

# Feathered Friends

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Grade Levels: K-3

## Nutshell

Students learn about birds, their unique characteristics and discover bird cut-outs along the trail. Students will also look and listen for live birds.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to

- List 4 characteristics that distinguish birds from other animals;
- Name at least 3 birds discovered along the trail;
- Describe the locations in which these 3 birds were found;
- Imitate one birdcall.

# Feathered Friends Pre-visit Activities

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*The following materials are aids to help prepare your students for their visit to the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station. The vocabulary list contains terms and concepts your students will encounter in their visit. Please modify the definitions as needed. The activities listed below are merely options- it is not necessary to do them all or to follow any particular order. Keep in mind that your student's learning experiences at CWES will be enhanced if they are familiar with these concepts and terms prior to the on-site activities.*

## **Activity #1**

Attract birds to your school yard! Make a simple platform feeder by standing a large log on end and covering it with sunflower seeds. Cardinals and grosbeaks like to feed from platforms. Ground-feeders like doves and sparrow prefer sunflower seeds and white proso millet spread on the ground. Bring woodpeckers and nuthatches to your feeding station by spreading peanut butter on pine cones, then hanging them on branches.

What behaviors do the students observe at the feeding station? How do different birds eat? Some may fly off with a seed; others may take seeds and hide them in the crevices of trees. What do the birds do when predators like hawks come by? Have an identification book available for your students. The Peterson First Guide to Birds of North America by Roger Tory Peterson is a great resource for young children. Keep a record of birds that visit your station and their behaviors.

## **Activity #2**

Have your students write a story about what bird they would most like to be and why? What would it be like to be that bird? What would they eat, where would they sleep? What would they be most afraid of and what would they like the most about being that bird?

# Feathered Friends Post-visit Activities

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*A visit to the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station can be a school-year highlight for both students and their educators. We feel the knowledge and concepts gained during a Station visit apply outside the Station as well. The following activities will allow students to expand their knowledge and help them incorporate those lessons into their everyday lives. Feel free to pick from and modify the activities as best suits your group.*

## Activity #1

Review with your class what makes a bird a bird. (Wings, feathers, eggs, light bones, beaks, and any other characteristics). Have your students design their own birds. Using old nature magazines cut out parts of birds like various bird beaks, bodies, heads, eyes, feet, etc. Your students can assemble any creation they choose will help the birds survive in their environments. Ask the students where their birds live, why they eat, how they catch their food and what animals prey on their birds. Have them display their birds.

## Activity #2

Talk with your students about bird nests. Have any of them seen a nest in the wild? What did it look like? Are all bird nests the same? Why? They may give answers such as, they're all made of things you can find outside, they're all where the birds lay eggs, etc. Encourage the kids to talk about why they might not all be the same (different size birds, different places to build them, etc.)

Now that they're bird nest experts, have your class make their own edible birds' nests! Give each student a piece of wax paper and a ½ teaspoon of butter for their hands. Prepare the Rice Crispy Treat recipe and place approximately ½ cup of the mixture on the wax paper before each student. Have students mold their mixture into a bowl-shape. Use chow mien noodles as sticks. Place jellybeans in the nest of eggs. Enjoy! While they're eating, you can remind them that, just like the Rice Krispie nests they just made, no two bird nests are alike.

### Kellogg's® Rice Krispies Treats® Original Recipe

3 tablespoons margarine or butter  
1 package (10 oz, about 40) regular marshmallows or 4 cups miniature marshmallows  
6 cups Kellogg's® Rice Krispies® cereal

1. Melt margarine in large saucepan over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Remove from heat.
2. Add Kellogg's® Rice Krispies® cereal. Stir until well coated.
3. Using buttered spatula or waxed paper, press mixture evenly into 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan coated with cooking spray.

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# Feathered Friends Resources

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## Teacher Resources

Callahan, Philip. 1979. *Birds and How They Function*. New York: Holiday House.

Pettit, Theodore S. 1970. *Bird Feeders and Shelters You Can Make*. New York: Putnam. 80pp.

Ranger Rick's NatureScope. *Birds, Birds, Birds*. Washington DC: National Wildlife Federation.

## Children's Literature

Brownlie, Betty. 1992. *The Life Cycle of the Common Sparrow*. New York: Scholastic, Inc. (For Grades K-9)

Fichter, George S. 1993. *Cardinals, Robins, and Other Birds*. Racine, WI: Western Publishing Company, Inc. 36 pp (For Grades K-4)

Flanagan, Alice. 1996. *Songbirds*. New York: Children's Press. 47pp.

Matthews, Downs. 1990. *Skimmers*. New York: Simon And Schuster, Inc. (For Grades K-4)

Peterson, Roger Tory. 1986. *Peterson First Guide to Birds of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Williams, Nick. 1997. *How Birds Fly*. New York: Benchmark Books. 32pp.

Yolen, Jane. 1990. *Bird Watch*. New York: Philomel Books. (For Grades K-6).