

Lesson One:

A Handful of Estuary Critters

MAMMALS

Nutria
Mink
Otter
Muskrat
Swamp Rabbit
White-tailed Deer

INVERTEBRATES

Periwinkle Snail
Fiddler Crab
Blue Crab
Brown Shrimp
White Shrimp
Ribbed Mussel
Oysters
Monarch Butterfly
Praying Mantis

Setting The Stage



Estuary critters are as numerous and diverse as the habitats in which they live. You can find animals everywhere you look! They inhabit the land, the air, and especially the water. There are animals that live in freshwater, saltwater, brackish water and everywhere in between! You can find them on barrier islands, in bottomland hardwood forests, in swamps and marshes. How many do you know? I'll bet you can name a lot of estuary critters, but here's a list to get you started. Feel free to add your favorite—or least favorite!—estuary critters.

In this activity you will select one of the animals to create an original artwork—on your hand! Just follow the directions and get ready to paint a hand-some critter!

BIRDS

Great Egret
Tri-colored Heron
White Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Herring Gulls
Brown Pelican
White Pelican
American Bald Eagle
Great Horned Owl
Barn Owl
Red-winged Blackbird
Barred Owl
Wood Duck

FISH

Red Drum (Redfish)
Croaker
Black Drum
Sheepshead
Flounder
Gambusia (mosquito fish)
Mullet
Speckled Trout
Menhaden

AMPHIBIANS

Tree Frog
Spring Peeper Frog
Gulf Coast 3-Toed Toad
Salamander
Bullfrog
Toads
Amphiuma

REPTILES

Diamondback Terrapin
Eastern Cottonmouth
American Alligator
Red-eared Slider
Snapping Turtle
Mud Turtle
Green Anole



Objectives

STUDENTS WILL

- **list a minimum of 10 critters of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary.**
- **select one critter and research, observe and describe it.**
- **paint as realistically as possible one critter on their partners' hand using craft paint or tempera paint.**
- **photograph and display their work.**

MATERIALS

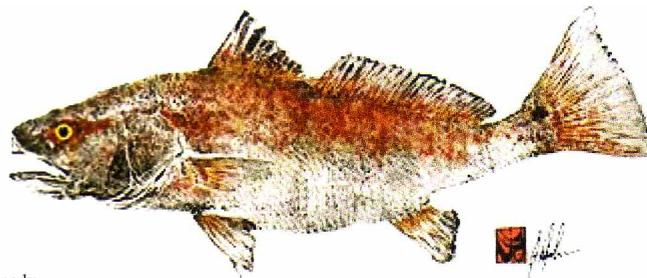
- Research materials—books, pamphlets, photographs and Web sites
- Handout: *My Estuary Critter* (p.4)
- Handout: *Hand Me My Estuary Critter* (p.5)
- Colored copies of paintings by *Robyn Kennedy: Estuary Critter Hands* (pp.7-10)
- Craft paints or tempera paints
- Water containers
- Paper, pencils, erasers
- Lotions or Vaseline
- Brushes-various sizes
- Camera, display board
- Paper towels

GETTING READY

1. Collect research materials.
2. Make copies of handouts *My Estuary Critter* and *Hand Me My Estuary Critter*.
3. Display/review examples of Robyn Kennedy's *Estuary Critter Hands*.
4. Collect and organize paint materials.

PROCESS

1. Introduce lesson by showing examples of critter hand paintings. Ask questions such as: “What critter is this?” “How is the hand being held?” “Which hand critter do you like best?”
2. Distribute handout *My Estuary Critter*. Analyze the examples of critter hand paintings using the elements of design, e.g., color, texture, shape and line.
3. Distribute research materials.
4. Brainstorm and list types of critters found in the estuary. (Students can conduct research, or you can distribute the list from the beginning of this lesson.)
5. Ask students to select the critter from the estuary that they would like painted on their hands.
6. Have students research, observe, and describe their critters. Each student should complete the handout *My Estuary Critter*.
7. Review painting directions described in *Hand Me My Estuary Critter*.
8. Ask students to pair off and take turns painting each other’s hand.
9. Photograph each student’s critter. Place name of the critter and the artist on the back of the photograph.
10. Display the hand critter photographs.



artist, Robyn Kennedy



HANDOUT:

MY ESTUARY CRITTER

Directions: Choose a critter that lives in the estuary. Use the Internet and/or printed materials to find information about your estuary critter. Record your findings on this Data Sheet.

| | |
|---|--|
| Name: What is its name? | |
| Habitat: Where does it live? | |
| Physical Characteristics: What does it look like? (Be very specific; list all of its features.) | |
| Color: What are its colors or shades of color? (List the features and the color of each one.) | |
| Texture: How does it feel? (List the features and the texture of each one, e.g., rough, smooth, bumpy.) | |
| Shape: What does each feature of its body look like? (List the features and the shape of each one, e.g., round, rectangular, triangular, irregular, or worm-like? Use adjectives, similes, or metaphors to describe the features.) | |
| Line: What type of lines can be used to outline each feature, e.g., straight, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, squiggly, zigzag, thick or thin? | |

