

37th Annual Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest



Open to Georgia students in K-5th grade



State Botanical Garden of Georgia
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



The [Georgia Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#), [State Botanical Garden of Georgia](#) and TERN (DNR Wildlife Conservation Friends Group) encourage participation in the **37th annual Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest!** As part of DNR and TERN's Kids for Conservation initiative, this contest provides a unique opportunity for kindergarten through fifth grade students to explore the wonders of Georgia's native animals and plants through the 2026-27 theme: **Wildlife Great and Small – We Need Them All!**



Do you enjoy seeing different kinds of plants and animals? If so, Georgia is the place to be! Our state has rich **biodiversity** (“bio” = life and “diversity” = variety) with over 4,000 species of plants and wild animals as well as tens of thousands of invertebrates! From North Atlantic right whales to sugar maples to wood storks to field ants, species come in all shapes and sizes.

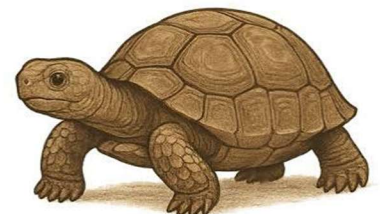
Just as every gear, bolt, rod and belt in a machine is needed to operate properly, every species, no matter how great or small, is needed for an ecosystem to function.

An **ecosystem** is a community of living things (plants and animals) and non-living things (air, water, soil) that work together to support life. If any part disappears, the ecosystem and the species in it may suffer. Plants and animals that once depended on the missing part may die, which leads to lower biodiversity and possibly even ecosystem collapse. However, if we take care of the environment, we can help prevent species loss and protect Georgia's biodiversity.

By participating in the Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest, you can help students appreciate wildlife and the habitats they need to survive, as well as learn how our actions can help or harm them. See the Teacher Tips on the next page to get started! Questions? Visit georgiawildlife.com/PosterContest or contact a state contest coordinator:

Linda May – (706) 319-0211, linda.may@dnr.ga.gov

Audrey S. Mitchell – (706) 583-0894, astadler@uga.edu



Teacher Tips

Contest Rules: Start with a Local Contest at Your School



While following the **Poster Contest Rules and Guidelines** (page 3), instruct your students to design their own artwork based on this year's contest theme:



Wildlife Great and Small – We Need Them All!

Artwork should depict at least one identifiable animal or plant species native to Georgia. Include a description on the **Poster Contest Entry Form** (page 5), thereby demonstrating that the student understands their subject. Then arrange for a local competition of students' artwork at your school or within your group (homeschool group, after-school camp, scout troop, library branch, etc.). **NOTE:** *Individual entries from students will not be accepted; they must first compete in a school- or group-level contest.* School or group judges will select first-, second- and third-place winners (award ribbons and Give Wildlife a Chance certificates are available for free – refer to **Contest Awards** section for details). Participating schools or groups will then choose one first-place winner from each division and email photographs of the winning entries with accompanying entry forms to the State Botanical Garden of Georgia.

The deadline to compete in the state-level contest is **March 1, 2027**. State entries will represent one or more of the four division categories described in the **Poster Contest Rules and Guidelines** section. First-, second- and third-place winners will be chosen as state-level winners from each division level, and the winning artwork will be announced and showcased on Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division and State Botanical Garden media in May 2027.

Supporting Activities

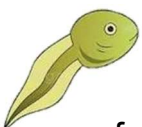
Kindergarten: Discover living and non-living things found outside, including earth materials. Compare the similarities and differences of living things found. (SKE2, SKL1, SKL2)

1st Grade: Discuss the basic needs of plants and animals. What do plants and animals provide for each other? (S1L1)



2nd Grade: Discuss how the weather may help or harm plants and wildlife. Can people also help or harm the environment? If so, how? (S2E3; also S3L2) Draw or make a model showing the life cycle of a native species of wildlife. (S2L1)

