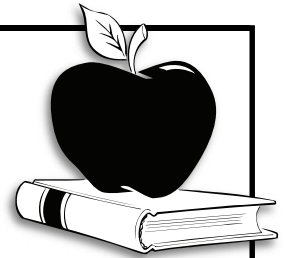


SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS: 3 - 4

SKILLS/PROCESSES: writing, lobbying, group process, construction

OBJECTIVE: Students will apply knowledge about birds to participate in an action to help Illinois birds.

TEACHER'S GUIDE



UNIT 4 ■ LESSON 1

Educated Action

BACKGROUND

According to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey in 2006, approximately 20 percent of Americans are considered birders. What started from a spark of interest and a following of the travels and artwork of John James Audubon has grown to a major outdoor activity. Birders spend millions of dollars each year on bird seed, feeders, houses, field guides and equipment. That's quite an investment in our natural resources!

You really are concerned for the earth, but what can you as an individual do to help? Get involved! Incorporate the information gained about our feathered friends in activities which educate people about the **environment** and the birds of your community, state and the world.

There are many organizations that work to preserve and protect habitats and birds, as well as organizations interested in cleaning up the environment. Contact the local, state or national office of groups such as the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Trees Unlimited or Global ReLeaf to learn about programs they have to better the environment. **Volunteer** to help with projects they are conducting in your area. If you are not able to find a group that works for your cause, talk to others in your neighborhood or school who share your interests and form your own club.

Several environmental and sporting organizations reward individuals and groups for significant accomplishments. Contact organizations to learn more about awards programs. Apply for environmental awards for the new and innovative projects you have undertaken.

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Work to improve habitats for birds and other wildlife. Create/plant a bird habitat or garden. Create a community garden or prairie. Encourage retaining edges for wildlife on farm land. Create a bluebird trail with the help of a state park or a chapter of the Audubon Society.

Build bird houses. Make and give away bird feeders made of recycled products. Consider giving your feeders to nursing homes and children's homes. Provide a year-round water source for birds. Make sure your waterers are scrubbed and refilled each day to reduce chances for birds to become diseased. Place nesting material, such as short pieces of yarn (six inches or less), hair or grass clippings, outside for birds to use.



2. Read about birds and habitats then give a talk to your class or a club. Write letters, make posters or design a T-shirt or bumper sticker. Discuss where posters and bumper stickers should be placed for maximum viewing.
3. Help with a clean up project or assist with fund raising for an environmentally oriented project. Volunteer to do a radio public service announcement for the group.

PLEDGE CARD



"The Earth is composed of complex and interrelated systems. I will strive to help others understand the need to care for the world we live in."

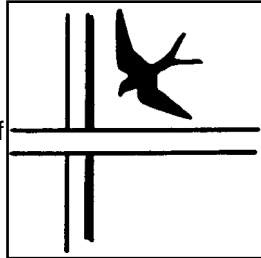
Signed _____ Dated _____

Witnessed _____

Reproduce this card or challenge students to create their own as an art project. Have a contest to design the most environmentally aware pledge card.

- Write for information about a topic you are interested in. Form a school or class conservation club. Disseminate the information to other students and local decision-makers.
- Research the animals that rely on insects, the effect insecticides have on those populations and the impacts of both insecticides and insect overpopulations on man. Discuss various insect control methods and how to determine when control is necessary.

- Construct silhouettes of birds of prey and affix them to windows. Birds often fly into windows because the reflection of trees and clouds makes windows appear to be openings in the walls.



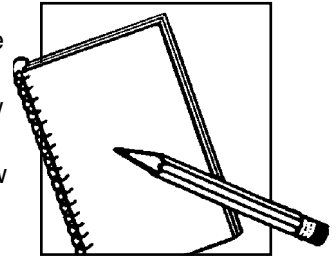
EVALUATION

- Have students write a report on the results of their actions. Share papers with newspapers, local decision-makers and others in the school.
- Count the different birds that visit your feeder(s). Report your findings to the local chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society. Also contact them to learn how you can participate in winter and spring bird counts. You may also want to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. It is held annually in February, and you will find more information at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>.

