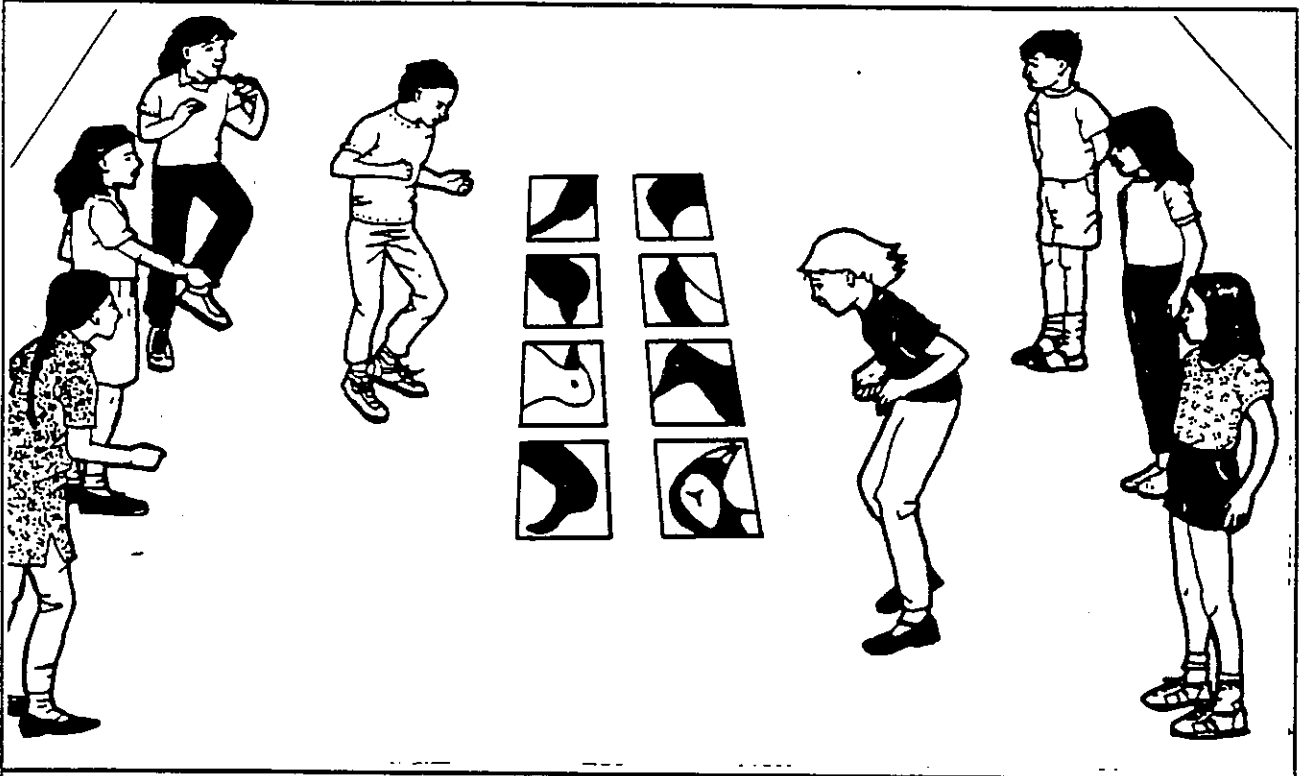


# SEABIRD IDENTIFICATION LINE GAME



## OBJECTIVE:

To reinforce seabird identification skills and knowledge about seabirds.

## BACKGROUND:

Seabirds are unlike any bird you would find on land. Their bills, bodies, and coloration are **adapted** for life in three worlds – water, air, and land. Some of the seabirds fly underwater as well as in the air. That means they must be streamlined in shape yet compact enough to conserve their body temperature in the cold ocean. They must be able to catch slithery food in the water and, in the summer, carry it while flying many miles to their hungry chicks.

All these adaptations are reflected in the seabirds' shapes. By studying and coloring the seabird images, students can begin to see these adaptations as well as learn to identify a variety of seabirds. They can use these pictures for the line game described below or to illustrate a story they write about seabirds.

This activity is best used as a review or for further depth after students have become familiar with seabirds. For winter observers, please note: Some of the seabirds' identifying features (the puffin's colorful, parrot-like bill or its punk feather tufts) are present only in summer to help attract mates. Refer to the range maps in the red booklet, *A Guide to Alaskan Seabirds*, to learn which seabirds might be in your vicinity.

## MATERIALS:

- one set of seabird coloring pages for each student, masters provided

## PROCEDURE:

1. Have students color their seabird pages, using the correct colors as indicated in the key. Point out and discuss the distinguishing features of each bird. When they have finished coloring, the students may put them together as a booklet to be used as a field guide to use during a visit to a colony.

Or any of the pictures could be used to illustrate a story they write about seabirds.

2. For the identification line game, you will need two pictures of each seabird species. You may wish to begin with just 3 or 4 common species and gradually add more species as the students' knowledge improves. Use pictures colored by students or make your own, making sure the name of the bird is not on the picture. You may wish to laminate them.

3. Form two equal teams and line them up, one team facing the other, 15 feet apart. Put the pictures, 2 of each species, in a row on the ground between the two teams. Be sure everyone can see the pictures. The teams count off separately, so that each team has a player number one, two, three, etc. Like numbers from each team face each other.

4. When the teams are ready, call out the name of a bird pictured on the cards lying between the teams, then call out a number. (To add to the surprise, call the numbers out of sequence.) For example, "tufted puffin, number three". Say the number after the bird name, so that everyone is looking for the correct answer, not just the people whose number is called.

5. As soon as the "threes" hear their number called, they race to the cards, trying to be the first to pick up the card with the picture of the tufted puffin. After picking up the card, they return to their team. The team should agree that the correct picture has been chosen. If not, player three can go back and get another card. Every successful player earns a point for his or her team. Since there are two cards of each species, it is possible for both teams to earn a point each round.

6. Facts about the birds can also be reviewed by making statements such as: "The seabird that has a very large orange bill, yellowish tufts on its head, and nests in burrows" (Tufted Puffin); "Ninety-seven percent of the world's population of this seabird nests on St. George Island in the Pribilofs" (Red-Legged Kittiwake); "This seabird makes a very high-pitched whistle, and the inside of its mouth is bright red" (Pigeon Guillemot); "This seabird nests in large, tightly-packed groups on cliff ledges and does not build a nest" (Common Murre); "In some areas of Alaska this bird is called the Sea Parrot" (Horned Puffin); "This seabird feeds on zooplankton, which it gathers by swimming underwater with its wings" (Parakeet Auklet); "This seabird chases fish underwater by swimming with its feet. Its feathers are not waterproof so it must hang them out to dry" (Pelagic Cormorant); or "This bird has the longest known migration, travelling 11,000 miles to winter in the Antarctic" (Arctic Tern).

Names of the birds in Native languages may also be used. Refer to the chart of Native names for seabirds on pages 46 and 47.

#### **EXTENSIONS:**

If possible, visit a seabird colony. Bring binoculars and identification books. Record and sketch observations using the Seabird Checklist included with this activity. The Seabird Checklist is designed to help students observe birds and record identifying characteristics, including bird size, bill shape, wing shape, tail shape, nest site, coloration, and feeding method.

Adapted from: *Teach About Geese*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

