

Variety Is the Species of Life

Do you know about biodiversity? You should! Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. It includes everything from the tiniest microbes to the tallest trees, from creatures that spend their entire lives deep in the ocean to those that soar above the Earth's surface.

Even though Pennsylvania is home to a great richness of life, our biodiversity is threatened. Natural events such as storms and fires have impacts on biodiversity, but nature is usually able to renew itself over time. However, human influences can cause extensive, irreversible effects on biodiversity and affect the overall health of our environment. Do your part to conserve.

Pennsylvania's biodiversity; our very existence depends on it! **Learn More:** Visit www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: 'Earth Day Central', www.GreenWorks.tv (GreenWords 'Biodiversity Jr') or check #12 on your Free Stuff Card (page 7) to

receive a free Biodiversity CD-ROM. ☺



Real Kids Care: Chris Mitchell

A *Falcon Data Recorder* – sounds like a pretty important job, huh? Well, 15-year-old Chris Mitchell, a student at Central Dauphin East High School in Harrisburg, was challenged to the task and passed with flying colors!

For the last couple of years, peregrine falcons have been nesting on the 15th floor of the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg. Last summer, Chris had the honor of being DEP's official falcon data recorder. He was responsible for writing down each bird's gender, weight, color, band number and any health issues observed by the wildlife biologists.

"Just being close to the falcons was exciting," Chris said. "You see them on the Internet and they look so small, but up close these birds are huge!"

As a member of the Falcon Watch and Rescue Team, Chris helps monitor the birds through binoculars to make sure the fledglings don't fall or land in the street as they begin to fly. And, last fall, Chris got the chance to spread his wings even more, so to speak, as he volunteered to band owls at the Ned Smith Center for Nature & Art in Millersburg. **Learn More** about environmental activities for kids at www.GreenWorks.tv (GreenWords 'Planet PA'). ☺



Return of the Raptor

Peregrine falcons nest on a ledge of the 15th floor of the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg. This nest is one of 10 active nesting sites in Pennsylvania. The reintroduction and recovery of the peregrine falcon as well as other native species, helps reclaim biodiversity that is our heritage. **Learn More:** Catch a glimpse on the webcam or check out the photo gallery at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: 'Falcon' or www.GreenWorks.tv (GreenWords 'Falcon'). ☺



What Are Endangered Species?

Plants and animals in imminent danger of extinction are known as "endangered species." Loss of wetland habitats, particularly large connected pieces of land, is the foremost factor currently affecting at-risk, threatened and endangered species in Pennsylvania. ☺



The Masked Turtle

The bog turtle is an endangered species known for its large red-orange or yellow blotch behind each eye, against an otherwise brown body lightly marked with orange or yellow. The primary reason for the bog turtle's troubles is the draining and destruction of its habitat. It is important to be aware that everywhere in nature is home to something. We must think twice before we carelessly disturb or destroy our state's wild places. **Learn More:**

For a Fall Day party highlighting our native species of Pennsylvania check #13 on your Free Stuff Card (page 7). ☺

Activity: Fun Is for the Birds

Birds are important to a healthy environment. They control insect populations, pollinate flowers, disperse seeds and even serve as food themselves for larger predators like the peregrine falcon. Feeding birds is a simple thing to do that can have a big impact on the health of our environment. Here's how fun can be "for the birds": Spread peanut butter on a pine cone and then roll it in birdseed. Tie a string to the cone and hang it from a tree or a hook near your window. Make a couple to attract even more birds. They will appreciate the meal, and the environment will appreciate your stewardship. ☺



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PLANET PA

Planet PA is the first place to go to learn all about your most immediate environment – Pennsylvania. At Planet PA, you'll find links to all sorts of information about nature and the environment. Check out online videos featuring other Pennsylvania kids protecting the environment. Have a look for yourself! **Learn More:** www.GreenWorks.tv (GreenWords "Planet PA").



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