



# HEROES COME IN ALL SIZES

**LUKE  
WILSON**

**LOGAN  
LERMAN**

**BRIE  
LARSON**

BASED ON THE BESTSELLING NOVEL

# HOOOT



**EDUCATOR'S GUIDE**

**Based on the Bestselling Novel by Carl Hiaasen**

Published by Knopf Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Random House Children's Books.  
Hardcover (ISBN: 0-375-82183-3) • Paperback (ISBN: 0-375-82916-4)



**W**e are proud to introduce our film adaptation of *Hoot*, a comic ecological detective story about kids learning what it means to take a stand. *Hoot*'s central characters, Roy Eberhardt and Mullet Fingers, march to a different drummer than their peers. They see the value in protecting nature and could be viewed as modern-day, junior versions of Henry David Thoreau, a famous writer and conservationist.

The name of our company is derived from our admiration of Henry David Thoreau and our affection for the special place where he once made his home, on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, MA. That beautiful setting first inspired Henry David Thoreau to write about nature's role in building character and about the value of marching to a different drummer.

Just as characters in *Hoot* take their stand in support of wildlife and habitat preservation, Walden Media has likewise taken a stand in support of literacy by producing faithful film adaptations of children's literature and supporting educational programs and materials aimed at inspiring audiences to read and find out more about the great literature on which our films are based.

For *Hoot*, we have partnered specially with the National Wildlife Federation to highlight its educational programs that re-connect young people with wildlife and natural habitats. It is our belief that the hilarious antics of Roy Eberhardt and Mullet Fingers will prove to be an inspiration and a means for continuing a discussion (and a drumbeat) first started by Henry David Thoreau at Walden Pond, a long time ago.

Cary Granat & Micheal Flaherty  
**Co-Founders**  
 Walden Media, LLC



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Register at [www.walden.com](http://www.walden.com) to get the latest news about Walden Media movies, educational materials, free educator screenings, and events. By becoming a member, you can participate on our online message boards to discuss and share tips and lesson plans for using films in your classroom. Walden Media loves to hear from our teachers. Please log on now and join us!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Image of Henry David Thoreau and drawing of his cabin courtesy of the Walden Woods Project/Thoreau Institute at Walden Woods, Concord, MA.

We are grateful for material about burrowing owls adapted from the Fall 2002 issue of *EcoFlorida*, used with permission of the author, Miranda Malone.

We thank the people at Bonnet House Museum and Gardens for their assistance and helpful information, and for the use of these photos: Aerial Photograph of Bonnet House, ©1940, courtesy of Bonnet House Museum & Gardens; Aerial Photograph of Bonnet House, 1988, ©1988 John Pearce.

The Burrowing Owl population graphic: Bowen, P. J., 2000, *Demographic, Distribution, and Metapopulation Analyses of the Burrowing Owl* (Athene cunicularia) in Florida, M.S. thesis, University of Central Florida, Orlando.

Burrowing owl content provided by Audubon of Florida and Center for Birds of Prey Education Staff.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Activities in this guide target grades 6-8, are interdisciplinary, and comply with national content and education standards for Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and Character Education. Each activity features adaptations for students who require additional literacy support and for whom English is a second language.

Additional *Hoot* lessons are available online at [www.walden.com/hoot](http://www.walden.com/hoot).

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# HOOT

## ABOUT THE MOVIE

Three middle-schoolers take on greedy land developers and corrupt politicians in the mystery adventure *Hoot*. Based on Carl Hiaasen's Newbery Honor book, *Hoot* revolves around a Montana boy who moves to Florida and unearths a disturbing threat to a local population of endangered owls. Determined to protect his new environment, the boy and his friends fight to prevent the adults from making a big mistake. Packed with surprising plot twists, quirky characters, and offbeat humor, *Hoot* is a classic story that's fun for all ages. *Hoot* is written and directed by Wil Shriner (*Frasier*, *Becker*) and produced by Frank Marshall (*Seabiscuit*, *Signs*) and Jimmy Buffett, and features original music from producer Jimmy Buffett. Walden Media has partnered with New Line Cinema and the Kennedy/Marshall Company to produce a faithful feature adaptation of the book.

The film stars Logan Lerman as Roy Eberhardt, Luke Wilson as Officer Delinko, Brie Larson as Beatrice Leep, Cody Linley as Mullet Fingers, and introduces Eric Phillips as Dana Matherson.



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# PARTNER RESOURCES

Walden Media is proud to work with organizations that care as much about children as we do. Here are some of Walden Media's content partners in support of our release of *Hoot*.



## NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the largest grassroots conservation group in America, is dedicated to keeping people connected to nature.

This job is getting tougher. Recent research shows that the average U.S. child spends over six hours indoors with electronic media each day. Children do not spend nearly enough time outdoors to stay healthy and develop emotional and physical connections to nature.

The NWF is committed to getting all children and families playing, learning, and caring for nature where they live. As the education partner for *Hoot*, NWF is providing opportunities to get students outdoors discovering wildlife and creating habitat projects.

Check out the April 2006 issue of *Ranger Rick* magazine for a behind-the-scenes tour of the movie *Hoot*, a poster about burrowing owls, and more ideas for enjoying nature in your neighborhood. Visit the magazine at [www.nwf.org/rangerrick](http://www.nwf.org/rangerrick). To learn about easy steps you can take to protect habitats for birds and other wildlife, visit [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org).



## SCHOLASTIC

Scholastic Corporation (NASDAQ: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology. Scholastic creates quality educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children's books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, film, videos and toys.

