A project of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center funded by:
3M Eco Grant, Eversource, and Jane B. Cook 1983 Charitable Trust

E11 – Osprey Aerobics

Teacher Notes

A few minutes of Osprey related exercise. Normal Osprey habits and activities can be easily converted into a class exercise programme presented as a game. It can be carried out in any space free of obstacles indoors or outside (school playground, sports field, gymnasium or school hall).

The activities of the birds that translate into exercises are as follows;

1. **Migrating.** To represent this, the children run from one side of the space to the other, at the same time as flapping their arms like wings.
2. **Perching.** To represent this, the children all stand still wherever they are with their arms at their sides.
3. **Helicoptering.** When chicks are building up their muscles in preparation for flying, they spend days flapping their wings whilst still on the nest. Gradually as the muscles build up they rise into the air a short way and come back down again. This is known as helicoptering. You can see a film clip of it on the film archive section. To represent this, the children stand on one leg and flap their arms.
4. **Hunkering down.** When there is a threat to chicks on a nest (for example an intruding bird like a Bald Eagle), they instinctively pull themselves down into the nest and keep still. This can be represented by the children squatting down onto the floor.
5. **Food begging.** Osprey chicks in the nest will make a persistent 'chipping' sound to beg food from their parents. The children can easily copy this noise, and would do so whilst standing still. On the other hand you may well not want to include this part!





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To play the game

1. Explain the exercises to the children. If possible show them the film clips of chicks helicoptering, hunkering down and food begging (if you decide to include it).
2. Put the children at one side of the open space. Designate this side as south, the opposite side becomes north.
3. The teacher stands to one side, the children will need spacing so that their flapping arms will not hit those either side.
4. The teacher then shouts out instructions:

Migrate north

Migrate south

Perch

Helicopter

Hunker down

Food beg

5. The children follow the instruction until the next instruction is called out. Migrating north /south and helicoptering can be interspersed with perching or hunkering down to give the children a rest or to really notch up their activity and heart rates can be followed one after another.

