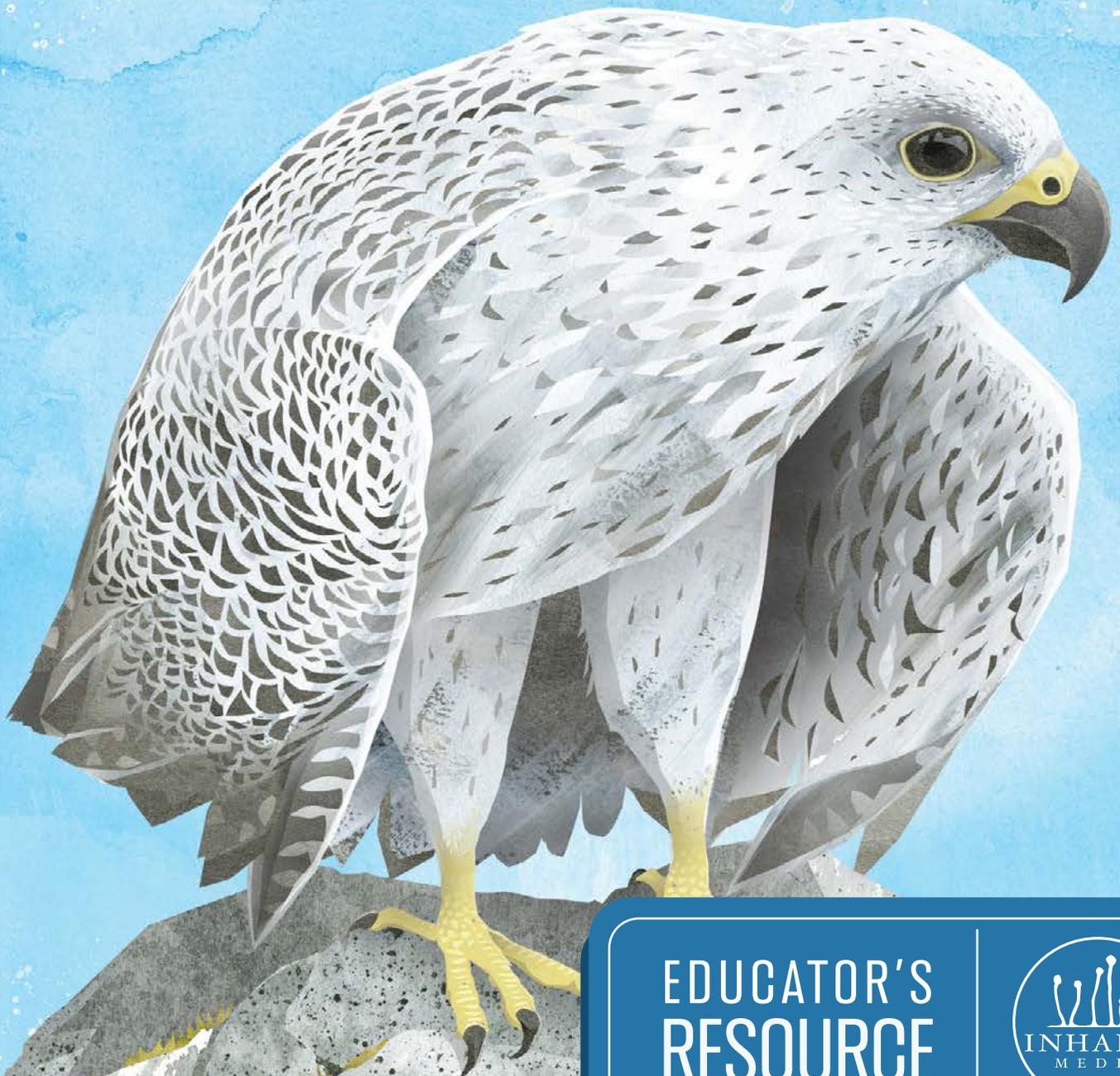


A CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO
 ARCTIC BIRDS

BY MIA PELLETIER • ILLUSTRATED BY DANNY CHRISTOPHER



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



A Children's Guide to Arctic Birds

About the Book

In addition to the many types of birds that live in the Arctic year-round, there are about 100 species that travel seasonally to the Arctic to lay their eggs and raise their young. In this book, young readers learn about twelve of the birds that call the Arctic home, whether that be for all or part of the year. With a simple layout and easy-to-follow headings for each bird, this beautiful book is filled with fun, useful facts, including where to look for eggs and nests during the short Arctic summer, and how to recognize each bird's call on the wind. Because migratory birds live in the Arctic for part of the year, many of the feathered friends covered in *A Children's Guide to Arctic Birds* can be seen at various times of the year throughout North America.

About the Author

Mia Pelletier grew up exploring the lakes and forests of the Canadian Shield. Drawn to shorelines and wild places, Mia studied ecology and lived in California and the Magdalen Islands before moving to Baffin Island, Nunavut, in 2010. In Nunavut, she works with Arctic seabirds, and with Inuit on the co-management of protected areas. Mia enjoys exploring the Arctic tundra and learning about the fascinating plants, animals, and people that call this region home.

About the Illustrator

Danny Christopher has travelled throughout the Canadian Arctic as an instructor for Nunavut Arctic College. He is the illustrator of *The Legend of the Fog*, *A Children's Guide to Arctic Birds*, *A Children's Guide to Arctic Butterflies*, and *Animals Illustrated: Polar Bear*, and author of *Putuguq and Kublu*. His work on *The Legend of the Fog* was nominated for the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award. He lives in Toronto with his wife, four children, and a little bulldog.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- Before asking students to read the book independently, ask if they can name any Arctic birds. Then read the names of the birds listed in the table of contents. Who has seen any of these birds?