HANDOUT:

HAND ME MY ESTUARY CRITTER

Directions for hand painting:

1. Find a partner.
2. First discuss how to shape your hand, fingers or fist to form your critter. See it in your mind's eye.
3. Next, trace or sketch your partner's hand/fist on a sheet of paper. Sketch your critter on it with a pencil. This may take a few tries. Find which direction of the hand works best. Maybe use only the head of the critter or the entire body. Make a decision based on shape and space.
4. Rub a light coating of Vaseline or lotion on your partner's hand.
5. Using water-soluble markers, trace your animal onto your partner's hand.
6. Begin painting.
Use large brushes first to fill in large areas of color. Allow to dry.
Add another layer using medium brushes. Allow to dry.
Add details with small brush. Make sure paint is not too dry or too wet. If dry it will flake off easily. Fill in background color; then add details such as feathers, scales, and fur.
7. Photograph your work.
8. Place your name and the name of your painted critter on back.
9. Show your hands! Display your hand critters of the estuary.



ASSESSMENT

List 10 critters of the estuary.

HAND CRITTER RUBRIC

| Criteria | Novice 1 | Apprentice 2 | Artist 3 |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Physical Features: Does it look like the critter? | If you have a good imagination! | Yes, it resembles it. | Yes—like looking in a mirror—photo ready! |
| Color: Are the colors accurate? | Colors exist. | Yes, colors are similar. | Yes—like looking in a mirror—photo ready! |
| Texture: Is the texture visible? | Texture? | Yes, you can discern texture(s) | Yes—like looking in a mirror—photo ready! |
| Shape: Is the form accurate? | If you have a good imagination! | Yes, it resembles it. | Yes—like looking in a mirror—photo ready! |
| Line: Are the lines clearly defined? | If you have a good imagination! | Yes, it resembles it. | Yes—like looking in a mirror—photo ready! |

Total Possible Points = 15 x 2 = 30 points

HANDOUT:

ESTUARY CRITTER HANDS

art by Robyn Kennedy

NUTRIA

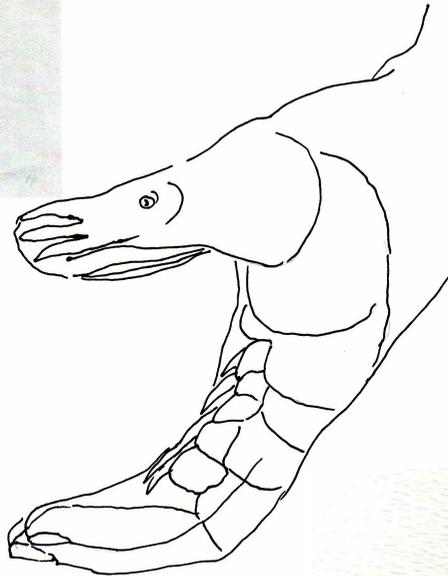


HANDOUT:

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SHRIMP

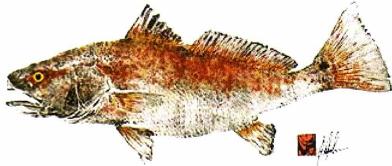


HANDOUT:

ESTUARY CRITTER HANDS

art by Robyn Kennedy

FISH



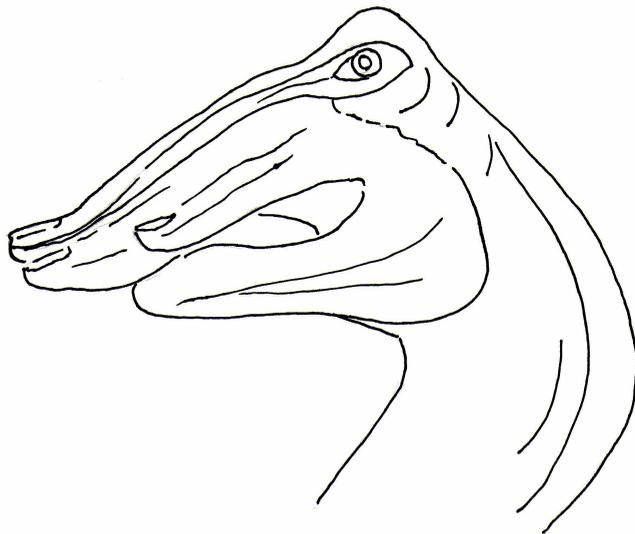
HANDOUT:

ESTUARY CRITTER HANDS

art by Robyn Kennedy



PELICAN



EXTENSIONS

Create VEGGIE CRITTERS! “Play” with lists of critters and vegetables from the estuary. In your mind’s eye, visualize which vegetables you would use to create selected critters. Make sketches. Buy vegetables. Create your VEGGIE CRITTER! Display and photograph. Here are some examples of Veggie Critters created and photographed by Christy Rogers.



RESOURCES

Mariott, M. (1988). *Hanimations*. Kane/Miller Book Publishers: Brooklyn, NY.

Make-Up Artists at Large: Hanimals

<http://www.make-upartistsatlarge.com/cgi-bin/imageviewer.pl?category=Hanimals>

