

**Welcome/ Introduction:** Staff/Volunteer Names  
**Today's Topic-Wings & Things**      **Question: What makes a bird a bird?**

**Ice Breaker/ Game:** **Noah's Aviary-** Students to make the sounds of assigned birds and find their partner with a matching call, until all the pairs match up.

**Feather Poem** with actions

**Background/ Exploration:** **What makes a bird a bird?** Ask the students what birds have that people don't. (feathers, wings, flight, beaks, scaly feet, eggs, hollow bones...)

Point out basic bird features using mounts and posters or worksheets:

feathers, wings, hollow bones, beaks, crop or gizzard, feet, eggs

- **Kinds of Feathers**
  - down (warm, pillow, fluffy)
  - contour (shape, smooth)
  - flight (long, strong)
- Allow students to look at and feel some feathers-show them how they zip back up after they get ruffled.
- Find the three kinds of feathers on a couple bird mounts.

**Flight-**For birds to fly well, their set of feathers must be streamlined, not too fluffy or puffy.

**Migration-** Ask students what they know about birds flying south. Why do birds do this?

**Beaks-** Ask student what birds use their beaks for.

Look at some different kinds of beaks.

**Activity:** **Where Would A Bird Be Without Its Bill?**

Stations where beak forms and functions are illustrated with household and kitchen tools.

**Kinds of Birds:** ducks/geese, perching/song, wading, raptors

Discover how each bird's adaptations help it in its life and habitat.

**Duck/Wood Duck-** bill, webbed feet, body shape for floating

**Bluebird/Robin-** pointed sharp beak, perching feet, body shape for flying

**Heron-** long sharp beak, long legs, long neck for snatching up prey

**Owl/Hawk-** talons, hooked beak, eye size and placement on front of head

**Activity:** **Bird Guessing Game-**Students guess which bird fits the clues.

**Nests/homes-**Look at or show pictures of different kinds of bird nests and eggs.

Discuss different bird habitats and homes.

**Life cycle-**Go over a basic bird life cycle with students.

(Return to habitat in spring, find territory, mating/nesting, egg laying/incubating, feeding, fledging, growth, migrate South in Fall)

**Activity:** Make **model binoculars** with toilet paper tubes and string.

Show students how to use them before going outside.

**Trail Talk:** **Prediction- What birds do you think we will find in this cold weather?**

Briefly discuss How to identify birds/What to look for: color, size, field marks, habitat.

**OUTDOOR EXPLORATION:** Explore different nearby habitats, looking for birds and signs of birds.  
(tree cavities, nests, woodpecker holes, tracks, etc.)  
Encourage use of “binoculars” to help students focus.  
Note any Bluebird or Wood Duck boxes.

**Birdsong-**Birds have different calls/songs, and sing for different reasons. (good for id.)  
*Birdsong Identiflyer™*-Play different bird songs for students. Have them try to identify familiar bird calls. Use the distress call to try to attract some birds.

**Game:** **Migration Headache-**Students pretend to be migrating waterfowl, meeting hazards as they travel from winter to summer habitats.

**Closing:** Discuss what you saw.

**Send Off:** Bye!

**Next Month-Furry Friends**

**Take Home:** bird-feeding information  
background on birds

*Project FeederWatch* information  
Red-tailed Hawk Glider

**Our State Bird** (If time)-Show pictures of the Goldfinch, our state bird. Describe-gold with black wings, small, molt to olive greenish in winter. Call sounds like “po-TA-to-chip, po-TA-to-chip”. Goldfinches have short, strong beaks for seeds. Thistle seeds are favorite food. They nest late in late summer when thistle and milkweed down are ready. They line their nests with the down. Goldfinches live in open fields, woodland edges, and backyards. Watch for these birds on a hike or in your backyard.

## Vocabulary

Aviary, crop, gizzard, down, contour, migration, territory, fledging

## References

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www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw Cornell University Lab of Ornithology, *Project FeederWatch* website

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