EXTENSIONS

- Read more about birds, bird behavior and the environment. Subscribe to a magazine about birds and write a review of the magazine for a newspaper.
- Find articles about birds, habitats or the environment. Hold a class discussion about the articles.
- In small groups develop scripts and themes; then videotape birds in your school yard or back yard. Seek permission to show your videotapes to younger classes in your school.
- Participate in the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest. Go to <http://www.fws.gov/birds/education/junior-duck-stamp-conservation-program.php> for more information.
- Learn about environmental policies and legislation affecting wildlife. Write to your newspaper or legislator in support of your position.

- Research the importance of dead-standing trees and dead branches. How many different animals live in these areas? Draw a picture or write a story about the animals living in a dead-standing tree.

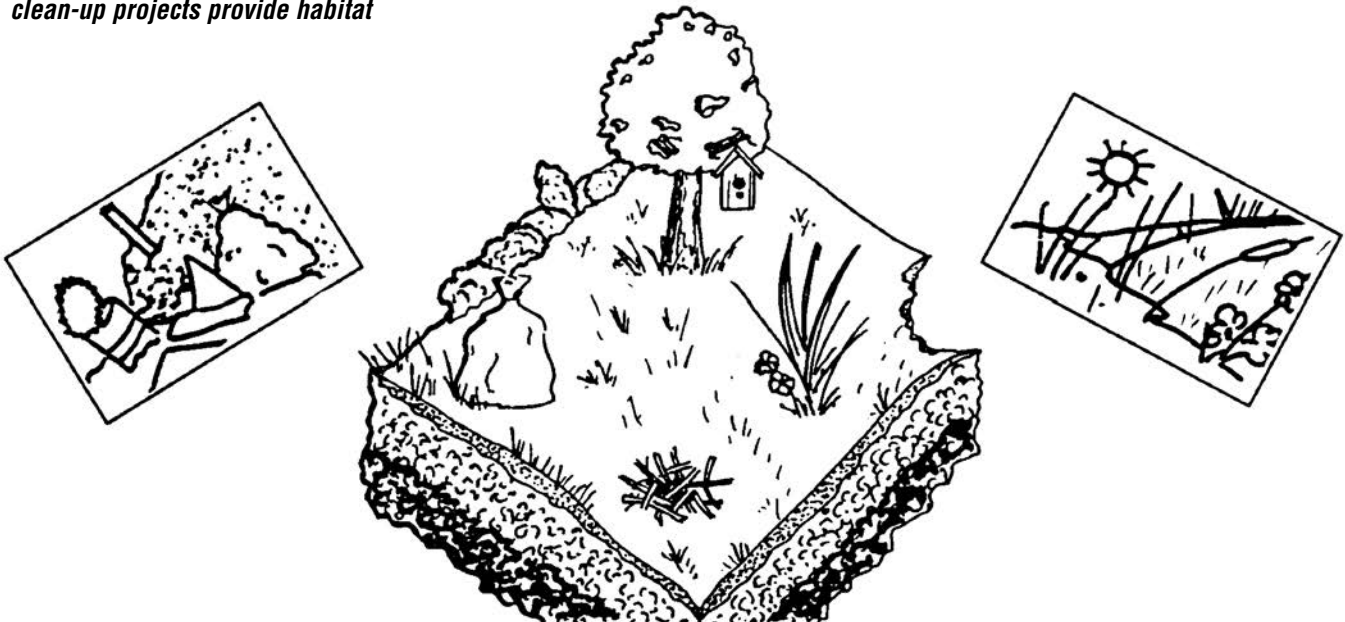


VOCABULARY

environment

volunteer

clean-up projects provide habitat





Approximately 20 percent of Americans are considered birders. Birders spend millions of dollars each year on bird seed, feeders, houses, field guides and equipment. That's quite an investment in our natural resources!

Use the information you have gained about our feathered friends. Help teach people about the environment and the birds of your community, state and the world. Organize a project to improve or create habitat around your school or community.

There are many organizations that work to preserve and protect habitats and birds. Other organizations work to clean up the environment. Study different groups to learn how they work to improve the environment. Volunteer to help a group with a project in your area. If you are not able to find a group that works for your cause, talk to others in your neighborhood or school that share your interests and form your own club.



