



# News from The Environmental Learning Center

For Immediate Release  
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## Media Advisory: South Columbus Kids Prepare for Wildlife Expedition

WHEN (April 27-May 1)

- 27 April 2009 9-10 a.m Monday (Key Elementary)
- 28 April 2009 10-11 a.m. Tuesday (Mathews Elementary)
- 01 May 2009 9:30-10:30 a.m .Friday (Clubview Elementary)

Jacob Bell, Destinee Thomas and Karim Younis have been preparing for their wildlife expedition since February. On April 27, they'll head south to help identify and count wild birds in the wetlands along the Chattahoochee River. Theirs will be one of the last expeditions of the spring season.

Jacob, Destinee and Karim are among the 350 Columbus-area students participating in a new "hands-on" science enrichment program – Kids BirdWatch - presented by Columbus State University's Environmental Learning Center at Oxbow Meadows.

Students and teachers from Key, Mathews and Clubview elementary schools will spend a morning practicing their wildlife observation skills in the wetlands near the Center. They'll learn how to use binoculars to spot and identify wild birds. They'll continue to hone their birdwatching skills at their school bird feeding stations and collect and send via Internet data for Cornell University's Ornithology Lab. Before school ends in May, each student will receive a free hummingbird feeder so they can continue to watch birds at home throughout the summer.

Each school has received a free bird feeding station - a metal pole, a thistle feeder, a sunflower feeder and a suet feeder — plus enough bird food to keep them full through the end of May. In addition, each student has been given a copy of A Checklist of Georgia Birds, A Checklist of the Birds of Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, For the Birds, and Birding Basics.

"Our goal to immerse students and their teachers in the excitement of scientific discovery and provide them with tools and skills they need to get started in one of the fastest growing citizen-science and outdoor recreation activities in America — birdwatching," said Heidi Hughes, executive director of the Environmental Learning Center.

The equipment, publications and supplies valued at over \$18,000 have been contributed by local and national businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies.

"Next year, we want to double the number of students and teachers in our program," said Hughes. "If you'd like to help sponsor a student, a teacher or a school, give us a call."

To learn more about birdwatching, the Environmental Learning Center sponsors a free bird walk every Saturday and Sunday at 8a.m. (adults and children 10 years and older, accompanied by an adult). Please call 706-687-4090 for a reservation.

- 30 -

*The Environmental Learning Center at Oxbow Meadows is an outreach program of Columbus State University  
in association with the Columbus Water Works and the Muscogee County School District*