In February 2006, start exploring *Hoot* in *Flashlight Readers*, Scholastic.com's free virtual reading club that brings together a community of booklovers. Young readers can create a membership card and enjoy full access to behind-the-scenes interviews and moderated author chats as well as exciting games and activities based on the book. Members can even leave instant messages for other readers, and parents can use the discussion questions to further the excitement of reading. *Flashlight Readers* also provides classroom learning opportunities with a comprehensive Teacher's Guide featuring lessons and activities that support national standards.

Launched in December 2005, *Flashlight Readers* brings to life *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Bailliett, and coming soon, *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen.

For more information about *Flashlight Readers*, visit the site at: <http://www.scholastic.com/flashlight>.



## AUDUBON CENTER FOR BIRDS OF PREY

The Audubon Center for Birds of Prey is an urban environmental nature center that works to promote a stewardship ethic for Florida's birds of prey and their habitats through wildlife rehabilitation, practical research, and interactive education. Established in 1979, the Center serves the largest volume of injured and orphaned eagles, owls, falcons, hawks, and kites east of the Mississippi River, assessing and treating more than 12,600 birds since its inception, including close to 900 eagles. The center offers education programs to diverse groups of all ages, including civic groups, clubs, after-school programs, home school groups, and county schools of all grades interested in learning about birds of prey, Florida's natural history, and Audubon's conservation efforts. For additional information, call 407-644-0190 or visit [www.audubonofflorida.org](http://www.audubonofflorida.org).



## RANDOM HOUSE CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Read the bestselling and Newbery Honor-winning book. For more activities and information about Carl Hiaasen's novel *Hoot* and other books published by Random House Children's Books, visit [www.randomhouse.com/teachers](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers).



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# MULLET FINGERS MEETS HENRY DAVID THOREAU

## HENRY DAVID THOREAU



"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." (*Walden*)

"If a man walks in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!" (*Life Without Principle*)

"There is a coarse and boisterous money-making fellow in the outskirts of our town, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow...and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him.... Nevertheless, as I do not need the police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in this fellow's undertaking any more than in many an enterprise of our own or foreign governments, however amusing it may be to him or them, I prefer to finish my education at a different school." (*Life Without Principle*)

"Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?" (*On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*)

## MULLET FINGERS



Mullet Fingers spends most of his free time in the woods and swamps, and eventually goes to live there to get away from his mother and the threat of being sent away to a military school. (*Hoot*, pp. 50-51, 115-116)

"Ever since I was little," Mullet Fingers said, "I've been watchin' this place disappear – the piney woods, the scrub, the creeks, the glades. Even the beaches, man – they put up all these giant hotels and only goober tourists are allowed." (p.172)

"Maybe someday I'll go back to school," the boy went on, "but for now I'm 'bout as smart as I need to be. Maybe I can't do algebra or say 'Nice poodle' in French or tell you who discovered Brazil, but I can make a fire with two dry sticks and a rock. I can climb a coconut palm and get me enough fresh milk to last a month..." (p.174)

Mullet Fingers and Roy discuss what it means to "cross the line." (p.171)

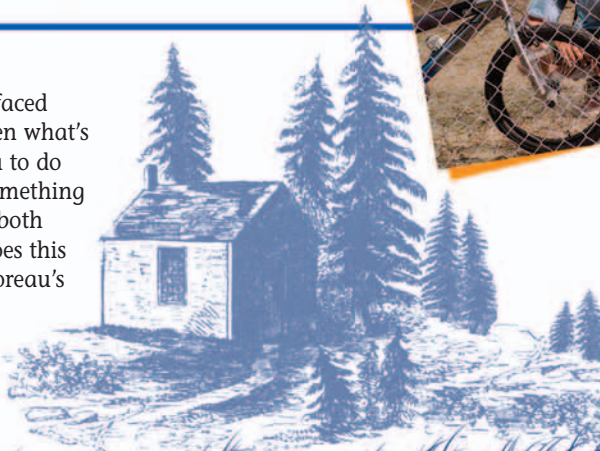
*Henry David Thoreau's writings stressed his belief that contact with nature can help us form values that then guide our actions.*

*Read the statements from Thoreau's writing and discuss their meanings. Then compare what you think Thoreau had to say with Mullet Fingers's actions and statements in Hoot. For background information, a short biography, and quotes and excerpts from his famous works such as Walden, please go to [www.walden.com](http://www.walden.com).*

## YOUR TURN

Roy's mother advises him, "You're going to be faced with situations where the line isn't clear between what's right and what's wrong. Your heart will tell you to do one thing, and your brain will tell you to do something different. In the end, all that's left is to look at both sides and go with your best judgment." How does this advice relate to Mullet Fingers's actions? To Thoreau's questions about what he calls "unjust laws"? Discuss these questions with a partner.

*Thoreau's cabin in Walden Woods.*



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# MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

*In Hoot, Roy halts the activity of the Mother Paula's All American Pancake House developers by proving that they hid information about the project's impact on the environment. While natural habitats and creatures that live in them are threatened all the time, laws, regulations, and government agencies do offer a measure of protection. By bringing environmental problems to the attention of a community, it is often possible to find ways to solve these problems. If you are concerned about an environmental issue in your community, what can you do about it?*



Go online to... [www.walden.com/hoot](http://www.walden.com/hoot) to learn more about how the government is working to protect our environment through agencies such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Check out our Q&As with two people who made protecting the environment their career.



## REACH OUT

Are there others in your community who are concerned about the same issue as you? Contact local environmental organizations and let them know about the situation that is on your mind. See if you can organize a group within your school or within your neighborhood to raise awareness about the problem. Brainstorm possible solutions.