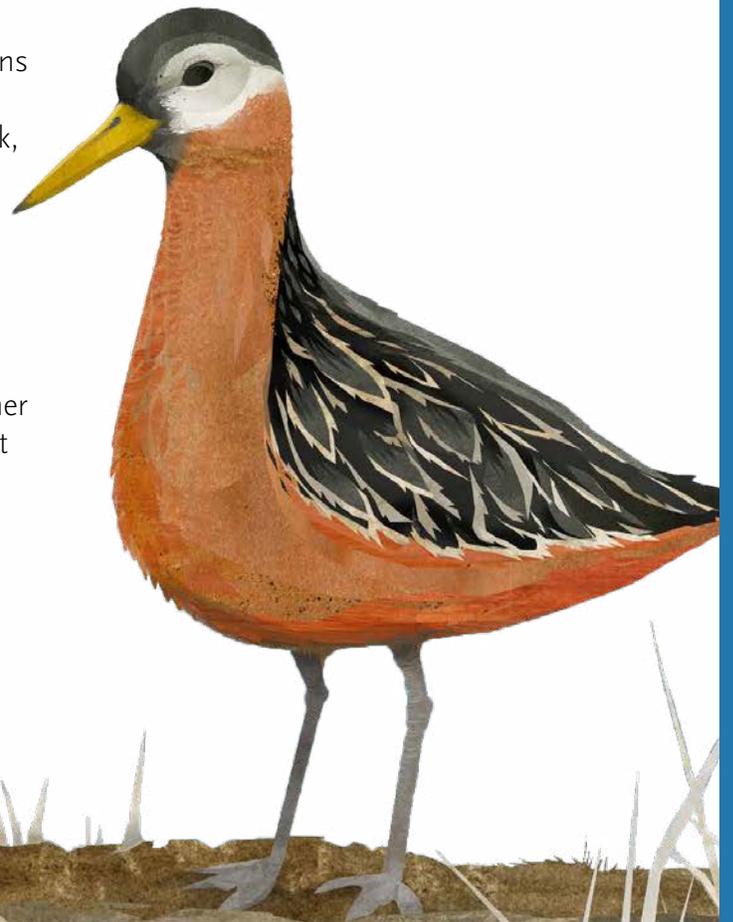


- Ask students to keep a list of words that are unfamiliar to them as they read the book. Some possible examples: migratory, moulting, dreading, polynyas, crustaceans.

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *A Children's Guide to Arctic Birds*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

- How many bird species migrate to the Arctic each summer? What are some of the reasons the Arctic is a favourable place for them to return to? Which bird makes the longest migratory journey and where does it return from? Which bird is usually the first to return every spring?
- The author writes that birds migrate to the Arctic because “the Arctic summer is rich with food.” Talk about all the different foods birds can find in the Arctic. Is anything in their diet also in your diet? Which Arctic birds eat other birds?
- Arctic predators also welcome the birds' return as a food source—especially their eggs. What are some of the ways birds hide their nests and eggs from these predators? Can you name some places you might look to see Arctic birds' nests? What field supplies would you want to bring with you?
- Each bird's nest contains eggs that are unique. Talk about some of the different egg colours, shapes, and patterns you learned about in this book. How are these useful to the birds? How might they help keep away predators? Which Arctic bird is seen most commonly near Arctic towns, even in winter? Have you ever seen a raven? Can you remember what ravens eat? What does their call sound like?
- Which Arctic bird is seen most commonly near Arctic towns, even in winter? Have you ever seen a raven? Can you remember what ravens eat? What does their call sound like?
- Thinking back to the illustrations in the book, can you remember which Arctic bird is the largest? The smallest? Which is the whitest? The blackest?
- Can you name some other animals that have wings, as birds do? Can you name some other animals that lay eggs, as birds do? What do birds have that no other animals have? How do their feathers protect them? What is it called when old worn feathers are discarded? Why do the colours of feathers sometimes change?



- What is another name for a bird's beak? How does the shape of a beak, and the shape of a bird's feet, help them find and gather food?
- There are some unusual facts about birds in the book. Can you remember which has the heaviest bones? Why is the weight useful to them? Which bird can dive the deepest underwater? Why do they make these deep dives? Which bird can row across a stream with its wings? Why wouldn't they just fly across?
- The author says that bird watching helps us "remember our place among the wildness of things." Do you understand what she means? Do you enjoy being outdoors in nature and observing wild animals?

Extension Activities

Have students complete one or more of these activities.

Language Arts

- The raven is well represented in Inuit myths and folktales. If you've heard a raven story, write it down using correct punctuation, description, and dialogue. If you've never heard one, do some research and then create a raven story of your own.
- Write a descriptive story about a year in the life of an Arctic bird, starting when it is born in the Arctic. Describe how it grows, migrates south, and then returns to the Arctic.



Art

- Using the “Feathery Facts” or other details from the book, create a deck of trading cards for all 12 birds featured in the book. You can choose to draw the bird itself, or focus on one element of the bird, such as an egg or a feather.
- Choose another Arctic bird, or an Arctic animal or insect, do some research, and create a page for it modelled on the individual bird pages in this book.

Science

Choose one of these topics to research and write a report about:

- Choose a non-Arctic bird in the same family as one of the Arctic birds and compare and contrast it with its Arctic counterpart.
- Choose three birds from the book and compare their nests, eggs, and babies.
- Report on the Arctic birds that find their food in the water. What do they eat and how do they find it?

