Dear Educator,

Welcome to **Wildlife Encounters** developed by the University of Illinois Wildlife Medical Clinic and the College of Veterinary Medicine, with financial support from the University of Illinois Office of Public Engagement. This interactive computer based program actively engages students in meaningful lessons pertaining to natural resource conservation, wildlife ecology, and wildlife medicine and has been designed to increase students’ understanding of wildlife beyond animal recognition and appreciation.

The program is composed of four themed lessons at each grade level group; K-4, 5-8, and 9-12th grade. Learning objectives have been developed and are associated with each lesson. These lessons, such as lesson I titled “Habitats”, may be completed singularly or in conjunction with the remaining three lessons. The program is designed for self-paced use by the individual student. However, **Wildlife Encounters** is easily adapted to a whole group format aided by use of a SMART board or Promethean board with individual student responders. Using a white board will enable you to effortlessly collect data on your students’ knowledge prior, during, and after instruction. An assessment tool, linked to Common Core standards for interpreting non-fiction passages, is including for each lesson. We recommend you administer the test as a formative check before having students view a lesson and again as a summative assessment after completing the lesson. Each test contains six to ten multiple choice assessment items written to lesson grade level group. The multiple choice questions can easily be changed to create extended response questions by removing the choices and adding a verb from Bloom’s taxonomy that addresses the skill you wish to evaluate. We hope you find these useful in gauging your students’ prior knowledge as well as growth after instruction.

Each lesson culminates in suggestions for student involvement and further exploration of the topics discussed. As an adjunct to the core lessons, educators can elect to explore the suggested Projects and Activities associated with each lesson in the Teacher’s Resources section which offers templates for activities designed to enhance student comprehension and engagement. Local educators may choose to use Educational Activity Loan Kits available locally to augment the **Wildlife Encounters** lessons. Activities kits contain manipulatives, models, and tools specific to a variety of topics.

The Wildlife Medical Clinic has a tradition of providing outreach opportunities to area school children through educational presentations incorporating visits from the Clinic’s birds of prey. **Wildlife Encounters** will prepare students by providing them with an understanding of the natural world in which these birds are found.

For more information visit the Wildlife Medical Clinic website at http://vetmed.illinois.edu/wmc/
Educators that use *Wildlife Encounters* in their curriculum will be eligible to receive a classroom visit from the Wildlife Medical Clinic birds of prey free of cost (base on location and availability).

Our goal is to create a generation of learners who can problem solve creatively and predict future trends with urbanization and wildlife. You are critical to achieving that goal. We hope to impart strategies to young people to aid injured wildlife, protect the habitats in which wild animals are found, and change human behavior to improve the environment for both people and animals. By engaging in these types of activities, your students will awaken their scientific spark and become partners in preservation.

We appreciate your feedback. After using *Wildlife Encounters*, we ask that you give us your comments. Please visit our survey link to complete a ten question evaluation. Again, thank you for participating.

Sincerely,

Dr. Julia Whittington
Wildlife Medical Clinic
University of Illinois
College of Veterinary Medicine

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