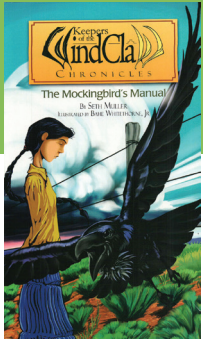


## Teacher's Keepers of the Windclaw Chronicles The Mockingbird's Manual

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**\$12.95**

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### About the Book

Ellie Tsosie, a Navajo girl from Kaibito, discovers *The Mockingbird's Manual*, a mysterious book that allows her to speak with birds. Through her encounters with a raven, a hummingbird, a red-tailed hawk, a Steller's Jay, and a canyon wren, Ellie learns science-based lessons about survival, adaptation, and habitat. Each bird teaches her how animals use their beaks, wings, and senses to thrive in different environments—deserts, canyons, mesas, and mountains. These lessons deepen her appreciation of the natural world and her connection to her homeland.

*The Mockingbird's Manual* also serves as an exploration of how observing nature can shape identity and stewardship. The story highlights the diversity of birds found on the Navajo Nation—from ravens circling Wind Rock to hummingbirds feeding on desert flowers, from hawks nesting on cliffs to wrens singing in canyon walls. Each bird has a role in the environment, reminding readers that balance and respect are essential to sustaining life in the desert and mountain ecosystems. By paying attention to birds, students can better understand seasonal changes, food chains, and the interdependence between people and the natural world.

For Navajo communities, observation of birds has long held cultural meaning. Stories, songs, and clan names connect families to birds as teachers, messengers, and protectors. When Ellie learns to listen to birds, she is also listening to her ancestors' teachings about respect for the land and its living beings. The act of watching birds, much like traditional herding or farming practices, teaches patience, awareness, and gratitude.

By the end of the story, Ellie realizes that learning from nature also means giving back—sharing her knowledge to help her family and community sustain harmony with the environment. The book encourages students to explore their surroundings, record what they see, and connect scientific observation with cultural understanding. Teachers can use this story to spark discussions about ecology, cultural identity, and environmental responsibility, linking Navajo traditions with science inquiry and outdoor learning.

## Readability Statistics:

- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 3.3
- Flesch Reading Ease Score:  $\approx$  88 (easy, upper elementary)
- Common Core Grade Band: Grades 2–5 (best fit Grades 3–4)

## 8 Day- Grade 4 ELD Unit Plan The Mockingbird's Manual Grade 4 – Arizona English Language Development Standards (ELD 4.1–4.4)

Audience: Navajo 4th graders and Navajo teachers

### Lesson 1 – Chapters 1 & 2: Unusual Find / Raven-Speak

Standards: ELD 4.1; ELD 4.

Objectives:

- SWBAT identify the main topic (Ellie discovering the manual) and recall two supporting details.
- SWBAT explain the figurative meaning of the wind in Ellie's grandmother's teaching.

Cultural Emphasis: Wind as gift; clan introductions as cultural identity.

Vocabulary: manual, sage, wind, clan, raven (Gáagii)

Comprehension Questions:

- What does Ellie discover in the wash?
- How does her grandmother explain the wind?
- Why does Raven ask Ellie, 'What is it like to be human?'

Exit Ticket: Oral clan introduction in small groups.

## Lesson 2 – Chapters 3 & 4: Meeting Buzz / The Sister Claw

Standards: ELD 4.2; ELD 4.3

Objectives:

- SWBAT explain the figurative language describing Buzz’s flight (spiral, hover) in their own words.
- SWBAT use details from text and illustrations to describe how the hawk values storytelling and art.

Cultural Emphasis: Hummingbird as energy; Hawk as teacher of art and stories.

Vocabulary: nectar, hover, spiral, tradition, petroglyph

Comprehension Questions:

- How does Buzz describe hummingbirds?
- Why does Ellie enjoy Buzz’s flight patterns?
- What does the hawk teach Ellie about art and tradition?

Exit Ticket: Drawing of a rock art design with a short oral explanation.

