



WINTER BIRDS

Experience Nature with the Greenburgh Nature Center
99 Dromore Road, Scarsdale, New York 10583
(914) 723-3470 FAX - 725-6599
www.greenburghnaturecenter.org 1-2007

ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

Our naturalists gear each program to the grade level of your students and accommodate any competency level if notified in advance. Our programs stress **hands-on and direct involvement learning**.
ALL CLASSES begin in the Visitors Parking Lot.

Winter Bird Buddies (1 hour, December to March Only) Pre-k - 3rd grades

Students learn how to identify some of our common winter residents, how birds adapt to winter life and some foods that local birds like to eat in winter. Children will walk outside by our feeders and around the grounds to view birds, and make suet or pine cone feeders. Live animals used.

NOTE: We are **peanut butter free** and use vegetable shortening to make pine cone feeders for the birds.

Avian Ecology (90 minutes) Grades 4-7

This class explores the ecology of birds through the use of living and mounted bird specimens, bird feathers, bones, and other "props". Students learn how to identify some of our common winter residents, how birds adapt to winter life, some foods that local birds like to eat in winter and the value and responsibility of winter feeding. Approximately half of the time will be spent looking for and studying birds in the wild. Students will be provided with binoculars.

bird adaptations - wings, feathers, hollow bones, all of which allow for flight.

great horned owl - large pupils for night vision, excellent hearing, strong beak and talons for grabbing and eating prey.

red-tail hawk - "binocular vision", sharp talons and beak for tearing flesh.

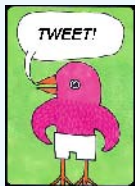
bob white quail - ground birds, feet adapted for ground living.



SOME BIRD ACTIVITIES & IDEAS FOR TEACHING

(NOTE: Teachers should adapt material to their students grade level. Consult a naturalist about birdfeeding.)

Go outside and find evidence of the different ways birds and other animals cope with winter - *Migration, hibernation, napping, storing fat, camouflage, growing a thick coat, fluffing their feathers, sleeping in tree cavities, storing food, eating different foods* and shedding antlers are all ways animals adapt to winter.



Learn Some Bird Calls - A good way to find birds is to actually listen for them! Often we step into a forest, watch for movement, see none and decide there is no-one around. LISTEN! Find a spot around your school, close your eyes and listen. After you hear the bird calls, (you should if the background noise isn't too loud), you can then use your eyes to look for where the sounds are coming from. Try this site for bird songs - <http://www.naturesongs.com/>

Some Common Birds Seen & Heard At The Greenburgh Nature Center (& Westchester) In Winter

Wild Turkey Rock Dove Mourning Dove Red-bellied Woodpecker Downy Woodpecker Hairy Woodpecker
American Goldfinch Pileated Woodpecker Blue Jay Common Crow Tufted Titmouse Carolina Wren
American Tree Sparrow Song Sparrow White-throated Sparrow House Sparrow House Finch Dark-eyed Junco
White-breasted Nuthatch Black-capped Chickadee Northern Flicker Northern Cardinal



You can use the pattern of the calls to help you figure out what bird is making the sound. Listen to the sound and see if it "speaks" to you. For example, a robin calls out "cheerio, cheer-y-up, cheerio" and a barred owl calls "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?". Connecting a phrase to a type of bird may help you to remember the sound the next time you hear it. Try this site <http://www.naturepark.com/sound2.htm> for some common bird calls you can try with your students.

RECIPE: Suet Balls

Materials:

- 1 cup suet (ask for it in the meat department of your grocery store) (optional - · 1 cup peanut butter
- 3 ½ cups cornmeal · Small amount of birdseed · 3-6 large pinecones · 3-6 pieces of 12-inch long string or ribbon

Instructions: Melt the suet in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the peanut butter to the suet, stirring until it's melted and blended well, then take the saucepan off the stove. Add the cornmeal to the mixture and blend until it looks like dough. When the dough has cooled, use a spoon or your fingers to pack the dough into the openings of pinecones. Roll the dough-covered pinecones in birdseed. Tie a string or ribbon around each of the pinecones, leaving one end long enough to tie onto a tree branch. Hang your seed ball bird treats outside and watch your hungry feathered friends eat like a bird! Note: Add 1 extra cup of suet instead of peanut butter if desired.



RECIPE: Cookie Cutter Treats For Birds

Take old bread slices and cut out shapes with cookie cutters. Let them dry and harden enough to spread with peanut butter (or Crisco). Cover the buttered shapes with black sunflower seeds and hang outdoors on trees or anywhere birds might come! Use a bird book to identify/draw the birds.

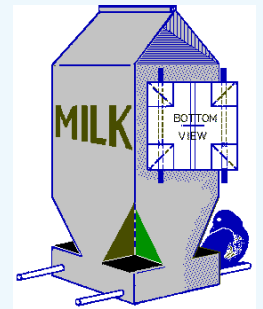
CRAFT: Simple Bird Feeders You Can Make

- Set a pie tin on a stool, flat topped tree trunk or hang it in a hanging plant hanger; dump it out after a rain, or punch drainage holes in it, and elevate it a little by placing small rocks or twigs beneath it. (All birds, specially juncos, cardinals, jays, sparrows)
- Punch holes on either side of a plastic pop bottle, stick a twig all the way through with its ends sticking out for perches and poking more holes nearby for the birds to pull the seeds out. Then hang the bottle by tying a string around its neck. (finches really like these!)
- Coat a pine cone with peanut butter, roll it in birdseed, and hang it from a tree branch. (chickadee heaven)
- Use a rectangle of old window screening. Wear heavy cotton gloves and use needle-nosed pliers to crimp the loose wire edges back (won't poke the birds nor snag their feathers), fold it in half, run two string hangers through the corners on each side, and hanging it. Slide in a suet/birdseed cake from the grocery store, or make a "cake" of oatmeal, birdseed, and peanut butter. (cardinals, jays, robins, sparrows)
- Stick a piece of bread, a doughnut, or half of an orange, on a twiggy branch of the tree (orioles will LOVE the orange!)
- Tie a string around the neck of a baby food jar and fill with orange juice. Hang it from a tree. (It will hang tilted, but orioles will perch on the rim and take dainty sips).

MILK CARTON BIRD FEEDER

- Small milk carton (the kind at school)
- non-toxic poster paints
- stapler and staples
- hole punch
- yarn or string

1. Wash & thoroughly dry the milk carton. 2. Cut a small section from the carton and then staple the top opening closed. 3. Paint the container, if desired, and let dry. 4. Poke a hole in the middle of the top of the carton, and thread a piece of yarn or string through it to use as a hanger. The string should be long enough for the feeder to hang where the branches don't rub against, but not so long that the feeder hangs too far away from the tree's leaf cover. Birds like to feel they have a hiding place to fly into quickly!) 5. Add birdseed and hang the feeder.



Some web sites to try for bird information (remember to type it exactly as written)

Iowa Association of Naturalists - Iowa Winter Birds. Huge pdf file with everything you need to know about bird (winter) adaptations. Huge pdf file with everything you need to know about bird (winter) adaptations.

(<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/IAN602.pdf>)

Science Made Simple - How DO Animals Spend The Winter? General winter animal information, including birds. (<http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/animals.html>)

Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology - New York's premier site on birds. (<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/>)