Students at Winston Middle School in Winston, Oregon, wanted to find a way to encourage businesses and residents in their community to recycle more. They made presentations to the school board and the city council to encourage more recycling. They also helped companies in their community increase recycling by reviewing the types of trash the companies threw out, weighing recyclable materials and pointing out opportunities to reduce waste. The students shared their findings with the companies and succeeded in increasing the amount of recycling in their town. Now more than fifty schools in the area around Winston Middle School take part in the program.

(Source: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/general/educate/svcllearn.pdf>)

## GET IT IN WRITING

Make sure you have the facts straight about the situation you want to highlight. Then, write a persuasive letter or essay – for your school newspaper, to the editor of your local paper, or to the appropriate government official. Explain why this issue is important to you and to your readers. Make specific suggestions about ways to address the problem.

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

One way to have an impact on an environmental situation of concern is to create a petition. A petition is a legal document used to communicate “the will of the people” to elected officials. A petition usually includes a brief summary of an issue and tells the position that a person is taking by signing the petition.

Recently, middle-school students at a school in Florida gathered about 1,500 names on petitions to keep the manatee on the state’s endangered species list. Here is a copy of a page of their petition. To read a newspaper article about this petition and to find out how to file a petition with public officials, visit [www.walden.com/hoot](http://www.walden.com/hoot).

## TAKE ACTION

Sometimes, it’s best to take matters into your own hands in a lawful manner. A group of St. Louis-area middle-school students taking a class in Environmental Citizenship has discovered that the best way to start to solve environmental problems is to tackle those that are closest at hand. Worried to learn that the Missouri River was designated the nation’s most endangered river for the second year in a row, the students wanted to find a way to help. They learned that the street storm drains in their area funnel water into underground streams that feed the Missouri River. These drains are often polluted with toxic chemicals such as paint, motor oil, and other materials. The students created warning stickers that read “Dump No Waste/Drains to Streams” and have placed those stickers on 60 storm drains in their area.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Is there an environmental issue in your area about which you feel strongly? Describe the issue:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some ways you could deal with this issue?

REACH OUT: \_\_\_\_\_

GET IT IN WRITING: \_\_\_\_\_

TAKE ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WHAT CAUSED THE CHANGES?



Bonnet House Museum and Gardens 1940



Bonnet House Museum and Gardens 1988

Look closely at these two photos of Bonnet House Museum and Gardens, a 35-acre oasis of coastal wilderness and gardens in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where some scenes for Hoot were filmed.

### BE AN ECO-DETECTIVE!

Use the terms listed to the right to help you discover changes that have taken place around Bonnet House Museum and Gardens over time.

1. Describe a change in the **topography** from 1940 to 1988. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Describe two changes in the **vegetation** from 1940 to 1988. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. List two kinds of **development** you see in the 1988 photo that weren't there in 1940. What are the effects of these changes on local wildlife? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### NOTICE CHANGES IN:

#### TOPOGRAPHY

(hills, valleys, direction of water flow, shoreline)

#### VEGETATION

(deciduous trees – trees that seasonally lose their leaves – and evergreen trees, shrubs, long or short grass, gardens, and natural areas)

#### DEVELOPMENT

(roads, highways, hotels, condos, gas stations, power lines, malls, marinas, etc.)



### FILM FACTS

Hoot is the first commercial movie ever to film an endangered species of owl.



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# WILDLIFE WHERE YOU LIVE

*For Mullet Fingers, Roy, and Beatrice, the process of saving the burrowing owls in Coconut Cove began by noticing them in the first place. Now it's your turn to take a closer look at wildlife where you live. Start by creating a Field Notebook like the one shown at right.*



## CONDUCT A SITE INVENTORY

- **Choose a place.** Make use of the schoolyard or a nearby park to focus your investigation.
- **Vary the scale.** Look for small animals (ants, beetles, spiders, butterflies, snails, slugs) as well as larger ones (birds, squirrels, frogs, toads).
- **Zoom in.** Peek under logs and rocks, beneath leaves, on tree bark, and in puddles or other wet areas.
- **Heed the signs.** Tracks, holes, nests, droppings, chewed leaves or twigs, insect and birdcalls, and other signs are all clues about the presence of wildlife.
- **Do not disturb.** Be a good steward. Move slowly and quietly. Treat all plants and animals with respect. Leave a habitat in better shape than the way it was when you found it.

## LOOK IT UP

Borrow a field guide from your local library and bring it along with you into the field. Or bring a camera or a notebook and pencil to make sketches. When you get back to your classroom, visit [www.eNature.com](http://www.eNature.com) to look up plants and animals you've spotted, to find answers to puzzling nature questions, and to create personal wildlife lists.

## MAKE A MAP

As a follow-up to the wildlife inventory, map your site. Begin with a map that includes major features such as buildings, roads, parking lots, athletic fields, etc. Work in teams to show features that are important to wildlife, such as:

- Topography (hills, valleys, direction of water flow, shoreline).
- Vegetation (deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, long or short grass, gardens, and natural areas).
- Soil types, areas of sun, shade, wind, and calm.
- Habitat features. (What existing site features provide wildlife with food, water, cover, and places to raise young?)

## HABITAT! WHAT'S THAT?

Habitat is where an animal finds everything it needs to live. Without habitat, living things can't survive. With healthy habitat, they will thrive. Habitat has four features:

### FOOD



### WATER



### COVER



### PLACES TO RAISE YOUNG



**Ready to welcome wildlife home?**  
For many more ideas and resources to get started, visit [www.walden.com/hoot](http://www.walden.com/hoot) and [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org).



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# HANDS-ON HABITAT

## WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

Like the owls in *Hoot*, wildlife all over the world is in danger as habitat shrinks while developed areas expand. How can you help? Bring back the habitat! The National Wildlife Federation has certified over 50,000 wildlife habitats. Imagine your schoolyard as a thriving sanctuary for butterflies, birds, frogs, and other animals, as well as a rich environment for learning. Begin by inspiring the entire school community (administrators, teachers, students, and parents) to create a vision you can all work toward.

