

# Lesson 1: Introducing Herring Gulls

## Objectives:

Students learn characteristics of the Herring Gull and make connections with past experiences with the Herring Gull.

## Essential Questions:

When do we see Herring Gulls? What have you observed about the bird?



## Alaska Native Values:

Learning by doing: Observing and Seeing Connections, Respect for Nature and Land, Hunter Success, Practice of Native Traditions

## Standards:

L14. Recalls people, places, objects and experiences and makes connections.

L11. Uses expanding vocabulary

## Promoting Culture Self Assessment

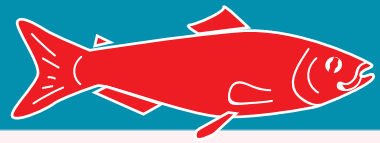
I select props for the dramatic play area that are culturally diverse including those that reflect Alaska Native culture

I ensure that the toys and play accessories that depict people are representative of the various cultural and ethnic groups both within my community and society in general.

I encourage and provide opportunities and experiences for children that support Alaska Native Culture.

Whole Group	Recalling Facts	Herring Gulls/Center
<p><b>Materials:</b> Seymore Gulls (2) White board or big paper to record answers Coloring sheet- <a href="http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/american-herring-gulls">http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/american-herring-gulls</a></p>	<p><b>Materials</b> Printed pictures of Herring Gulls Pen or Pencil</p>	<p><b>Materials:</b> Herring Gulls (in kit)</p>
<p><b>Activity:</b> See below activity.</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Hand out pictures of Herring gulls or coloring worksheet. Ask students to recall facts about what they learned through whole group discussion.  Write what they dictate on the paper and have students share their work. Hang up on a bulletin or near the door so students can practice reading while waiting in line or in class.</p>	<p><b>Activity:</b> Allow students to play with Herring gulls during their free-time.  Make and island with blocks and have gulls pretend to make nests.  If you have fox or bears have them pretend to swim to the island to snatch ch eggs.</p>

# Activity



Engage: Whole Group Activity: Introducing Herring Gulls (time 20 min)

Begin lesson with sound clip from

<https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/hergul/introduction>

Ask students: Do you recognize the sound of this bird?

Explain that it is a Herring Gull and they make sounds to communicate if there is danger, when they spot food, when they are hungry, or when they see another gull they like.

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Herring\\_Gull/sounds](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Herring_Gull/sounds)

(Short video of a Herring Gull and a little more in depth back-ground about different sounds the gull makes).

Have students practice imitating the sound of a Herring Gull.

Explore: Touch, Agturu, Agtur, Vandanihchit

Pass around the two gulls. Ask students, *“What do you notice about the gull? Or, what do you already know about gulls?”*

You can record their answers on the board or a piece of paper either in a short phrase or with a quick picture.

As students list their observations follow with what another question to help guide students into learning more in depth. Example:

Student: “They have a beak”

Teacher: *“Yes! Good it has a big sharp pointy beak. What do you think the Herring gull needs a big sharp pointy beak for?”*

\*Draw a Herring gull beak

Teacher: *“Yes! Herring Gulls need their long pointy upper beak (or mandible) to swoop down and catch smaller fish. They also eat pretty much everything- they are scavengers kind of like the pike! They will eat other birds, clams, mussels, worms, eggs of other gulls and even trash.”*

Student: “They have wings”

Teacher: *“They do! They have really strong wings to help them travel for long distances. Some Herring Gulls travel, or migrate, for the winter cold months to warmer places in the south (southern US, China and Japan).”*

<http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/herring-gull>

This website has a good colored map showing where gulls migrate.

Students: “They have feet.”

Teacher: *“What else do you notice about their feet? They are webbed! See how their toes are connected? This helps them swim really well, like a duck.”*

<https://www.arkive.org/herring-gull/larus-argentatus/image-A23410.html>

This website shows good close up photos of the Herring Gulls feet.

Students: “They have eyes.”

Teacher: *“They do, they have yellow eyes. And something re-ally special about the Herring Gull’s (and most sea birds) is that it can drink salt water if it needs to. If people (and most animals) drink salt water it makes us sick. But a Herring Gull can drink salt water and the salt comes out of a small hole above its eyes.”*

<https://www.birdnote.org/show/seabirds-drink-salt-water>

This website shows a photo of a gull and how the salt water drips down from the special gland down its beak.

Students: “They lay eggs.”

Teacher: *“Yep! They lay eggs on islands or far out in the tundra where predators like foxes or bears can’t easily get to their eggs. We can go and get gull eggs when they first start laying. People have gathered gull eggs for a long, long time as a resource for food. It is important if you ever go out looking for eggs you don’t take all of the eggs, we always leave some especially if there are 3 eggs in the nest, then it’s a good idea to not take any of those eggs because they might have a little chick inside. Have you ever been out sea gull egg hunting?”*- Listen to responses and gather information. Fill in the blanks with this information:

Herring Gulls begin laying eggs in mid May and typically lay 1-3 eggs. When they first lay eggs is a good time to pick them- Late May or Early June. After that eggs tend to taste ‘fishy’ and may be more developed.

When looking for eggs going to an island is your best place to find them. Explain that an island is land surrounded by water. Discuss islands close to your region so students can make connections.

Gulls make indents in the grass or tundra then lay eggs that are about the size of a soda can (about 4 inches). They are oval shaped. The oval shape of an egg helps birds to rotate, or move the egg around during the day so it can stay warm on all sides. It also prevents the eggs from rolling away like a ball.

Explain: Talking, Niugtuk, Qalarte, Qenax

“We’ll be learning more about Herring gull eggs and we’ll even get to hide and find them!”

## Evaluation

Emerging: The student can name the plush toy as a ‘sea gull’ or ‘Herring Gull’.	Developing: The student can name Herring gull and listens to discussion.	Proficient: The student can restate 1-2 facts about the gull.	Advanced: The student can state 3-4 facts learned and share a cultural experience with gathering eggs, or a time they were outdoors and observed a gull.
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