

Curriculum

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Lesson 1: Chirp! Chirp!

Target audience: K- 6th-grade youth

Time needed for station: 20 minutes

Volunteers needed to support station: one

Objectives

Youth will be able to:

- Identify local birds
- Construct a bird feeder at home

Materials

PROVIDED

- 5-10 clipboards
- Colored photographs of common song birds of Indiana (laminated)
- 3 copies of Birds of Indiana Field Guide by Stan Tekiela
- Pliable wire, rope or twine
- Two 3/8" x 12" dowel rods
- Utility knife

NOT PROVIDED

- Photo of sample bird feeder already assembled and plastic jug instruction sheet (<https://www2.ag.purdue.edu/extension/nature/Documents/Plastic%20Jug%20Birdfeeder%20Instructions.pdf>)
- Backyard Birds Checklist, a National Wildlife Federation handout (https://rangerrick.org/crafts_activities/backyard-birds-checklist/)
- Plastic gallon milk jugs or 2-liter bottle
- Bird feed
- Paper and pencil for recording bird observations
- Aluminum pie pans (optional if you make this feeder instead of the milk jug feeder)
- Access to Audubon Birds of North America free phone app (optional)
- Binoculars (optional)

Background info

General description of how this activity connects families with nature and health:

Participants will observe a demonstration of how to make a bird feeder. If available, participants can watch birds at an already established feeder and identify common birds. An alternate inside/outside activity would be using laminated

WIN! Tip

Time spent in bright sunlight can reduce nearsightedness and increase vitamin D levels (Children & Nature Network, 2016).

photos of birds to introduce participants to common birds, or putting the pictures in trees and bushes before taking participants outside to spot them.

The National Wildlife Federation identifies four elements necessary for attracting wildlife: water, food, shelter, and a place to raise their young. A water source can be as simple as a tray that you fill and clean regularly. Birds mostly will not bathe in dirty water, but if they are thirsty, they will often drink it. Most birds eat seeds. Black oil sunflower seed is the preferred type for many. Robins love raisins. Bluebirds love mealworms. Woodpeckers love a slice of orange.

You can get creative with birdfeeders, or just designate a spot on the ground, along a fence or on a retaining wall, where you regularly leave them a treat. They will learn quickly and before you know it, you will have ample opportunities to bird watch.

Procedure

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP

Prepare the supplies needed to make a sample bird feeder that will be used as a demonstration example (see Materials Not provided). A table or counter will be needed to demonstrate how to make the bird feeders. Educators will also need to print out multiple birdfeeder instruction sheets for participants to take home (<https://www2.ag.purdue.edu/extension/nature/Documents/Plastic%20Jug%20Birdfeeder%20Instructions.pdf>).

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Avoid nut butters (because of allergies) when selecting bird feeding ingredients. Participants may choose to use nut butters at home. Sharp knives for cutting plastic can be dangerous. Take precautions while demonstrating how to make the feeder.

1. Explain to participants that they will be learning about local birds and how to make bird feeders.
2. Take participants outside and guide them through Activity 1: Bird Watching/Identification. While outside, tell participants the WIN! Tip.
3. Guide participants through Activity 2: Bird Feeder.

ACTIVITY 1: OUTDOOR ACTIVITY – BIRD WATCHING/IDENTIFICATION

If you have access to an established bird feeder, allow participants 5-10 minutes to chart what birds they observe. Have them record their observations using a clipboard, paper and pencil.

When watching birds, have participants concentrate on their key physical characteristics. When the bird is in sight, do not look away until you identify the key features. After it

flies away, you can still look it up in a book or online. Use the Birds of Indiana Field Guide for more detailed identification and information.

Unable to go outside, or don't have a space that will likely have live birds? Utilize the laminated pictures to show the types of birds that are common in Indiana (i.e. cardinals, robins, woodpeckers, sparrows, blackbirds, mourning doves, finches, blue jays, titmouse, chickadee). If you can go outside but no bird feeders are available, you can post the laminated pictures in the trees prior to the workshop. Participants can use binoculars or walk around the trees to view the pictures.

Discussion tips

Ask the group if they see any of these birds in their backyards. What sounds do the birds make? What types of food does each bird like? What do you see the birds doing? Why do you think they are doing that activity or making that sound? Educators can download the free Audubon Birds of North America app to hear the sounds and identify birds.

ACTIVITY 2: BIRD FEEDER

Demonstrate how to make a bird feeder

The station volunteer will demonstrate how to make the bird feeder, following the instructions: (<https://www2.ag.purdue.edu/extension/nature/Documents/Plastic%20Jug%20Birdfeeder%20Instructions.pdf>). Participants will then receive the instruction sheet to take home and make a feeder together with their family.

Pie Pan Tray Feeder

(if not making the plastic jug feeder)

Start with an aluminum pie pan. Poke holes on each side. Pull the twine through the holes and use the twine to hang the feeder in a tree. Punch a few additional drainage holes in the feeder.