## LIMITS TO LIVING HERE

Each of the four parts of habitat – food, water, cover, and places to raise young – is vital to wildlife. The feature in shortest supply determines the population size of a given species and is called the **limiting factor**. For instance, burrowing owls in the western United States live in burrows dug by badgers, prairie dogs, and other animals. Even if an area has plenty of food to support a large owl population, the number of burrows available determines how many owls can actually live there.

Choose several species from your site inventory. Research their habitat needs. Which factors are limiting at your site?

## TAKE ACTION

Now you know what your site needs. You're ready to dig in! Here are some hands-on habitat projects:

- putting up birdfeeders
- starting a garden of native flowers and shrubs
- building and installing nest boxes
- planting trees
- constructing a pond

No matter what you choose, wildlife will benefit – and so will you.

## Habitat: A Must-Have

Mother Paula's pancakes just won't satisfy this burrowing owl. It needs insects, frogs, and mice to eat, as well as an open grassy area for the burrow where it takes shelter and raises its young.

**EDUCATORS:** Looking for local sources of information about wildlife, native plants, or resources such as field trips and guest speakers? Try contacting:

- The National Wildlife Federation affiliate in your state ([www.nwf.org/affiliates](http://www.nwf.org/affiliates))
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other wildlife agencies in your state ([www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html](http://www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html))

Reading  
Comes Alive  
with...

Ranger  
Rick

Check out the April 2006 issue of *Ranger Rick* magazine for a behind-the-scenes tour of the movie *Hoot*, a burrowing owl poster, and more ideas to enjoy nature in your neighborhood. Every month *Ranger Rick* offers captivating wildlife stories and photographs. The online *Ranger Rick Educator's Guide* provides valuable reading, writing, and science connections. Visit us at [www.nwf.org/rangerrick](http://www.nwf.org/rangerrick).

*Once you've investigated your site and discovered what kinds of wildlife share your place, you're ready to take action. Now you know what's there, and you've probably started to envision what's not – but could be. Turn your vision into a reality with projects to create or improve local wildlife habitat.*



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## THE BURROWING OWLS OF HOOT: THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

*The population of burrowing owls in Florida is facing an uncertain future. These small, ground-dwelling birds stand about 10 inches tall and weigh only five or six ounces. They have very specific habitat needs, requiring open areas on which to hunt and construct their burrows.*

### THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

“The burrowing owls that face destruction in *Hoot* are very real,” author Carl Hiaasen tells readers on his website. “Their habitat is being wiped out by development, so the state finally gave them the status of a protected species. Sadly, the bulldozers keep rolling. In fact, after I finished *Hoot*, there was a news story about several owls being deliberately killed up in Broward County (Florida). The birds were the only things standing between the developer and some land he wanted to build on, and mysteriously the birds wound up dead. It was creepy how much it resembled the plot of the book.”

As illustrated in *Hoot*, Florida is experiencing unprecedented growth, with developers competing for the real estate most desirable for development (dry, open lands), which is also prime habitat for burrowing owls. In Florida, burrowing owl populations are found in isolated pockets around the state, leaving them vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes, which have the potential to wipe out a majority of these ground-dwelling birds in a very short time.

### DEEPEN THE STORY: YOUR TURN

1. Using research materials and the Internet, research which states and in what locations you’re likely to see burrowing owls. List them here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you live in a state where burrowing owls make their home, plan a visit to the area to conduct a population survey. Use ACTIVITY FOUR and FIVE to help you. If you do not live near burrowing owl habitats, use photographs from books or the Internet.

3. Compile a list of natural and man-made threats to burrowing owls.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Write a book or film review of *Hoot*. Include the answers to this question in your review:

- What adaptive behaviors of burrowing owls did Mullet Fingers and Roy make use of to ensure that the owls were visible to people? List three examples.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

5. List five things that you can do to protect burrowing owls and their habitats.

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

5) \_\_\_\_\_



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# BURROWING OWL FACTS

**APPEARANCE** About 9-10 inches tall, weigh about 4-6 ounces, and have white to beige spots and bars on their brown feathers. Unlike most other owls, they don't have ear tufts and have long, unfeathered legs that raise their height to give them a better vantage point for spotting predators and prey when they stand on the ground.

**NUMBERS** Estimates on how many burrowing owls are found throughout the U.S. range from 3,000 to 10,000.

**SHELTER** Owls dig their own burrows, take over unused gopher or tortoise burrows, and may even nest in drainage pipes. Burrows may be up to 8 feet long and up to 3 feet under the ground.

**FOOD** Hunt mainly for insects like crickets but also may eat small lizards, frogs, snakes, and birds and carrion.

**PROTECTION** Developed ways to "trick" their predators to avoid being attacked or eaten, including an imitation of a rattlesnake sound. It is an amazingly accurate call, tricking their predators enough to cause them to back away from the burrow. This process is called mimicry. Mimicry is the resemblance of one organism to another or natural object to protect itself from predators. It is an important tool for survival for many animals.

**SOUNDS** Burrowing owls have a variety of calls, from "hoo-hoo" to "whep" to "cack."

**BREEDING** The months between February and July are said to be the usual burrowing owl mating period. These birds can begin to mate at the age of one year.

**NESTING** Females lay 6 to 10 white eggs. A female may sometimes share the job of incubating the eggs with her mate, for about a month.

**OFFSPRING** Young burrowing owls may be visible outside the burrow when they are just two weeks old. They usually fledge (begin to fly) around 6 weeks after hatching.



