



# Birds

## Class Outline

**Brief Synopsis:** This class visits feeders for a close-up view of songbird species, explores the woods for a glimpse of canopy dwellers, sits quietly as wild chickadees approach, and enjoys a view of soaring eagles, hawks, or vultures high above the Root River valley.

### Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to list several characteristics of birds that make them unique to their own taxonomic Class called *Aves*.
2. Students will use careful observations to identify local birds and be able to name several species observed during class.
3. Students will observe birds residing and interacting in their habitats.
4. Students will understand why observing birds is an important way of learning about local species and how human actions have an impact on these populations.

### Outline:

#### I. Bird Parts (30 minutes)

As the students enter the classroom they are greeted by several hands-on stations about what makes birds unique from other animals. Everyone is given the chance to explore the items and experiments to learn about different adaptations and to discover what makes birds special creatures. The class then creates a bird on the chalkboard using multiple ideas and sharing their discoveries made about birds while exploring the room.

#### II. Birding Equipment (20 minutes)

Bird identification books designed for beginning birders are handed out and used in a game to help familiarize students with this valuable tool for birding. Binoculars are also handed out with instruction on how to focus them and tricks for viewing birds. Each student is given their own pair of binoculars for use during class.

#### III. Birding (1 hour and 30 minutes)

The class hikes the trails of Eagle Bluff making many stops to observe and identify birds in their different habitats. These stops may include visiting feeding stations, the overlook to watch soaring raptors, or Chickadee Central where wild birds may eat out of quiet students' hands.

#### IV. Hummingbird Hustle (15 minutes)

On extremely cold or quiet days, the class may play a game to learn more about the perils of migration for birds who spend their summers in Minnesota and their winters near Central America. Students become Ruby-throated Hummingbirds that have to find enough food as they migrate between their two seasonal homes. Even if a bird can find enough food, it may face an unpleasant surprise at one of its habitats that sends it to the *avian afterlife*!

### Quick Facts

**Class Length:** 3 hours

**Ages:** Designed for 4th-7th grade

**Season offered:** Year round

**Time outside:** 1 hour 45 minutes

**Hike length/physical activity:**  
1 mile, moderate physical level.

**Pre-requisite/prior knowledge:**  
No special skills required.

**Minnesota Academic Standards:**  
Science: 4.III.A.1, 4.IV.B.1

**Pre-Visit Classroom Activities**

**Post-Visit Classroom Activities**

**Family Activities**