



## Bird Olympics

**Appropriate Grade: 3-8**

### Background Information:

Bird Olympics is a great outdoor activity with a primary focus to teach students about bird adaptations.

**Learner Objective:** The student will learn about bird adaptations and will demonstrate their knowledge through activities and by answering questions

### Procedure

1. Start by asking a few questions to get students thinking about bird adaptations. Example: “Who can tell me...

**How many bird species there are in the world?**

(Between 9,000 -10,000)

(Go ahead and guess if you don't have any ideas. I will give you some hints, there are about 3,000 different kinds of mammals.)

**How many bird species are found in Oregon?** (Around 350)

**How can so many different birds live in one location?**

They have special adaptations for living in different habitats (parks, ponds, trees, wetlands etc.)

### Materials Needed:

- Bird Olympics score sheets (page 3)
- 5 bird Olympics laminated station sheets (in kit)
- Stopwatches (2-3) (in kit)
- Blindfolds (at least 5) (in kit)
- Measuring tapes (2-3) (in kit)
- Extra pencils
- Flip chart, or white board to record scores (optional)

### Does anyone know what an adaptation is?

Ask students if they know what the word ADAPTATION means? If they don't know then give them the definition, “behaviors or modifications that make a plant or animal more suitable to live in a certain environment.” Give them some examples but make them tell you (ducks have webbed feet for living in water, woodpeckers have strong, long bills for pecking at trees).

Today we are going to play a game called Bird Olympics. This game will teach you about some of the different adaptations birds have to help them survive in different places. By the end of this activity you will:

- Know what an adaptation is
- Know a few examples of amazing adaptations birds have
- Know how you compare to some of the birds around us

2. Visit each station. Ahead of time set up the stations spread out at your site. Be sure to have the appropriate tools needed for each site. At each station, make sure to emphasize that these are ‘adaptations’ that these birds have which help them survive.

Station 1: Bald Eagle and White Pelicans – have long wings to be able to fly long distances for long periods of time. Both of these birds migrate and depend on being able to soar for long distances.



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- Bald Eagle – flying speed is important for hunting and escaping predators. For Bald Eagles, flying speed enables them to steal fish from Osprey who hunt and feed in the same area.
  - Owls – need to be able to stare for long times to catch prey at night
  - Cormorants – fish eating birds have to be able to dive under water for long periods of time to chase and catch fish
  - Hummingbirds – have to hover to suck nectar so they can flap their wings quickly
3. Once you have gone through all the stations, do a wrap up session. Ask the students to answer the three questions listed at the beginning. Also review the stations by asking students to name some different adaptations that they learned. Examples:

What is an adaptation for a bird that can stare for long periods of time?

What is an adaptation for a bird that flies for long distances?



## Bird Olympics Data Sheets

1. A White Pelican has a wingspan of 8-9 feet , a Bald Eagle has a wingspan of 6-7 feet. I have a wingspan of \_\_\_\_feet \_\_\_\_inches.
2. A Bald Eagle can fly up to 35 miles/hour can run \_\_\_\_\_ miles/hour.
3. An owl can stare for hours while hunting for prey, I can stare for \_\_\_\_\_minutes without blinking.
4. A cormorant dives deep in search of fish. It can hold its breath for about 15 minutes (900 seconds). I can hold my breath for \_\_\_\_\_seconds.
5. In 10 seconds, a hummingbird beats its wings 700 times; Chickadee = 270 times; Starling = 45 times; Robin = 23 times; Crow = 20 times; Turkey Vulture = 0-5 times. I can flap my wings \_\_\_\_\_ times in 10 seconds.

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