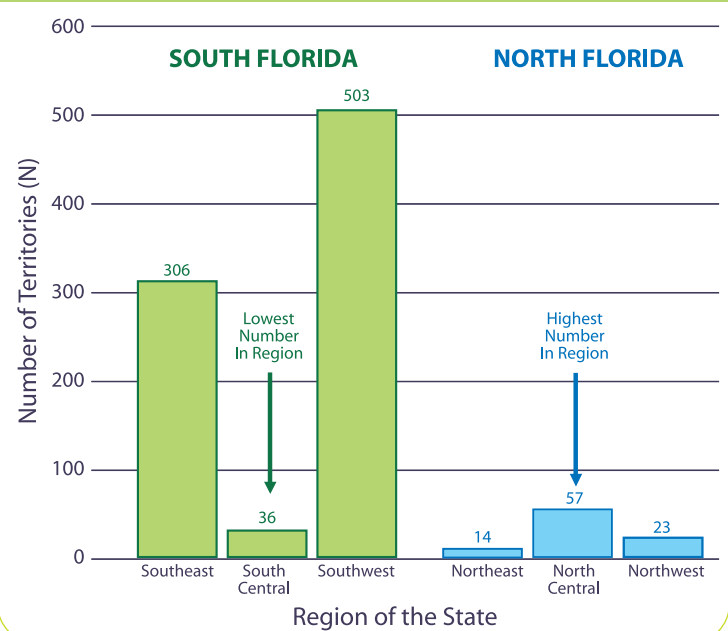
## THINK ABOUT IT

Why does Carl Hiaasen says he hopes that his "children and grandchildren [are] able to grow up in a place where they can always see a bald eagle or a manatee or a school of dolphins—or a pair of little burrowing owls, for that matter?" How does the presence of such creatures make our lives richer?

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

One means of survival for organisms is called **adaptive behavior**. This is the process of an organism changing its actions in order to survive. One adaptive behavior observed in burrowing owls is their use of feces from other animals to line the entrance of their burrow. This masks the owls' presence by fooling predators, which protects the burrow.

Number of Burrowing Owl Territories Recorded in Florida in 1999



## FILM FACTS

Mother Nature took center stage during filming;

Hurricanes Dennis and Katrina each shut down the set and Ophelia delayed post-production.



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Scholastic Presents **A CHAT WITH CARL HIAASEN**

*Where did Carl Hiaasen get his ideas for a character like Mullet Fingers? Why did this columnist for The Miami Herald and well-known author of adult novels decide to write a book for and about kids? You can get the answers to questions like these from Mr. Hiaasen himself when you join Scholastic.com's online chat with the Hoot author in April 2006.*

**HOW TO PARTICIPATE:**

- With your class, decide what you want to ask the author. Use the ideas below to help prepare a list of questions; send these to our moderator before the chat.
- Submit questions for the author before the chat. A variety of questions will be chosen and Mr. Hiaasen will respond to them on the day of the chat. Submit your questions at: [www.scholastic.com/hiaasen\\_chat](http://www.scholastic.com/hiaasen_chat)
- Sign in on the day of the chat! To join Mr. Hiaasen and other classes, click the chat link at: [www.scholastic.com/hiaasen\\_chat](http://www.scholastic.com/hiaasen_chat)

**PREPARE FOR THE CHAT:**

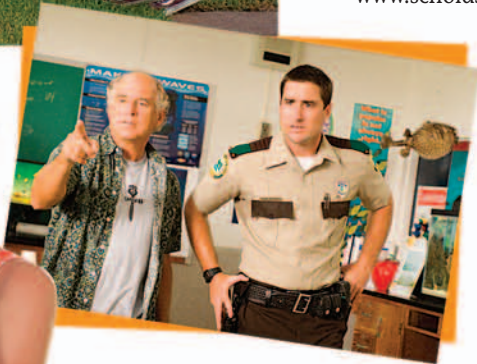
Before submitting your questions or participating in the chat, use the following guide to get the most out of this interactive learning opportunity.

- Get to know a bit about the author. Visit Carl Hiaasen's author page at [www.scholastic.com/hiaasen](http://www.scholastic.com/hiaasen) to gather key facts about his life and work.
- Read and discuss *Hoot*. Read the book several weeks before the chat, allowing time to discuss the book and brainstorm and submit questions.
  - Review other Q&As with the author. Mr. Hiaasen's website includes answers to some frequently asked questions at [www.carlhiaasen.com/faqs-hoot.html](http://www.carlhiaasen.com/faqs-hoot.html). Come up with new questions you think Mr. Hiaasen will enjoy answering.
  - Research themes in the book. Using library resources and websites such as [www.floridaconservation.org](http://www.floridaconservation.org) or [www.audubonofflorida.org](http://www.audubonofflorida.org), gather information about burrowing owls, the Florida everglades, building regulations, or themes connected to other topics you are studying this year.

**JOIN THE AUTHOR ONLINE:**

- Organize a CIA! As members of the CIA (Chat Investigating Agency), work in small groups to complete a KWL Chart (download it at [www.scholastic.com/kwl](http://www.scholastic.com/kwl)). Fill in the first two columns before the event and the final column after the chat.
- Contact your technical support staff. Have your teacher check if your school filters prevent classrooms from entering chat rooms. Your school's technical support staff will need to change the filter setting before the chat. Details are posted at [www.scholastic.com/hiaasen\\_tech](http://www.scholastic.com/hiaasen_tech).

- Assign question monitors. Question monitors can type and submit class questions during the chat.
- Read questions aloud as they're posted. Pick someone to read each question and its answer as it goes up on the Web. You should have time between questions to briefly comment on or discuss an answer.
- Watch for questions from your classroom. Keep an eye out for instances when your questions get posted. Make sure you have paper and pens to record the answers right away.



