

Red-tail Kids Club

RED-TAIL LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.



Why do flowers have colorful petals?

Whose eggs are in the pond?

What is that bright yellow bird?

Who lives in that hole in the mud?

You may have noticed the sun rising sooner and setting later. There are more hours of daylight and the days are getting warmer. Snow has melted and the air smells fresh after it rains. It's finally Spring!

Hi, I'm Reddy Red-tail!

I am lucky because I get to spend most of my days soaring high in the sky. Sometimes I sit perched on a tree watching over the land where I live, and sometimes I fly low over the fields looking for food to eat.

Sadly most creatures like you get to spend very little time out in nature. This is sad indeed because nature needs you, and you need nature.

I want you to get outside and explore nature. The best way to learn about my friends and the world I live in is to be curious.

That means getting dirty, smelling things, touching things, and asking questions. I have some ideas that might help you to have fun adventures outdoors.

See you outside!

What are the first signs you see that tell you Spring is here? Maybe in your yard crocus and daffodils are popping up through the ground. You may find a tiny white flower called Harbinger of Spring or Salt and Pepper on your walk through the woods. Skunk cabbage can appear as early as January and February in wet areas. It puts out its own heat and melts the snow around it. The stinky smell attracts pollinators like flies and gives it its name!

Trees and shrubs begin to look green as tiny leaves emerge from buds. Later in spring, look for wildflowers like Spring Beauty and Shooting Stars in the woods. You may have Redbud and Dogwood trees blooming in your yard.

Many people consider Robins to be the first bird of spring although they can be seen here all year. Large flocks of noisy Red Winged Blackbirds return early in spring. Sandhill Cranes can be seen and heard flying high overhead on their way home farther north. Later in spring when the weather is warmer more flowers will bloom and attract pollinators. Warblers and hummingbirds will feed on nectar and insects when they return.

Groundhogs emerge from hibernation and skunks and chipmunks that have been sleeping lightly, or dormant, become more active as they search for food. You may smell a skunk before you see it!

Spring rains leave temporary or vernal ponds behind. Jelly-like masses of eggs are laid by frogs and salamanders in the ponds. Many of these amphibians will return to the same vernal pond where they hatched! You can hear a chorus of frogs singing to attract mates and the shrill call of spring peepers at nightfall.

Take a walk outside and look for the signs of Spring!

Reddy's Nature Journal

Pick a few days in early Spring and go outside with your journal. Choose a comfortable spot and use your senses to record the "firsts" of Spring. What is the first bird you hear? Does the first thing you smell have a good or bad smell? Which tree has flowers or leaves first? Which bird lays eggs in its nest first? Draw pictures in your journal to record your "firsts".

My friends at Red-tail Land Conservancy protect many wild places where you can explore nature. They also have free nature journals you can take with you. Ask your parents to call the office and pick one up.

I hope to spy you out exploring nature soon.



🔍 Let's Explore

Hawks have very good eyes. This helps us spot food when we are flying high above the ground.

Try to spy these things as you explore the outdoors:

- Red flower buds on a tree
- A bumble bee visiting a flower
- A bird that has returned from migration
- Green shoots poking through the ground
- A bird nest with speckled eggs

What else can you find?

♥️ Caring for Nature

Earth Day is April 22nd and many communities have planned special events. Celebrate Earth Day any day by organizing a neighborhood cleanup or walk along the river to collect trash. Take your own bag when shopping instead of using the store's plastic bags. Remove invasive plants so that native plants have a better chance to grow. After you have removed invasives, plant native plants and help their pollinators thrive.

How else can you help?

😊 Just for Fun

There are lots of fun things to do outside in Spring.

- Dig worms and go fishing
- Build a birdhouse from recyclables
- Plant a pollinator garden
- Look for insects under leaves
- Take a hike and listen to the sounds of spring

What is your favorite outdoor activity?



See ya' in the woods.

Visit www.fortheland.org to learn more about my friends at Red-tail Land Conservancy and how you can support their work to preserve natural places. You can find properties to visit, learn about upcoming events, and get involved in helping to protect nature.