Wetlands

Design Intent

The local waterways await, with a new adventure around every corner. Stop for a moment and listen... can you tell a green tree frog's call from an American Bullfrog? See those crushed grasses? The birds are rustling around, making their nests. Look at how the ecosystem works together, a living breathing thing as it supports countless forms of life. So go explore: climb a tree, have a picnic on the water's edge, set out with your fishing gear in the quiet hours before dawn. The *Wetlands* are nature's playground, ready to be enjoyed by animals and people alike!

Technology Components

N/A

Mural Features

- Double-Crested Cormorant-Double-crested Cormorants are large brown-black water birds with small heads and long necks. They have thin, sharply hooked bills about the same length as their heads, along with a small patch of yellow-orange skin. These birds have heavy bodies that sit low in the water and are the most widespread cormorants in North American, commonly found in freshwater from Alaska to the Bahamas.
- Roseate Spoonbill-Locally common in coastal Florida, Texas, and southwest Louisiana, roseate spoonbills are usually found in small flocks, often with other wading birds. They feed in shallow waters, sweeping their spoon-shaped bills back and forth. Roseate spoonbills typically reach lengths of 30-40 inches and have a wingspan of 50-53 inches. They have pink wings and underparts, with a white neck and back.
- Leatherback Sea Turtle-Leatherback turtles are named for their shell, which is made of leathery, fatty tissue, rather than a hard shell. They are the largest sea turtle species and among the most migratory, crossing both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The leatherback's diet primarily consists of jellyfish and salps, and nesting occurs on sandy beaches from late February, peaking in May.
- Great Blue Heron-The great blue heron is a large wading bird found near shores, marshes, rivers, and wetlands across North and Central America. This heron species stands around 4 feet tall, with a wingspan of up to 6.5 feet, making it the largest heron in North America. It is a solitary hunter, often standing still to spear fish, frogs, or insects with its bill. Great blue herons nest in colonies called rookeries, usually in tall trees.



Mural Features

- Great Egret-The great egret is a tall wading bird with all-white plumage, a long, slender neck, and a yellow bill. Commonly found in wetlands, marshes, and along shorelines, it hunts by standing still or slowly stalking prey like fish, frogs, and insects. During the breeding season, it grows long plumes on its back, which were once hunted. The great egret is smaller and thinner than a great blue heron.
- Osprey-An osprey is a large, fish-eating raptor with a dark eye stripe and white and brown underparts. They are usually found over lakes, rivers, and coastal waters, diving feet first to catch fish with their talons. Ospreys build large stick nests in tall trees, poles, or platforms, often returning to the same site every year.
- Black Rat Snake-Black rat snakes live in a variety of habitats, from rocky hillsides to flat farmland, and are able to survive at wide-ranging elevations. They are non-venomous constrictors that feed mainly on rodents, but also on frogs, birds, and eggs. During the colder months, black rat snakes brumate, like hibernation, but wake during the winter for brief periods of activity.
- San Jacinto Monument-The San Jacinto Monument is a 567-foot tall obelisk located near Houston, Texas. It commemorates the Battle of San Jacinto, the decisive 1836 battle of the Texas Revolution where Texas won its independence from Mexico. The monument includes a 220-ton star topper and contains a museum at its base.
- Fred Hartman Bridge-The Fred Hartman Bridge is a cable-stayed bridge in Texas that spans the Houston ship channel, connecting Baytown and La Porte. The bridge opened to traffic in 1995, replacing the Baytown Tunnel, which was removed to allow for the channel's deepening.
- Barge-A barge is a flat-bottomed boat, typically used for transporting goods on rivers, canals, or other inland waterways. They are often towed by tugboats or pushed by other vessels. Barges can also be used for other purposes, such as carrying passengers, or as ceremonial vessels.
- Raccoon-Raccoons live throughout the continental U.S. in woods, wetlands, suburbs, parks, cities, and anywhere there is cover, food, and water. Raccoons are omnivores, eating both meat and vegetables. They are nocturnal and most often search for food at night, eating grasshoppers, nuts, berries, mice, squirrels, and bird eggs. Raccoons are solitary animals, except for the breeding season. Females usually have one litter a year, with three to seven offspring per litter.
- Cattails- A cattail is a tall, reed-like wetland plant with long, slender leaves and a distinctive brown, sausage-shaped flower spike. Found near ponds, marshes, and lakes, it provides habitat for wildlife and helps filter water. In late summer, the flower head releases fluffy seeds that disperse in the wind.

Themes to Explore

- Habitats
- Animal Identification and Behavior
- Plants
- Water and Land
- Conservation
- Water and Soil Exploration
- Sink or Float

Mounted Animals and Artifacts

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List of Hansa Animals

- Raccoon, Great Blue Heron, Pelican, Mallard Duck

To Find Out More

- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- USGS: Lakes and Reservoirs