The three-legged dog in the movie *Hoot* belongs to director Wil Shriner's neighbor.



**FILM FACTS**

Carl Hiaasen appears in the movie *Hoot* as Felix the Assistant.

## RECAP AFTER THE CHAT:

Discuss the author's answers.

- What new information do you know about Carl Hiaasen?
  - Describe the writing strategies Mr. Hiaasen shared.
  - Was there anything surprising or unexpected about the author's answers? Explain.
  - Are there questions you wished he had answered but didn't?
- Complete the KWL Chart. Work with your CIA group to complete the "What did I learn?" column. Share answers with the rest of the class.
  - Discuss the film version of *Hoot*. If you were in charge of turning this book into a movie, what scenes would be most important? What would you change in the book *Hoot* for the movie version? Why? What would you cut? Why?
  - Review the chat transcript. A few days after the event, return to the chat page at [www.scholastic.com/hiaasen\\_chat](http://www.scholastic.com/hiaasen_chat). Re-read the dialogue. Is there anything you missed or forgot about when you discussed the chat earlier? Pick your favorite part of the chat and explain why you liked it.

## LEAD A DISCUSSION OF HOOT

After reading *Hoot*, use these questions to start a discussion about the book. You can also share your thoughts with other kids through the Book Bulletin Board at: [www.scholastic.com/hoot\\_discussion](http://www.scholastic.com/hoot_discussion).

1. How is Roy's family different from Beatrice and Mullet Fingers's family? What influence do you think the characters' families had on their actions?
2. Why does Beatrice protect her stepbrother? How are Mullet Fingers's family life and his desire to save the owls connected?
3. Why did Mother Paula's Pancakes "lose" the Environmental Impact Statement?
4. Through much of the book, Roy feels like an outsider. What finally makes him feel that he belongs in Florida?
5. Do you think other characters feel like outcasts? Which ones? Why would they feel like this?
6. Dana Matherson bullies Roy, but other characters also act as bullies. Which characters? Who are their targets? How can you deal with bullies in real life?

## RECOMMENDED READING FOR 'TWEENS & TEENS

*YALSA and Walden Media have selected these books, which span a broad range of reading and maturity levels. We encourage adults to take an active role in helping individual teens choose those books that are the best fit for them and their families. This list was prepared for Walden Media by YALSA's 2005 Booklist Taskforce. YALSA is the world leader in selecting books, videos & audiobooks for teens. For the full Hoot-related list, go to [www.walden.com/hoot](http://www.walden.com/hoot).*

Allende, Isabel. *City of the Beasts*. HarperCollins, 2002.

Alexander accompanies his grandmother on a trip into the Amazon jungle in pursuit of the legendary "Beast," a journey on which he meets a strange, magical girl and a mysterious native tribe who teach him what it means to be a man and live in harmony with nature.

DeFelice, Cynthia C. *Lostman's River*. Macmillan, 1994. Fighting greedy profiteers, Tyler MacCauley's trust in a stranger may spell doom for Lostman's River and its wildlife. A selection for YALSA's 1998 Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults.

Gauthier, Gail. *Saving the Planet and Stuff*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2003. Sixteen-year-old Michael spends the summer with friends of his grandparents to escape the alternative of taking care of his brainy little brother. He works as an intern for Walt and Nora's environmental magazine. Michael is a keen observer of the office politics and shakes up Walt and Nora's beliefs.

Hill, Julia Butterfly. *One Makes the Difference: Inspiring Actions that Change Our World*. HarperCollins, 2002. A guidebook for anyone who wants to make the world a better place. Ideas and resources for reducing pollution and waste and taking political action are included.

Hobbs, Will. *Jackie's Wild Seattle*. HarperCollins, 2003.

Shannon and her little brother Cody spend the summer in Seattle with their Uncle Neal, who volunteers for a group that rescues and rehabilitates wild animals found in urban areas. When her uncle is injured by a hawk, Shannon begins to help with the rescues and becomes more involved with a wildlife center, where teens are encouraged to work with the animals and learn more about the important connections between humans and wildlife.

Sattler, Helen Roney. *The Book of North American Owls*. Clarion Books, 1995.

Everything you ever wanted to know about owls, in text and illustrations.

Thomas, Rob. *Green Thumb*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1999. Grady Jacobs, a thirteen-year-old science whiz, earns an invitation to participate in an internationally-sponsored rain forest study. Dr. Philip Carter, head of the project, is disgusted to discover that Grady is just a kid and gives him all of the grunt work. Grady performs his chores and discovers that Dr. Carter is populating the forest with poisonous trees. Grady has to flee for his life into the jungle with Dr. Carter in close pursuit.



**For more lists of recommended reading, go to [www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists).**

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## ACTIVITY 1

### Mullet Fingers Meets Henry David Thoreau

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts, Character Education, Social Studies

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 1: Reading for Perspective; Standard 3: Evaluation Strategies; Character Education: Chicago Public Schools Character Education Standard 2: Trait of Courage; Standard 9: Trait of Responsibility; Social Studies: NCSS Standard 3: People, Places, and Environments

**DURATION:** Two 45-minute class periods

**MATERIALS:** Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 1; writing materials

**OBJECTIVES:**

- to read several statements written by Henry David Thoreau and summarize the meaning of each;
- to re-state Thoreau's ideas in one's own words;
- to evaluate the applicability of Thoreau's comments to the words and actions of Mullet Fingers in *Hoot*;
- to reflect on the meaning of "step to the music."

