

DAY 3-ORNITHOLOGY-IT'S FOR THE BIRDS (3 ACTIVITIES)



Hey kids! Remember me? I'm Becca, and I'll be your Naturalist today with a fun lesson on ornithology-the study of birds! Whether you are a bird fan or not, these irresistible animals come in so many different shapes, sizes, and colors and with some wacky and wonderful behaviors! Hummingbirds that can fly backwards, the Lyre bird that can mimic almost any sound it hears, or the Bald Eagle that builds a nest up to 10 feet across-these amazing creatures have a lot to offer the animal world. And the best part is, many of these incredible creatures live in the same places we do! Let's take a look together to see what we can discover.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE?

You can tell a lot about a bird by looking at its feet and its beak. Below are some images of bird feet and beaks from some of Camp Seymour's bird specimens. In these activities we will be using some of the great **observation** skills you have been practicing.

On the following page for each bird beak and set of feet, write down your observations (I notice...), your questions (I wonder...), and make connections ("It reminds me of..."). Try to write at least 2 for each section. Then based on your observations, **make a claim** about what purpose you think the beak or feet serve for the bird and **support with evidence** you observed (reminder-a claim with evidence looks something like this... "I think (claim) because (evidence)."

BEAKS



FEET



BEAKS

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| Observations: |
| Questions: |
| Connections: |
| Claim: |

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| Observations: |
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FEET

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| Observations: |
| Questions: |
| Connections: |
| Claim: |

Once you've finished, you can download the bird **Beaks and Feet Background Sheet** and see if your claim was correct! Good work!

ACTIVITY 2: WHAT BIRDS ARE IN MY BACKYARD?

Materials you will need:

- Ideally a green space such as your backyard, the local park, school playground, community garden, etc.
- *Optional:* If you already have birdseed, you can put some out. If you don't, popped popcorn is a great treat if you have it. If not, no worries! The birds are there either way!

The best time to do this next activity is first thing in the morning or late in the afternoon when birds are most active. Let's have some fun, and if you take photos, with a parent/guardian's permission, remember to **post and tag YMCA Camp Seymour on social media!** We would love to see you looking for birds! Now let's go outside!

MISSION 1: LET'S LISTEN FOR A MINUTE

For one solid minute close your eyes and listen-can hear any birds? If you are having a hard time focusing or hearing, try cupping your hands around your ears towards the sounds you are hearing (we call this "deer ears"). Ready, go!

I heard a few birds and some human noises, as well! I hope you were able to hear some, too. Now that we know the birds are here, let's see if we can spot some.



MISSION 2: I SPY A BIRD!

Using your "deer ears" and your eyes open, try to find the location of some birds. Stay in one place and listen first. Once you can hear them, turn your eyes towards where you heard the sound, and keep a keen eye out for your bird. Pro-tip-Birds can be tricky to spot, because many are so well camouflaged. Once you've heard a bird, keep your eye out for movement in the direction you are looking. That's a helpful way to spot them!

Did you see one yet? I found a few "lbb's" (little brown birds) near me! 😊 Once you've got a bird in your view (ideally pick the bird that's the easiest to see), observe it for a few minutes and take particular notice of its beak and feet. In the space provided below, **describe what you observed** about its feet and beak, and **make a quick sketch** with some notes of what your bird looked like. Based on your evidence, make a claim for what you think the bird eats based on its beak and how it uses its feet. (You can use the **Beaks and Feet Background Sheet Beaks and Feet Background Sheet** as a resource.)

Good work! If you have access to a computer and the internet and want to try and identify your bird, these two websites include some good resource for identifying birds!

<https://www.whatbird.com/Expert/Expert.aspx>

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/bird-watching/bird-identification.php>

BONUS MISSION: “PSSSHING”!

You may be asking yourself, what in the world is “pssshing”? Well, I’ll tell you! It’s a way to try and get birds to come down a little closer, so you can get a better view! 😊 I learned it from my mom when I was growing up, and she learned it in an Ornithology class she took. Here’s how you do it: first off, make sure you can hear birds somewhat nearby. Then make the sound a p makes, then make the “sh” sound right after. Now put them together, and repeat it over and over. It sounds something like this “pshpshpshpshpshpshpsh.” Repeat this repetition a few times, and then wait and watch a minute or so in between repetitions. Hopefully a few bird friends will come a little closer to check you out! Disclaimer, this does not work for all birds, but I have found great success using this method with Chickadees and Kinglets-both are common throughout western Washington!



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY-CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen Science is an important collaboration between everyday people like you and me and trained scientists! Not all scientists have the time or resources to do the research they want. That’s where we come in! Citizen science with birds typically involves recording bird observations in green spaces. Scientists then use the observations/data to help trace bird migration and changes in bird numbers through time or reveal things like how birds are affected by environmental changes. This collaboration helps form conservation plans and specific actions to protect bird species and habitats!

There are many different opportunities available to participate in Citizen Science. If you have access to an electronic device and internet connection or wi-fi, you can search Citizen Science and come up with many different links and projects. I have included a few links below.

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu/citizenscience/>
<https://celebrateurbanbirds.org/>
<http://nbpsurvey.org/>
http://www.landscape.org/washington/bio_ed/citizen_science/



You’ve learned some great science skills thus far this week, and you could be a big help in supporting scientists in important work. If you participate in any Citizen Science projects, please let us know, because we would love to hear what you’re doing!

I hope you had fun checking out some of our bird friends today! I’ve had fun with you, and I hope you’ll keep your eyes and ears open, and keep “pssshing” those birds whenever you are outside!