

# Virtual Learning

## FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

by Wendy Fachon

When organizations and schools transitioned to distance learning and online platforms, the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) created an online listing of distance learning resources, where students, teachers and families can continue to engage in environmental education and outdoor recreation in a safe and meaningful way, and on their own time. The following is a sampling from that list.



Explorer magazine, which kids can download off the DEM website. The Summer 2020 issue features an interview with Dr. Charles Clarkson, coordinator for the Rhode Island Breeding Bird Atlas (a five-year project to document the distribution and abundance of all birds breeding in Rhode Island), a habitat chat about grasslands, facts about barn owls, a photo caption contest and more. [dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/wildlife-hunted/outreach](http://dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/wildlife-hunted/outreach).

### **Audubon Society of Rhode Island**

created the Audubon at Home online program to bring nature play and learning into the home. Each week, Audubon educators add a new nature theme and new content, sharing related fact sheets, virtual stories, animal videos, DIY activities, crafts and more. Audubon encourages people to visit an Audubon wildlife refuge as a great way to get exercise and fresh air while learning more about nature. [asri.org/audubon-at-home/resources.html](http://asri.org/audubon-at-home/resources.html).

**Save the Bay** helps families experience the bay from home through its Breakfast by The Bay series. STB's education team is streaming live at 10 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays on its Facebook page. This is an easy way to explore the Narragansett Bay's various habitats, plants and animals and learn about estuary and ocean ecology. Kids can ask questions in real time and extend their learning by completing worksheets and activities linked in every video. These live streams can be accessed any-time on STB's YouTube channel. [SaveBay.org/school-groups-faq/breakfast-by-the-bay](http://SaveBay.org/school-groups-faq/breakfast-by-the-bay).

**Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management** publishes its *Wild Rhode Island*

**The Nature Conservancy** has designed Nature Lab Summer Camp for grades 3 through 8. Designed by scientists, this program helps students investigate how nature works and how they can help support nature's work. Four, week-long thematic family guides help direct an at-home summer camp experience with videos and action-oriented projects. The themes include Provide Food and Water Sustainably, Tackle Climate Change, Build Healthy Cities and Protect Land and Water. Download individual weekly guides below. [Nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/how-we-work/youth-engagement/nature-lab](http://Nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/how-we-work/youth-engagement/nature-lab).



**Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council** offers a video series to help kids learn about watersheds and how pollution effects waterways. The Woono watershed covers a 52-square-mile area that begins in North Smithfield, ends in Providence and impacts 27 percent of Rhode Island's population. [wrwc.org/wp/resources](http://wrwc.org/wp/resources).

**Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation** provides virtual tours of its extensive recycling facility in Johnson. Videos show what happens to various items

left on the curb during trash pick-up day. This is an eye opening experience that leaves visitors asking what they can do at home, school and work. [RIRC.org/education-program-support/virtual-tours](http://RIRC.org/education-program-support/virtual-tours).

**Story Walking Radio Hour** produces environmental education podcasts that share nature-inspired story walks, ecological history, sustainable living ideas and interviews with innovative Rhode Islanders that are making a difference in their communities and for the greater good of the world. Topics include composting, plastic waste management, watershed conservation, solar energy, sustainable farming and wild weed wisdom. Companion photo blogs provide additional learning resources. [NetwalkRI.com/programs](http://NetwalkRI.com/programs).

For even more ideas, people can find RIEEA's complete listing of distance learning resources at [rieaa.org/distance-learning-resources](http://rieaa.org/distance-learning-resources). Educators and organizations with additional material can ask to be added to this list by emailing [JSilversmith@rieaa.org](mailto:JSilversmith@rieaa.org).

WendyFachon is a member of RIEEA, a writer for Dreamvision 7 Radio Network's Sustainable Living News and the host of Story Walking Radio Hour at [NetwalkRI.com](http://NetwalkRI.com). See ad on this page.



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