

Avian Adventures

Grades: Early Elementary (K-2)

Key Words and Definitions

MIGRATION	The seasonal movements of animals from one region to another
CITIZEN SCIENCE	An effort by people who are not trained scientists, to contribute to the scientific record through research, data gathering, and other methods
PERCHING	To rest on something safely, away from the ground

Pre-Field Trip Activity: Bird Facts

One 20-minute session; pre-visit

Learning Objective

- Students will become more familiar with birds commonly found in New York and general bird characteristics.

Materials

- An open space in the classroom for students to walk back and forth

Procedure

1. Have students stand on one side of the classroom. Designate one side of the classroom as the “false” side, and the other as the “true” side. Tell the class that you’ll be reading out true or false facts, and students will have to walk to either the “true” or “false” side of the classroom depending on whether they think the fact is true or false.
2. Say that we’ll be looking for birds on our field trip to Wave Hill, and that some of these facts will help us learn more and become more curious about the kinds of birds that live nearby.
3. After each statement, you can give your class a hint, or ask a question, to see if that changes their opinion. Start with simple facts first and work up to trickier ones.

Facts:

- **All birds have feathers.**
True
- **All birds have beaks.**
True
- **All birds have the same kinds of beaks.**
False—different kinds of birds have evolved to have different kinds of beaks in order to eat the right kinds of available food.

- **Some birds lay their eggs in other birds’ nests.**
True—the cowbird will lay its eggs in robins’ nests in the hopes that its offspring will be nourished by the robin.
- **Birds use Earth’s magnetic field to navigate during migration.**
True!
- **There are only 50 different species of bird in the world.**
False—there are over 10,000!
- **Birds migrate year-round.**
True—there is usually a bird migration happening at all times of the year. Many shorebirds migrate to New York in the spring and summer. Some species of songbirds and waterfowl migrate during the fall.
- **The cardinal is New York’s state bird.**
False—the bluebird is the state bird of NY.
- **A lot of information about birds is collected by normal citizens!**
True—this is called citizen science. We will be practicing citizen science during our field trip by looking for birds and talking about our observations!

Resources

 [More about migration in New York: Spring and Fall Migration in New York City : Nyc Parks \(nycgovparks.org\)](https://www.nycgovparks.org)

Post-Field Trip Activity: Designing a Bird House

One 20-minute session; post-visit

Learning Objective

Students will learn about the lifestyles of different birds and use this information to make conclusions about the best structural design for those birds' houses.

Materials

- Bird info sheets
- Pieces of paper for drawing on
- Markers
- Pencils

Procedure

1. Print and hand out bird info sheets (found in the resources section) if using. You can section students into small groups and hand out one info sheet per group.
2. Allow students to look over their sheets and learn about their birds for several minutes. Ask what they notice, what they were surprised by, and if there are any follow up questions. Did anyone remember the birds on the sheets from Wave Hill? Did anyone see a bird that isn't listed on the sheet?
3. Hand out sheets of paper, markers, and pencils. Students will take some time to design the perfect bird house that suits the needs of their assigned bird. Their house must have: a roof, a way for the bird to enter (door), a perch for the bird to stand on, a source of food, and a place for the bird to make their nest. Encourage creativity!
4. Once everyone has designed their houses, allow students to share their designs and explain why they made the choices they made. Ask where they think they would put their bird house. In their backyard? In a tree at Wave Hill?

Resources

 [Info about birds: Spring & Summer Birds \(massaudubon.org\)](https://www.massaudubon.org)

 [Blue jay info sheet \(massaudubon.org\)](https://www.massaudubon.org)

 [Bald eagle info sheet \(massaudubon.org\)](https://www.massaudubon.org)

 [Hummingbird info sheet \(massaudubon.org\)](https://www.massaudubon.org)

 [Meadowlark info sheet \(massaudubon.org\)](https://www.massaudubon.org)



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