

# Shorebird Values on the Line

*Adapted with permission from “Values on the Line, Project Learning Tree Pre K-8 Activity Guide.”*

**Grade Level:** upper middle school/ high school

**Duration:** one class period

**Skills:** evaluation, discussion, critical thinking, comparison, and vocabulary

**Subjects:** science, social studies, and language arts

## Concepts

- Taking an active role in shorebird conservation requires that we apply knowledge.
- Environmental stewardship is vital for the long-term conservation of our shared natural resources.

## Vocabulary

- values
- beliefs
- facts
- opinion

## Overview

Students rank to what degree they agree or disagree with a set of statements pertaining to shorebirds and shorebird habitat. They compare their rankings with those of their classmates, examine the reasons behind them, and discuss what factors influence a person’s values.

## Objectives

After this activity, students will be able to:

- Clarify the difference between a belief, a fact, and a value.
- Identify the need for balanced information when forming opinions.
- Explain to what degree they agree or disagree with environmental issues related to shorebirds.

## Introduction

The process of searching for truth involves identifying and assessing facts; distinguishing substantial from insubstantial evidence; separating the search for truth from the acceptance of propaganda; and examining controversial subjects such as politics, ethics, and religion in a constructive and unbiased manner.

To make decisions, students need to resolve ambiguities, balance the advantages and drawbacks of alternative solutions, and project the likely consequences of a particular choice. By combining such a decision-making procedure with pertinent scientific and technological information, students move toward achieving scientific literacy.

## Materials

- One copy of the *Shorebird Values Statements* handout (included here) for each student
- Large open space

## Activity Preparation

1. Make a copy of the Shorebird Values Statements handout for each student.

## Procedure

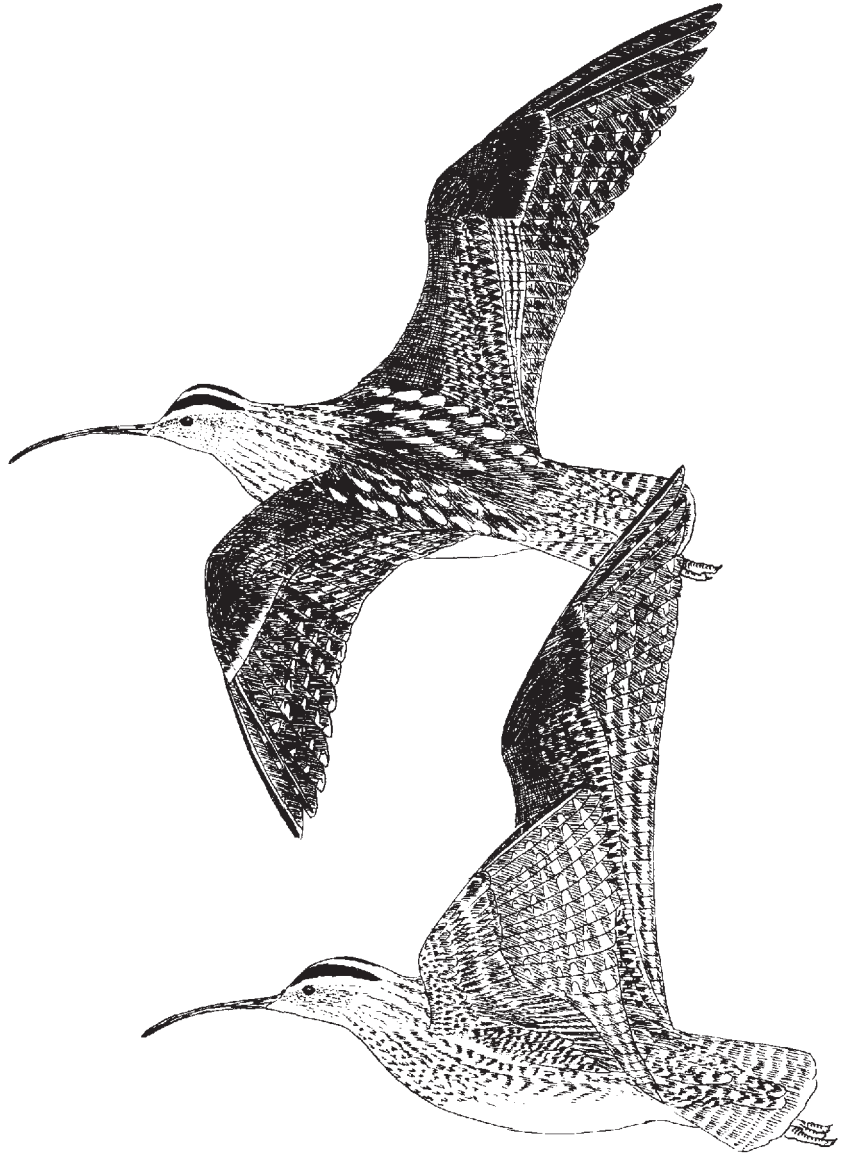
1. Pass out a copy of the *Shorebird Values Statements* handout to each student. Ask them to rank how much they agree or disagree with each statement by circling a number, under each statement. A “10” represents strongest agreement and “1” the strongest disagreement.
2. Find an open space and have the students stand in a line. Tell them that the line represents the scale of 1 to 10 that they used to rank the value statements (one end of the line being “strongly agree” and the other end “strongly disagree”).

