



Honor Element 5: Birds of a Color

Biology, Environmental Science	Birds of a Color
<p>Grades: Pre-K – 7</p> <p>Time 45 minutes – 1 ½ hours</p> <p>Learning Activities: 30 minutes Art: 15 minutes Birdhouse: 45 minutes (optional)</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Reading materials Paper and pencil Colored pencils, markers or crayons Birdhouse: Precut wood or wood plus supervised tools for sawing and measuring Seed</p> <p>Objectives</p> <p>Learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and appreciate grade-appropriate information about birds and their habitats. • Understand the impact of climate change on habitats. • Understand that different bird species have different needs. • Protect bird habitats related to specific species. 	<p>Teachers or Parents will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide learners to identify birds, listen to the variety of bird songs and to draw a favorite bird. • Relate the diversity of favorite bird choices to the song Des Colores. Relate the concept of honoring the opinions of others. • Clear a space of trash and make recycled bird art to hang in trees or to sit on tables. • Where reading comprehension allows (grades 2+) pair up to ask and answer riddles. • Discuss issues concerning local birds and create a plan that honors their needs. • Build a birdhouse (optional).

Introduction

Birds provide honorable services for other species. They lend color and song to our environment. They also spread seeds from one area to another, to populate forests and fields with new plants. They carry nectar to germinate blossoms in springtime, so fruits and flowers will grow.

Birds who migrate great distances face danger when climate change alters their resting places or changes their habitats.

When we protect birds, we protect life for everyone.

The birds on these pages flew into your lesson plan from Africa, North and South America, from Europe, and from tropical islands. Photographers from around the world captured them on camera, to share the beauty of their colors.

All Learners Activity

1. Name the color of each bird pictured in this chapter.
2. Look around the room or outdoor space where you sit. Give everyone a chance to name the bird plus and something of the same color. (Example: Bluebird – Sky).
3. Call out your favorite bird and its color.

Discussion

Did each person in the room choose a different bird? Is the group more colorful when everyone chooses differently?

Listen to the birds outside. Does each one sing a different song? Is the world a better place with each of these songs?

What does it mean to “honor” the opinions of others and unique “songs” of one another?

What does it mean to honor living things within a system?

Mountain Bluebird



By Donna Tench



Hummingbird

by Frank Cone



Rust and Yellow Tanager

By Lord Dragonstar, taken on the east slope of the Andes Mountains



Red Cardinal

By Havey Reed

Lilac-breasted Roller

Johan Swanepol





Pileated Woodpecker

By Hal and Kirsten Snyder



Parrot

By Zdeněk Macháček

Making Birds

Honor the songbirds you know for the joy they bring to the world, by protecting their home. Make certain the yard is free of trash, except for items birds might use in nests such as stray hairs and items from nature.

Make paper birds or birds from the recycled trash to hang in the trees or to decorate to the house.

Upper Grades Activity

See if you can answer the riddles about these birds.

Riddles:

1. Why is the woodpecker in the picture called a pileated woodpecker?
2. Which bird lives in the South hemisphere and acts like a human?
3. Faithful to its mate, this bird lives in the treetops but swoops down onto the savannahs to gather up food for its children. What is it called?
4. Name the bird that flies both backwards and forwards, beating its wings 50-200 flaps per second in its effort to pollinate flowers.
5. The male version of this bird is red, with a black crest and an orange beak. It sings its life away, traveling only one or two kilometers from its home in its lifetime. What is it?
6. This bird can show up in grasslands, deserts, mountains or in the yard in springtime, blooming like a flower. Name the bird.
7. Which bird, a cousin to the robin, is considered both practical for its housekeeping practices and sacred for its beauty?

Responses:

1. Answer: Pileus is another word for cap, much like the cap or hat of a mushroom. A pileated woodpecker looks as if it wears a cap on its head.
2. Answer: The parrot lives mostly in the forests of South America but has been found in much greater ranges. Its claws and beak allow it to eat an omnivorous, almost human diet, including nuts and meats, but its ability to imitate speech makes it more human-like than other birds. One parrot impressed television guests in 2010 with its vocabulary of 1700 words.
3. Answer: The lilac-breasted roller, not to be confused with similar looking birds such as the lavender-breasted roller, is the national bird of Kenya. It lives throughout large parts of East and Southern Africa. It mates for life.
4. Answer: Hummingbirds, the smallest of birds, flap their wings so quickly, they sound like little motors. The smallest of these, the bee hummingbird, weighs only 2 pounds. One bird can visit dozens or even hundreds of blossoms daily, pollinating fruit trees, vegetable gardens and flowers.
5. Answer: A cardinal travels only one or two kilometers from its home in its lifetime. It may not travel far, but it protects hearth and home with its song.
6. Answer: The yellow tanager is the most versatile of the birds listed.
It lives in each type of habitat.

The mountain bluebird has inspired poetry and is known as the herald of the rising sun, a sacred bird to the Navajo and other people. The mother bird chooses the male by its ability to house and feed the young, not by his appearance

Honoring Birds

Observe the birds near your home. Which birds pollinate plants? Which ones provide song? Who are their predators? Do you see any migratory birds (birds that travel long distances based on feeding or mating habits during the year)? Do you see any threats to the habitats of birds? For example, sometimes sea birds choke on beach trash. Sometimes an overpopulation of cats reduces songbirds. What can you do to ensure the balance of birds that support all life systems?

Climate Change and Birds

How do you think fire affects birds? Can they find new habitat after a flood or hurricane? What about a wildfire? Fire season, once a month or two long, has become a year-round threat in some mountain regions. Some bird species benefit from the increased plant growth that springs up from the ashes, but with these three birds as samples, you can see the threats may outweigh the benefits.

The following blueprint enables you to build a home to help songbirds survive, if you choose. While pollinators like sugar water, larger birds eat seeds.

Woodpeckers decline after a fire. They rely totally on healthy trees in the forest to maintain a happy home. The black-headed woodpeckers who make their home in our Sierra forests have had a rough go of it due to climate change. Have you noticed the decline?

Western bluebirds have often increased following prescribed burns, as they benefit from the species that pop up in a rejuvenated forest. Not all songbirds are so lucky, as today's fires burn so rampantly, they create confusion about where to go next and widespread habitat loss for some of the birds.



Mountain chickadees decreased in response to thinning treatments in the forests. Birds can fly out of a fire zone, but where will they go? The increasing intensity of the fires and the unpredictability of which habitats will be lost makes a bird's life difficult. You can help.

After a fire, it's a good idea to put out extra food and water for songbirds who have become climate refugees.