## Lesson 3 – Chapters 5 & 6: The Mockingbird’s Return / The Mesa

Standards: ELD 4.3; ELD 4.4

Objectives:

- SWBAT make a connection between Wide-Sky’s ability to learn songs and the idea of listening to many voices.
- SWBAT engage in a collaborative discussion to compare Ellie’s decision about sharing the manual with their own experiences of family responsibility.

Cultural Emphasis: Mockingbird as language learner; Ellie deciding to share with her grandmother.

Vocabulary: mockingbird (Zahalánii), mesa, prophecy, responsibility

Comprehension Questions:

- Why do mockingbirds learn many bird songs?
- What does Wide-Sky tell Ellie about listening?
- Why is Ellie unsure about sharing the manual with her grandmother?

Exit Ticket: Partner oral reflection: ‘If I learned something powerful, I would/would not tell my grandmother because...’

## Lesson 4 – Chapters 7 & 8: Tornado Dreams / Un-keeping Secrets

Standards: ELD 4.1; ELD 4.2

Objectives:

- SWBAT identify the main idea of Ellie’s tornado dream and list two supporting details.
- SWBAT explain the meaning of the prophecy given by Ellie’s grandmother using sentence frames.

Cultural Emphasis: Prophecies and dreams as protective teachings.

Vocabulary: tornado, Stellar’s Jay (Joogí), prophecy, secret

Comprehension Questions:

- What happens in Ellie’s tornado dream?
- What lesson does the Stellar’s Jay teach Ellie?
- What prophecy does her grandmother share?

Exit Ticket: Drawing of a protective symbol with a one-sentence explanation.

## Lesson 5 – Chapters 9 & 10: The Canyon Wall / The Stone Reunion

Standards: ELD 4.3; ELD 4.4

Objectives:

- SWBAT use textual evidence to explain how canyon wrens show preparation and wisdom.
- SWBAT participate in an oral group presentation to explain what Stone teaches about human–raven partnerships.

Cultural Emphasis: Wisdom in preparation; restoring old relationships with birds.

Vocabulary: canyon wren (Tsénołch’ooshii), nest, partnership, reunion

Comprehension Questions:

- Why are canyon wrens considered wise?
- What does Lightsong teach Ellie about nests?
- What does Stone say about the old circle between humans and ravens?

Exit Ticket: Group oral retelling of canyon wren’s nest-building lesson.

## Lesson 6 – Chapters 11 & 12: A Circle Broken / A Tangled Wind

Standards: ELD 4.1; ELD 4.3

Objectives:

- SWBAT identify the central theme of the 'broken circle' lesson in Stone's teaching.
- SWBAT connect ideas across chapters by explaining how Ellie's encounters with dust devils relate to restoring balance.

Cultural Emphasis: Balance with nature; dangers of whirlwinds.

Vocabulary: circle, balance, dust devil, danger

Comprehension Questions:

- What does Stone mean by a 'broken circle'?
- How does Ellie experience danger from dust devils?
- What ideas do the class have for repairing circles of balance?

Exit Ticket: Drawing + sentence frame: 'The circle was broken when \_\_\_\_\_. We can heal it by \_\_\_\_\_.'

## Lesson 7 – Chapters 13 & 14: The Wing Carver / The Feather Cave

Standards: ELD 4.2; ELD 4.4

Objectives:

- SWBAT interpret the figurative meaning of feathers and carvings as cultural symbols.
- SWBAT collaborate in a group storytelling activity to create a new 'bird teaching.'

Cultural Emphasis: Feathers as sacred; caves as teaching places.

Vocabulary: carving, feather, cave, symbolism

Comprehension Questions:

- What does the wing carver teach Ellie?
- Why are feathers powerful symbols in Navajo culture?
- How can caves be seen as places of memory and teaching?

Exit Ticket: Group oral story: each group shares a new 'bird teaching.'