3. Read one of the value statements aloud and have students position themselves in line according to how they ranked the statement. They will need to communicate with each other to make sure everyone is in the right place. Once they are settled, point out how the line reflects the range of opinions in the class.
4. Next, break the line at midpoint, and have half the students stay in place while the other half moves down so each student has a partner.
5. Give each person in the pair one minute to explain to his or her partner the ranking he or she chose. Then give the other partner half a minute to paraphrase what was said. Have the partners switch roles, giving the other person a minute to explain his or her ranking and the partner half a minute to paraphrase what was said.
6. Repeat steps three through five for as many of the value statements as you like.
7. Discuss each value statement with the students, using the following questions as a guide:
  - What reasons did they have for the rankings they chose?
  - What reasons did their partners give for the rankings they chose?
  - Did any of them support their rankings using examples or specific information from real-life situations?
  - Did anyone feel like changing his or her ranking on a particular statement after pairing with someone else and hearing his or her opinion?
  - Did students feel they needed additional information to judge an issue? If so, what did they need?



- Where do people's values come from? What kinds of experiences change or strengthen people's values?

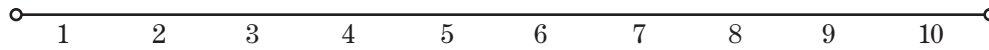
Alternative: Using chalk, string, or tape, create a scale of 1 to 10 on the ground. Make the scale 10 yards or meters long with the numbers one yard or meter apart. For a particular value statement, have the students place themselves as close as possible to the ranking they chose. When everyone is settled, make a diagram on the chalkboard or easel paper of how students are distributed on the scale. Have them do the exercises in steps three to five, and allow them to change their ranking based on what they learn. Have students once again position themselves on the scale. Draw another diagram showing their revised positions. Compare the diagrams and discuss the changes with the entire group.



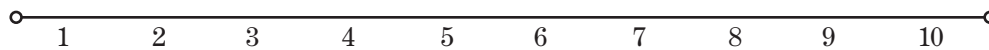
# Shorebird Values Statements

1 (strongly disagree) – 10 (strongly agree)

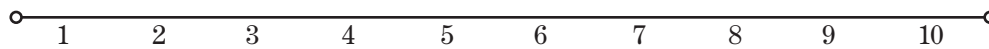
1. Beachfront property that is valuable shorebird habitat should not be protected if development would bring more jobs and tourist dollars into the community.



2. It is important to protect tundra wilderness areas even if most people will never visit them.



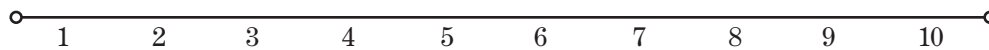
3. The world's natural resources exist for people to use. Preserving these resources for shorebirds is a luxury we cannot afford.



4. The loss and degradation of habitat is the biggest problem facing shorebirds today.



5. Shorebirds can always find another place to rest and feed if a traditional migration stopover site is lost to development.



6. People have a responsibility to protect all life forms on Earth, including shorebirds.



7. Protecting shorebirds and their habitat is primarily the responsibility of the government of the United States.



8. People should be able to use their own land in whatever way they want (that is farming, grazing cattle, housing, logging, wildlife habitat).



9. The fate of the human race is tied to the fate of other living things, including shorebirds. If people are to survive, we must protect all species and their habitats.



10. People will eventually develop alternative farming and grazing practices and machinery that will allow farmers and cattle ranchers to successfully coexist with grassland-nesting shorebirds.

