

## Birds (Ornithology) Pre-Post Trip Activities

### **Activity 1. Research Coastal Georgia Birds**

Before taking ornithology, have students in groups each select a species of bird found in coastal Georgia to research. Students can then give a short presentation on their species using either poster or PowerPoint. This will familiarize students with birds they may see on their visit.

### **Activity 2. Build a Bird Feeder**

This fun DIY bird feeder activity will get every student involved. Have each kid bring an empty milk or juice carton to class to act as the base of the feeder. Other materials to provide the kids: rope, cord, ribbon, or wire; acrylic paint; paint brushes; decorations recycled from household materials, crafts, or nature (sticks, leaves, etc.); glue or hot glue gun, and some bird seed. Once the kids have built their feeders, send them home with a bag of birdseed each, have them hang their feeders, and record in a journal all the birds they see come to the feeder over the weekend. Then discuss what birds everyone saw, if any other animals visited their feeders, and how birds build their nests in the wild. (Additional instructions can be found on pg. 3).



### **Activity 3. Bird Watching**

Take your students outside to do a little bird watching. If they sit quietly, they should be able to see some birds in the trees and bushes around school. Have them bring a notebook and pencil to sketch the birds that they see. After bird watching, have them use the internet or an ID guide to identify what birds they saw outside based on the characteristics they drew/wrote down.

### **Activity 4. Build a Bird**

Have students create a new bird species using arts and crafts materials. Students should pick an environment/habitat for the species, provide it a niche, explain its diet and adaptations, and list what predators and threats it may face. The birds can be constructed any way the students would like. After creating the species, the students should present them to the class.

### **Activity 5. Different Beaks For Different Folks**

Come up with multiple different food sources (based on reality or totally creative) for different birds that you make up. These food sources could range from something simple like hard nuts that need to be cracked or little berries that are only found inside skinny flowers. For each of these food sources, have a prop ready to show the students. For example, the berries mentioned above could be represented by marbles or pebbles at the bottom of a 2-liter bottle. Split students into groups for each food source and instruct them to come up with a beak design for a fictional bird that might eat that food source. For an added twist, discuss what if the fictional bird has more than one food source so their beak must be adapted for two different foods instead of one. Ask the students to draw the bird and the beak and ask why they made the beak the way that they did.



### **Activity 6. Bird Proof Your Windows**

Window strikes are a major threat to birds. Window decals lower the chances of birds flying into the glass which can be deadly. Create window art with your class using window markers or tempera paints, or hang ribbons on window exteriors. Art must be placed no more than 2-4 inches apart in order to be effective. For an extra birdy take, have students draw/color different species of birds!

### **Activity 7. A Birdy Experiment**

Put up two bird feeders around the school grounds. Have one of the feeders be near a walkway and the other be near a forested area. Create a science experiment with the students, having the control be the type of food being put into the feeder. Ask questions like, what bird species are stopping by the feeders, how often do they stay, which one is visited more often, do they visit when other birds or squirrels are around, etc. Have the students visit or watch the feeders in small groups.

## Additional Instructions

### **Activity 4. Build a Bird Feeder**

Steps to build your bird feeder:

- ✿ Cut a large hole in the center of one side of the carton, starting several inches from the bottom.
- ✿ Beneath this large hole, cut a small hole to poke a stick through. This will provide a perch for dining birds.
- ✿ Cut two small holes on either side of the top of the carton to thread the rope or wire through so you can hang it from a tree or other object
- ✿ Paint and decorate your feeder.
- ✿ Fill with birdseed (or fill a baggie with birdseed to send home with kids so it does not spill)
- ✿ Take your feeder home and hang it in a spot about five feet from the ground at least, and preferably somewhere with a good view from a window