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Give copies of Activity 1 to students.
2. Invite students to reflect on experiences they have had in nature or in the wilderness and on what they learned about themselves through their experiences.
3. Summarize for students the work of Henry David Thoreau. For additional information about Thoreau, see our Professional Development website at [www.walden.com/web/teach/dev](http://www.walden.com/web/teach/dev).
4. Examine with students what Thoreau learned about himself by living simply in the woods, then ask them what parallels they see in Mullet Fingers's life.
5. Take a passage of Thoreau's writing, invite students to explain the meaning, and then apply the passage to the corresponding passage or statements about Mullet Fingers from *Hoot*. Do the same for each pairing on the Activity Page.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Some students may find it beneficial to follow along silently as you read aloud from a transparency of Activity 1, stopping to discuss each quote individually. Some students may benefit from going over the following words that appear in the Thoreau quotes: measured, speculator, esteemed, industrious, enterprising, boisterous, unjust, endeavor, transgress.

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on the basis of their reflections for the activity YOUR TURN and on their ability to restate one of the Thoreau quotes and apply it to Mullet Fingers.

**EXTENSIONS:** Challenge interested older students to read some or all of *Walden* and to present a report on its contents to the class. Other students might find it challenging to read and write about writers living in Concord, MA during the time Thoreau lived there – particularly Louisa May Alcott and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

## ACTIVITY 2

### Make Your Voice Heard!

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts, Social Studies, Character Education

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 5: Communication Strategies; Standard 7: Evaluating Data; Social Studies: NCSS Standard 6: Power, Authority, and Governance; Standard 10: Civic Ideals and Practices; Character Education: Chicago Public Schools Character Education Standard 2: Trait of Courage; Standard 9: Trait of Responsibility

**DURATION:** One 45-minute class period

**MATERIALS:** Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 2; writing materials; clipboards; access to copying machines

**OBJECTIVES:**

- to read about work on behalf of the environment instigated by middle school students and the role of writing in expressing an opinion or a course of action;
- to write a persuasive letter or essay;
- to create a petition and collect signatures;
- to identify an environmental issue or issues within one's community and devise a course of action in response to the issue or issues;
- to learn about the role of government agencies in protecting the environment.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Give copies of Activity 2 to students.
2. Invite students to read the selection aloud or silently.
3. Reflect with students on why middle school students in Oregon and Missouri took action.
4. Brainstorm with students to find out about some environmental issues that concern them.
5. Encourage students to fill out the bottom of page 6.
6. Invite students to share their responses to the question, "WHAT CAN YOU DO?"

**ADAPTATIONS:** Students for whom English is a second language may benefit from working on each of the four subheadings in greater detail. Or, based on students' answers, you may wish to form small interest groups of students.

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on their reflections and insights into the role of persuasive writing and action within a democracy.

**EXTENSIONS:** Challenge interested students to make a graphic story or a mural based on one of the four subheadings found on the page.

## ACTIVITY 3

### What Caused the Changes?

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts, Social Studies

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 1: Reading for Perspective; Standard 7: Evaluating Data; Social Studies: NCSS Standard 3: People, Places, and Environments

**DURATION:** Two 45-minute class periods

**MATERIALS:** Classroom set of color reproductions of Activity 3; writing materials

**OBJECTIVES:**

- to examine two photographs of the same environment taken over time for changes in the landscape;
- to define the terms topography, vegetation, and development and apply them to the two photographs;
- to make inferences about changes in the natural environment and their effects on wildlife populations;
- to reflect on the importance of the preservation of wilderness areas.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Distribute color copies of Activity 3.
2. Using a stopwatch, give students three minutes to list as many changes as they notice from one photo to the other on a piece of paper.
3. Go over lists as a class, listing changes on the blackboard.
4. Invite students to put: a **t** (for topography), a **v** (for vegetation), or a **d** (for development) after each item on the list.
5. Invite students to draw a third "photograph" showing what Bonnet House Museum and Gardens will look like 50 years from now—if conservation steps are taken, or if they are not.
6. Challenge students to discuss reasons for the predictions in their pictures.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Some students may find it beneficial to draw pictures of changes they see under three headings (i.e., topography, vegetation, and development).

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on their ability to correctly use the three terms both on the pictures they draw and in the predictions they make about the environment.

**EXTENSIONS:** Invite students to research local environmental photos taken of the same area over time and to discuss the changes they see.

## ACTIVITIES 4 AND 5

### Wildlife Where You Live and Hands-On Habitat

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Character Education

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Language Arts: NCTE/IRA: Standard 7: Evaluating Data; Standard 8: Developing Research Skills; Science:

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## All activities are appropriate for students in grades 6–8.

NSES Grades 5–8 Standard C: Students should develop understanding of: structure and function in living systems; reproduction and heredity; regulation and behavior; populations and ecosystems, and diversity and adaptations of organisms; Social Studies: NCSS Standard 3: People, Places, and Environments; Character Education: Chicago Public Schools Character Education Standard 8: Trait of Respect; Standard 10: Trait of Work Ethic

**DURATION:** Three 45-minute class periods (one of these class periods is in the field)

**MATERIALS:** Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 4 and 5; writing materials; Internet access; research materials

### OBJECTIVES:

- to learn about conducting a field investigation as a way to collect important data;
- to conduct a field investigation and create a map of the site investigated;
- to observe wildlife in its natural habitat and evaluate the factors that might be limiting its existence.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Give copies of Activity 4 and 5 to students and read them aloud as a class.
2. Invite students to discuss how Mullet Fingers knew the owls were in danger. Encourage students to imagine how they might find out if any wildlife in their area is in danger.
3. Explain what a wildlife site inventory entails and discuss rules and precautions to take while conducting one.
4. Create Field Notebooks to use during the investigation.
5. Conduct wildlife site inventory.
6. Discuss student observations made in the Field Notebooks.
7. Encourage students to research and document unfamiliar wildlife encountered during the investigation.
8. Invite students to work in teams to construct a map of the site they investigated. Remind them to include the topography, vegetation, soil types, and habitat features.
9. Allow teams to choose a species to investigate further. Using the information gathered from the site inventory and map, have students research the ways in which the law of limiting factors affects this species.