## Lesson 8 – Chapters 15 & 16: The Silent Watcher / A Circle Completed

Standards: Integrated ELD 4.1–4.4

Objectives:

- SWBAT identify the main idea of Ellie completing the prophecy and provide two supporting details.
- SWBAT explain how balance and responsibility are figurative lessons from the ending.
- SWBAT participate in a sharing circle to connect Ellie’s journey to their own family responsibilities.

Cultural Emphasis: Fulfillment of prophecy; carrying teachings forward.

Vocabulary: balance, prophecy, heritage, responsibility

Comprehension Questions:

- How does Ellie complete the circle of teachings?
- Why is the prophecy important to her journey?
- What lesson from Ellie’s story can you carry home?

Exit Ticket: Sharing circle – each student shares one cultural lesson they will carry home.

## Grade 4 Science Unit Plan: The Mockingbird's Manual Birds of the Navajo Nation

Grade Level: 4

Time: 2–3 class periods (40–50 minutes each)

Standards:

- Arizona Science Standards – Grade 4 Life Science
  - 4.L2U1.11: Develop and use models to describe the flow of energy in ecosystems.
  - 4.L2U1.12: Construct an argument about the effects of environmental changes on the survival of organisms.
  - 4.L4U1.13: Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information about how organisms adapt to their environment.

### Objectives

Students will:

1. Identify and describe the habitats of five Arizona birds: Raven, Hummingbird, Red-tailed Hawk, Mockingbird, and Steller's Jay.
2. Compare the adaptations (beak shape, diet, nesting, flight) that help each bird survive.
3. Use Navajo (Diné) names alongside English names to connect scientific learning with cultural knowledge.
4. Analyze how changes in environment (forest fires, drought, urbanization) might impact bird habitats.

Materials

- Bird chart (Navajo & English names)
- Arizona habitat map (forest, desert, canyon, mountain, urban)
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Vocabulary list (English + Navajo names)
- Access to Cornell Lab of Ornithology "All About Birds" (optional digital resource)

Vocabulary

- Gaagii – Raven
- Dahiitxihi – Hummingbird
- 'Atseełtsóii – Red-tailed Hawk
- Zahaláníí – Mockingbird
- Joogí – Steller's Jay
- Habitat, Adaptation, Ecosystem, Predator, Prey, Migration

## Lesson Sequence

### Day 1 – Introduction to Birds and Habitats

1. Hook (10 min): Show images/flashcards of the five birds. Ask: Where have you seen these birds before? Write student observations on the board.
2. Mini-Lesson (15 min):
  - Define habitat (place where an organism lives).
  - Place each bird on a habitat map:
    - Raven – desert canyons, mesas, urban areas
    - Hummingbird – gardens, meadows, forests
    - Red-tailed Hawk – open fields, cliffs, forests
    - Mockingbird – desert scrub, towns, backyards
    - Steller’s Jay – mountain pine and aspen forests
3. Activity (15 min): Students create a bird-habitat chart (bird name in English and Navajo + matching habitat).

### Day 2 – Adaptations and Survival

1. Review (5 min): Quick oral review of habitats in Navajo and English.
2. Mini-Lesson (15 min): Explain adaptations (beak shapes, wings, nesting, food).
  - o Raven – omnivorous scavenger, strong beak.
  - o Hummingbird – long beak for nectar.
  - o Red-tailed Hawk – sharp talons, hooked beak for hunting.
  - o Mockingbird – mimics sounds, eats insects/berries.
  - o Steller’s Jay – strong beak, adapted to forest nuts and insects.
3. Activity (20 min): Students rotate through adaptation stations (pictures/models of beaks, wings, food). They match adaptations to the correct bird.
4. Closing (5 min): Discuss: How do these adaptations help birds survive in Arizona?

