

Teacher Notes

Themes and Issues:

The main theme of this story is what a community can do to achieve a common goal. Hannah and Zoe live in a pleasant environment close to a reserve where wildlife flourishes and the locals meet. Thus the story revolves around keeping that environment safe from inappropriate development.

What inspired this story:

When a co-writer passed a sign on my street saying 'Lame Duck Protest', she challenged me to write a story about a lame duck. When people grow older they sometimes have trouble walking and refer to themselves as 'lame ducks'. I also wanted to show how youngsters and seniors have more in common than maybe they first realise.

Did you know?

- Ducks are mostly aquatic and may be found in both fresh water and sea water.
- Most ducks have a wide flat beak adapted for dredging.
- They eat a variety of food such as grasses, aquatic plants, fish, insects and worms.
- Many species of duck are temporarily flightless while moulting (losing feathers). They seek out protected areas with good food supplies during this period.
- Some ducks, particularly in Australia where rainfall is patchy and erratic, are nomadic.
- Ducks are known to imprint or follow one person if found when very young.
- Wildlife management is the process of keeping certain wildlife populations at a sustainable level. It protects endangered and threatened species.
- Most wildlife management is concerned with the preservation and control of natural habitats.

Comprehension Questions:

1. In your own words describe Hannah, her little sister Zoe, and some of the other people who appear in this story.
2. What is wrong with Antonia the duckling when Hannah and Zoe first find her?
3. Why are the girls told not to touch wild birds?
4. What might be going to happen to the reserve?
5. How do Hannah, Zoe and their friends rescue the reserve?
6. Hannah describes both her little sister Zoe's response to finding Antonia, and what happens in the reserve. Would the story have been different if it was told in the third person (using 'he' and 'she' instead of 'I')?

Research Activities:

1. Draw a map of your own neighbourhood. Show built-up areas, parks, reserves, shopping centres, farms and/or uncultivated bush.
2. Survey animals that come to your school and your suburb (including birds). How many species are tame? How many are wild? Have the numbers of wild animals increased or decreased in the last few years?
3. Research wild water birds in your area. How many varieties are there?
4. Look up the RSPCA website and find out how they, and other similar organisations, care for sick animals.

Creative Response:

1. Design a costume of your favourite animal.
2. Draw and colour as many wild birds as you can find
 - In your neighbourhood
 - In your state
 - In your country.
3. Design a poster advertising the Lame Duck Protest.

Writing Activities:

1. Pretend you are Hannah or Zoe and write a letter to the council arguing that the reserve should be protected and that the planned development should never take place.
2. Find an area in your neighbourhood that needs preserving. Imagine that it will be taken over by a high rise development. Draw up a table and write down the positives and negatives of this area being developed.

Topics to Debate:

1. Development is more important than conservation.
2. Wild ducks have to stay wild.