3rd Grade: Ask students to color the map on page 9 of [“Exploring Georgia’s Wildlife”](#) coloring book (free download; then print). Use a different color for each ecoregion. Research the types of plants and animals that live in your ecoregion and how they’re similar or different than species that live in Georgia’s other ecoregions. (S3L1)



4th Grade: Conduct Project Learning Tree’s [“Water Wonders”](#) activity. Each student is a water molecule traveling on a unique journey through the water cycle. (S4E3) Pick a native species and illustrate its role in a food chain. What would happen to the food chain/food web if that plant or animal became abundant, scarce or extinct? (S4L1)

5th Grade: Refer to [Georgia’s Biodiversity Portal](#) to develop models that show how plants and animals are sorted into groups. For a list of rare species in your county, click on All Species and Communities > All Rare Natural Elements by Location > County. (S5L1)

Poster Contest Rules & Guidelines

Sponsorship and Judging



The 37th annual **Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest** is sponsored by the [Georgia Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#), [State Botanical Garden of Georgia](#) and [The Environmental Resources Network, Inc. \(TERN\)](#). The theme changes yearly, but the contest is an ongoing educational effort to help children and teachers gain awareness and appreciation of Georgia's native animals and plants. The 2026-27 theme is **Wildlife Great and Small – We Need Them All!** Artists and wildlife professionals will judge the contest entries based on artistic interpretation, originality, visual impact and theme adherence.

Eligibility

The contest is open to Georgia students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Homeschool groups, public schools and private schools are encouraged to participate. Artwork must be produced by individual students; group drawings are not permitted. Computer-generated artwork is not allowed. Schools/groups may enter one poster from any or all divisions:

- Division 1: Kindergarten
- Division 2: First and Second Grades
- Division 3: Third and Fourth Grades
- Division 4: Fifth Grade

Each school/group may enter **no more than a total of four posters** to the state-level contest (one entry per division). State-level entries are normally the artwork of the first-place school or homeschool group winners.



Entry and Format Requirements



All state-level artwork entries must be submitted electronically.

Any size flat artwork is fine as long as it can be photographed well (photos may be taken with a smart phone or digital camera). Collages and 3D artwork are not eligible. By submitting artwork, you are granting (on behalf of yourself and the student) permission for sponsors to publish, reproduce and distribute the artwork.

For each state level entry, submit a full-frame photo of the artwork and a photo or PDF of the completed Entry Form (last page) via email to Audrey S. Mitchell at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia no later than **March 1, 2027**: astadler@uga.edu



Contest Awards

Certificates & Ribbons: Educators may request Give Wildlife a Chance certificates for all students who participate in their local school or group competition, as well as first-, second- and third-place ribbons to present to class, grade level or school group participants.

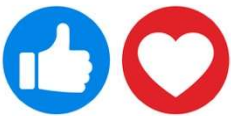
Email Audrey S. Mitchell (astadler@uga.edu) with the following information:

- School name
- Contest coordinator's contact information (e-mail, street address, phone #)
- Total number of students participating in the contest by grade level
- Number of certificates, first-place, second-place and third-place ribbons needed

NOTE: For a fast, convenient way to obtain certificates, teachers may download and print participation certificates from <https://georgiawildlife.com/postercontest>



State-Level Awards: The artwork of first-, second- and third-place winners in the state-level contest will be showcased on Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division and State Botanical Garden social media. Winners will also receive state-level award ribbons and may be recognized in other ways.



Thanks for participating!



37th Annual Give Wildlife a Chance Poster Contest Entry Form

Wildlife Great and Small – We Need Them All!

Email Deadline: March 1, 2027



Student's Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____ Division (circle one): 1 2 3 4

Total number of participants in this age division: _____

Poster Description: _____

Contest Coordinator: _____

School, Homeschool or Other Group: _____

Street Address: _____

Coordinator's E-mail: _____

Coordinator's Phone #: _____

Parent's E-mail: _____

**For each state-level poster contest entry,
email a photo or PDF of this completed form
along with a photo of the artwork to:**

Audrey S. Mitchell at the State Botanical
Garden of Georgia - astadler@uga.edu