## Day 3 – Environmental Change and Cultural Connections

1. Warm-Up (10 min): Ask: What happens to birds if their habitat changes (fire, drought, cities expanding)?
2. Mini-Lesson (10 min): Introduce 4.L2U1.12 – environmental changes affect survival. Discuss examples in Arizona (forest fire near Flagstaff, drought in Navajo Mountain).
3. Cultural Connection (15 min): Share a Navajo teaching or story about one of the birds (Raven as a messenger, Mockingbird as a singer). Ask: What can these teachings tell us about how we should treat birds and their homes?
4. Assessment Activity (15 min): Students write a short paragraph:
  - Name one bird in Navajo & English.
  - Describe its habitat and one adaptation.
  - Predict what might happen if its habitat changed.

### Assessment

- Formative: Bird-habitat charts, adaptation stations, group discussions.
- Summative: Student paragraph connecting bird name, habitat, adaptation, and environmental impact.

### Extensions

- Field trip (virtual or real) to Canyon de Chelly, Grand Canyon, or Navajo Mountain to observe habitats.
- Art project: students color blackline bird outlines and label adaptations.
- Navajo language extension: practice using bird names in sentences (e.g., “Gaagii sits on the rock.”).

## Resources for Science Unit Plan: Birds of the Navajo Nation

### 1. Grand Canyon National Park

- Bird Checklist (Print-Ready PDF): The NPS offers a downloadable, printable “electronic checklist” and a published 3rd edition annotated checklist titled Birds of the Grand Canyon Region (National Park Service).
- Interactive Map Resources: While not bird-specific, the NPS visitor site offers general park maps (like the South Rim pocket map), which could be adapted to plot bird hotspots (National Park Service, NPMaps).

### 2. Navajo National Monument

- Bird Checklist (Print-Ready PDF): Printable bird checklists are available from the Southern Desert Network’s inventory & monitoring efforts, which include Navajo National Monument (National Park Service).
- Interactive Data: The NPSpecies database can generate a species checklist report for the park via the IRMA portal for customized, dynamic viewing (IRMA).

### 3. Canyon de Chelly National Monument

- Bird Checklist (Print-Ready PDF): A comprehensive avian inventory (c. 2006) is available as a PDF listing around 143 species compiled through records and surveys (Navajo Fish and Wildlife).
- Interactive Map Resources: While specific interactive maps aren’t available online, the site’s Foundation Document includes a “Species Checklist” that likely connects to mapping tools—check with park staff for access (NPS History).

### 4. San Francisco Peaks (Coconino National Forest)

- Bird Checklist (Print-Ready PDF): No standalone public PDF checklist was found in the search results. However, you may contact Coconino National Forest staff or explore the NPSpecies or forest plan documents for downloadable lists; one PDF concerning forest land does discuss the region broadly (US Forest Service).
- Interactive Map Resources: Though specific bird maps aren’t online, broad resources like the NPSpecies portal or regional bird reports (e.g. forest bird ecology) may include geospatial data to build simple interactive visuals (US Forest Service).

## Summary Table

Location	Print-Ready PDF Checklist	Interactive Map / Equivalent Resource
Grand Canyon NP	Annotated Birds of the Grand Canyon Region; electronic checklist (National Park Service)	Visitor and hiking maps for adaptation (National Park Service, NPMaps)
Navajo National Monument	Printable bird checklist from monitoring network (National Park Service)	NPSpecies database via IRMA for live checklist (IRMA)
Canyon de Chelly NM	PDF inventory (~143 species) (Navajo Fish and Wildlife)	Foundation document may link to internal mapping tools (NPS History)
San Francisco Peaks (Coconino NF)	None identified; contact forest staff or use forest plan documents (US Forest Service)	No bird-specific map found; regional ecology publications may help (US Forest Service)

## Suggestions for Classroom Use

- Download & print these PDFs for student field notebooks or identification activities.
- Use simple park maps (like Grand Canyon's) as a base—students can annotate bird hotspots or range zones.
- Engage students with interactive checklists (via NPSpecies), prompting them to look up a bird, learn a fun fact, and then plot it on a map.
- For the San Francisco Peaks, consider creating a DIY map using local bird data: overlay different elevation habitats with probable bird species found there.