**ADAPTATIONS:** For ease and expediency, the creation of the site map and the limiting factors research can be done as a whole-group activity rather than through teamwork.

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on the basis of their observations and details for the wildlife inventory and site map. Also assess students on the quality of the law of limiting factors research.

**EXTENSIONS:** Challenge interested students to use their law of limiting factors research to identify and create specific projects (birdfeeders, gardens, ponds) to enhance their site.

## ACTIVITY 6

### The Burrowing Owls of Hoot: The Story Behind the Story

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Character Education

National Standards: Language Arts: NCTE/IRA; Standard 5: Communication Strategies; Standard 7: Evaluating Data; Standard 8: Developing Research Skills; Science: NSES Grades 5–8 Standard C: Students should develop understanding of: structure and function in living systems; reproduction and heredity; regulation and behavior; populations and ecosystems; and diversity and adaptations of organisms; Social Studies: NCSS Standard 3: People, Places, and Environments; Character Education: Chicago Public Schools Character Education Standard 1: Trait of Caring; Standard 8: Trait of Respect

**DURATION:** Two 45-minute class periods

**MATERIALS:** Classroom set of reproductions of Activity 6; Internet access; library access; writing materials

### OBJECTIVES:

- to research burrowing owl habitats;
- to identify natural and man-made threats to the burrowing owl population;
- to read basic facts about burrowing owls;
- to define and give examples of adaptive behavior as a defense mechanism for survival;
- to make inferences about why burrowing owl populations have been declining;
- to identify actions students can take to protect burrowing owls and their habitats.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Invite students to read Activity 6 and to discuss aspects of the story that are most interesting to them.
2. Ask students why they think Carl Hiaasen cared enough about burrowing owls to write a book about them.
3. Encourage students to research burrowing owls using the suggestions found under DEEPEN THE STORY.
4. Invite students to write a book or movie review of *Hoot*, using the answers to the questions they come up with from the activity.
5. Encourage students to discuss what they can do to protect burrowing owls and their habitats.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Some students may wish to complete the activity pages in pairs. Students for whom English is a second language may benefit from illustrating the “Burrowing Owl Facts” for a class FACT chart.

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on their reasons for wanting to preserve the burrowing owl and its habitat.

**EXTENSIONS:** Invite local officials to your classroom who work on behalf of wilderness preservation and management to discuss what they do and how they got into such work.

## ACTIVITY 7

### Scholastic Presents A Chat With Carl Hiaasen

**SUBJECTS:** Language Arts

**NATIONAL STANDARDS:** Language Arts: NCTE/IRA; Standard 4: Communication Skills; Standard 11: Participating in Society; Standard 12: Applying Language Skills

**DURATION:** 2-3 45-minute class periods

**MATERIALS:** Internet access; Activity pages; writing materials

### OBJECTIVES:

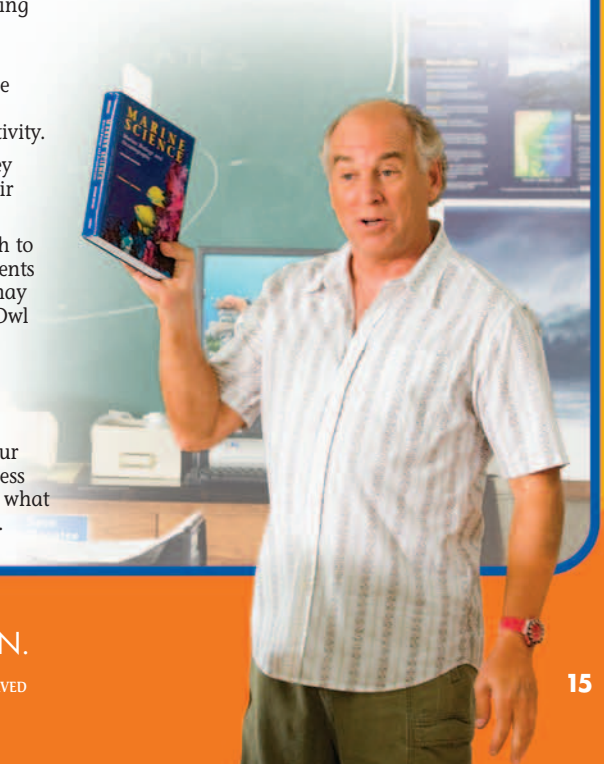
- develop questions for an online chat with *Hoot* author Carl Hiaasen
- research the author and his writing
- synthesize knowledge gathered from multiple sources and summarize learning
- practice critical reasoning skills to answer discussion questions

**PROCEDURES:** Follow the procedures described in detail in this activity. Encourage students to carefully type in Web addresses as they are listed in the Flashlight Reader Pages.

**ADAPTATIONS:** Some students may benefit from a review and practice with the KWL strategy. Using the Flashlight Readers book-related activities for *Hoot* may provide insight and clearer understanding of the story to help students prepare for the chat and answer questions. Bookmark websites for quick access.

**ASSESSMENT:** Assess students on their ability to generate original questions for the chat; how well they pay attention to and participate in the event; and their contribution to group activities and answers provided in discussion questions.

**EXTENSIONS:** Encourage students to go to an author reading at a local bookstore and to prepare for the trip in the same ways they did for Carl Hiaasen’s online chat.



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