

# SPRING BIRDS

Birds in a Woodland Biome

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## Teacher's Guide

Spring Program: Spring Birds: Birds in a Woodland Biome

Grade Level: First and Second Grade

Field Trip Length: 1.5 hours

### INTRODUCTION

As spring returns to central Illinois, many of the first welcome sounds that indicate warmer days are those of the birds. Birds are the most visible wild animals of Lincoln Memorial Garden. Spring is the time of intense activity for all animals of the woods. It's time for our feathered friends to search for food, build nests, lay eggs, and after an incubation period, raise their young. We'll listen for bird calls and songs, look at birds' beak and feet adaptations as we observe them moving through the Garden, and search for new nests in the branches of the trees and shrubs. Spring is a time of continual growth for all plants and animals in a woodland biome. Lots of migrating birds are moving **Spring Birds in a Woodland Biome** is a field trip to Lincoln Memorial Garden that increases students' awareness of the many adaptations of birds, introduces the beauty and wonder of a spring woodland biome, and deepens appreciation for the natural world during the spring season in central Illinois.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To observe spring changes in a woodland biome at Lincoln Memorial Garden, focusing on using our five senses to heighten the experience of springtime in the natural world.
2. To compare and contrast bird beak and feet adaptations as we observe the many feathered friends at the Garden.
3. To study simple food chains and food webs which include birds found in a native woodland community in the spring.
4. To gain a greater appreciation for the beauty of nature found in the woods at springtime.

**THIS PROGRAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MEET THE FOLLOWING ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS:**

Learning Area	Goal	Standard	Benchmark
Language Arts	4	A	1a, 1b, 1c, 2b, 2c
Language Arts	4	B	1b, 2b

Science	11	A	1a, 1b, 1e, 1f, 2a
Science	12	A	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b
Science	12	B	1a, 1b, 2a, 2b

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PRETRIP ACTIVITIES

1. Take a walk around the schoolyard or neighborhood with the children. Introduce a simple bird watching activity that encourages the children to count the birds and to keep a tally of what the birds are doing – flying, looking for food, gathering nesting materials, making a nest, resting, etc. Assign several students to be the scribes and record the sightings. Upon returning to the classroom, create a bar graph that shows how many birds in total were observed and then designate columns to determine what they were doing. Use this experience to begin a discussion of bird behavior and needs in the spring.
2. Consult a field guide of birds of Illinois to help the children to become more familiar with common wild birds that might be observed in the spring in central Illinois. (*Birds of Illinois* by Sheryl Devore, Steven Bailey and Gregory Kennedy, referenced in the Resource List, is one of the best and most current guides available.) Ask each student to choose a bird to research and write a brief report. Ask the children to share the reports with the class in an oral presentation. Note similarities and differences between the birds as the children give their reports.
3. Choose a book to read about spring, spring birds, or woodland biomes in the spring from the Resource List at the end of this teacher's guide.
4. Play the game What Bird Am I? Find pictures of common wild birds around the world and collect them in a basket. Ask a child to draw a picture from the basket, give you the picture and then act out the bird. Choose birds with very different ways of moving for this activity to be fun and appropriate for this age level of children. (Example: hummingbird, penguin, duck, ostrich, loon, kingfisher, bald eagle, etc.) Broaden the activity with pictures of animals from a woodland community and play animal charades.

## DESCRIPTION OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL GARDEN FIELD TRIP

Spring is such a wonderful time to learn more about birds at Lincoln Memorial Garden. Lake Springfield serves as a wonderful refueling and resting place for birds migrating to their final destination farther north. As well, many migratory birds are returning to the area after a winter in the tropics. With all these feathered travelers joining our permanent bird residents, there is plenty to see and to hear as we learn more about bird behaviors. We'll listen for courtship songs and territorial calls, look for nests of eggs or

perhaps even baby birds in the nest, and notice the behaviors and adaptations of the different birds who make the Garden their home in the springtime. As we hike the trails in the woodland community, we will observe food chains and food webs that include birds in them.

The field trip will begin with a brief introduction to Lincoln Memorial Garden in one of the Garden's Council Rings. A naturalist will lead a discussion about the history of the Garden, expectations for visitors who walk the trails of the Garden, general concepts of bird watching techniques, and the components of a woodland biome.

The school group will be divided into small groups of 10 – 12 children. During the naturalist-led walk, the group will explore the woodland ecosystems of the Garden and use birds as a theme to focus our observations. We will conclude the hike in the Discovery Room of the Nature Center. Students will be able to explore exhibits and hands-on activities to learn more about the natural world of central Illinois.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR POST TRIP ACTIVITIES**

1. Create a class mural of spring at Lincoln Memorial Garden upon returning to school. Have each child include her/his favorite memory of the field trip in a collective class artwork. First create the trees, shrubs and flowers from reused construction paper and even sticks gathered from the children's yards, then add animals and lots of birds. If you glue them in layers there will be a nice collage effect and give more depth and dimension to the memory poster.
2. Find a recording of common bird songs and calls at the library. Play the songs for the children and show them the picture of the bird as the song is played. Help the children develop their auditory discrimination and reinforce the spring calls and songs heard at the Garden.
3. Create an integrated art and science activity by asking the children to make nests. First, show them pictures of many different types of bird nests. If the weather is warm, go outside for this activity as it can be a messy one. Give each child materials from which to choose to make a nest. Gather ahead of time some grasses, sticks, and mud. Ask the children to make a nest from the mud, sticks, and grasses. To make this a truly challenging activity, use masking tape to tape their thumb, ring finger and pinky finger together on their writing hand. The two fingers left to move about serve as a beak ... that's what the birds use!

## RESOURCE LIST FOR SPRING BIRDS: Birds in a Woodland Biome

Brenner, Barbara. *One Small in a Tree*. Harper Collins Publishers. 2004

DeVore, Sheryl, Bailey, Steven D. and Kennedy, Gregory. *Birds of Illinois*. Lone Pine Publishing International, Inc. 2004

Dunphy, Madeline. *The Peregrine's Journey: A Story of Migration*. Millbrook Press. 2008

Earle, Olive L. *Birds and their Nests*. George J. McLeod, Limited. 1952

Harrison, Hal. *A Field Guide to Birds' Nests*. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1975.

Headstrom, Richard. *Birds' Nests: A Field Guide*. Ives Washburn, Inc. 1949, 1961

Hickman, Pamela. *In the Woods: See, Make and Do*. Orca Books Publishing Company, Ltd. 1998

Lauber, Patricia. *Who Eats What? Food Chains and Food Webs*. HarperCollins Publishers. 1995

Lindbergh, Reeve. *North Country Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1997

Mathewson, Robert. *The How and Why Wonder Book of Birds*. Grosset & Dunlap, Inc. 1960, 1973, 1981.

Matthews, Tina. *Out of the Egg*. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2007

Peterson, Roger Tory. *A Field Guide to the Birds Coloring Book*. Houghton Mifflin Company. 1982

Stokes, Donald and Lillian. *A Guide to Bird Behavior: Volume I*. Little, Brown, and Company. 1979

Stokes, Donald and Lillian. *A Guide to Bird Behavior: Volume II*. Little, Brown, and Company. 1983

Stokes, Donald and Lillian. *The Birdfeeder Book*. Little, Brown & Company. 1987

Waldbauer, Gilbert. *The Birder's Bug Book*. Harvard University Press 1998