



“The Hunt,” 2013
Mac Stone (American, b. 1984)
C-print photograph
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Ina Gotler-Colen
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INTRODUCTION

This teaching poster features Mac Stone’s photograph “The Hunt,” and is provided by the Appleton Museum of Art as a source of inspiration for any classroom to promote thoughtful discussion, creative thinking and artmaking.

Use the information on this poster as a way to introduce students to the Appleton before a class field trip and as a tool to enhance students’ visual literacy. Before you start a discussion, give the students a few minutes to really look at the poster. Ask students to tell you what they see. After you have spent a few minutes discussing all the recognizable items, have the students dig for deeper meaning and understanding. Having students verbalize their thoughts when examining a piece of art supports critical thinking.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTWORK

“The Hunt” is a color photograph of a large bird (Everglade snail kite) caught mid-motion with wings spread wide and talons clenched forward. The upper half of the photo is a blue sky with white clouds with the bird as the focal point in the center of the photograph. In the lower half of the photo, stalks of green vegetation (needlerush) form a horizontal line separating sky from marshy lake. The bird approaches a snail on the surface of the water in the lower foreground.

Photographer Mac Stone worked in coordination with state wildlife biologists to capture this photograph. After finding the right spot, he spent weeks patiently waiting in the water of Lake Okeechobee before finally getting the perfect image.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mac Stone (American, b. 1984) was raised in North Central Florida, exploring the swamps and springs of the area. At an early age he developed a love of conservation and photography. Stone is a contributing photographer for National Geographic Magazine, a National Geographic Society Explorer, and a senior fellow with the International League of Conservation Photographers. He is the author of the book, “Everglades: America’s Wetland.” He currently lives in South Carolina with his wife and two children.

“It kind of seems like, well, it just happened. But this is one that took months of planning and weeks out in the field of just sitting and waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting, moving this whole rig and setup into new locations until finally finding a location that this kite could zero in on.” — Mac Stone

FEATURED ANIMALS

Everglade snail kite
The bird in the photograph is a male Everglade snail kite. The male is slate gray in color with an orange beak and talons. The snail kite feeds exclusively on the apple snail. When the habitat of the apple snail was diminished through draining of the wetlands, it reduced their numbers. With less food, the Everglade snail kite became critically endangered. In an unusual twist, the Everglade snail kites are rebounding due to a new food source: the island apple snail, which is an invasive species — though fully grown adult island apple snails are too big for the snail kite to eat. It is not known what the long-term impact this invasive species will have on the other native plants and animals.

Apple snails
Apple snails are a large family of freshwater snails or aquatic gastropods. The Florida apple snail is naturally found in Lake Okeechobee, while its relative the island apple snail is an invasive species to the area.

EVERGLADES

The Everglades is a critically important wetland ecosystem in South Florida covering over 1.5 million acres. It was designated as a national park in 1947 due to its biodiversity and is often described as a “river of grass.” The Everglades is not only an important habitat for plants and animals, it serves a crucial role for humans as well. It recharges the Biscayne Aquifer that provides drinking water for millions of South Floridians. The Everglades is recognized globally as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE

Lake Okeechobee is the largest freshwater lake in Florida covering over 730 square miles, which means it is so large you can’t see from one side to another. It is a relatively shallow lake with an average depth of 9 feet. Most importantly, the lake serves as a freshwater source for the Everglades. The lake’s name, “Okeechobee,” is a combination of two Seminole words: “oki,” meaning water, and “chobi,” which means big. So, Okeechobee translates to “big water.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where does the photograph take place? What are the clues in the photograph to help you make an educated guess?
- Why is this photograph called, “The Hunt?”
- What adjectives and adverbs would you use to describe the bird?
- What do you think the bird was doing prior to the photograph being taken, and what will it do next?
- The skyline splits the photo horizontally in half. Why do you think the photographer chose to do that?
- List the different textures found in this photo. What would they feel like?



DID YOU KNOW?

Photographers often frame their subjects according to the “Rule of Thirds.” This refers to three sections of a visual space, both horizontal and vertical. Most phone camera apps and digital cameras incorporate this method, resulting in the grid that appears on the screen.

ENVIRONMENTAL VOCABULARY

- Aquifer**
A layer of porous rocks and minerals under the earth that contains freshwater.
- Biodiversity**
Short for biological diversity, it is the plants, animals, fungi and other microorganisms found in a particular area.
- Groundwater recharge**
Also known as deep percolation, it is part of the water cycle in which surface water re-enters the earth to become groundwater.
- Invasive species**
A plant or animal that is not naturally found in a particular area.
- Predator**
An animal that eats another animal.
- Watershed**
An area of land that channels rain into a larger body of water.
- Wetlands**
An area of land completely covered by water all year or for varying periods of the year.

ART VOCABULARY

- Background**
The farthest part of an artwork from the viewer.
- Focal point**
The most important part of an artwork that captures the viewer’s gaze.
- Foreground**
The part of an artwork closest to the viewer.
- Landscape**
An artwork depicting the natural environment.
- Middle ground**
The part between the foreground and background in an artwork.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Wetland Watercolors**
Use watercolors to paint an artwork of the wetlands. Experiment with color and use tints and shades to depict all the colors of green found in this environment.
- Florida Focus Landscape**
Sketch a landscape with your favorite Florida animal as the focal point of your picture. As you start, figure out where you want the focal point to be in the picture plane.
- Bird’s-Eye View Drawing**
Imagine you are a snail kite flying. What do you see? Draw a picture from the point of view of the snail kite.
- Lake Okeechobee Postcard**
Design a postcard with bright colors and ad-style images to promote Lake Okeechobee to visitors. Remember to depict what you can see and do there.
- Everglades Food Web**
Make a food web depicting the different food chains between the plants and animals of the Everglades. Be sure to include the Everglade snail kite and apple snail.
- Invasive Species Poster**
Create an informational poster with prominent illustrations depicting an invasive species in any of Florida’s ecosystems. Examples include the island apple snail, armored catfish and blue tilapia.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas
Research the life of environmentalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas (1890–1998) to discover her work in protecting the Florida Everglades.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Stone, Mac. “Everglades: America’s Wetland.” University Press of Florida, 2014.
- Mac Stone**
macstonephoto.com
- National Audubon Society Magazine**
audubon.org/magazine/spring-2017/see-one-worlds-coolest-most-specialized-raptors
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**
myfwc.com
- Britannica**
britannica.com/place/Lake-Okeechobee