



Take Action!

Overview

Students will design and participate in a Service-learning project at school focused on birds.

California Science Standards

Grade 6: 7.b.-I&E
Grade 7: 7.a.b.-I&E

Oregon Science Standards

Grade 3: 04– L.S.
02–S.I.
Grade 5: 05– L.S.

National Standards

Content Standard A:
Scientific Inquiry

Materials Include

* Student Journal

Materials Needed

* Research materials
(computers, books,
articles, etc).
* Computer Lab

Activity Time

Preparation: 20 min.
Activity Time: several
times during class

Best Season

All Season

Vocabulary

* Service-learning

Grade Level: 4th-12th (O.S.S.: 3rd-5th) (C.S.S: 6th-7th)

Learner Objectives

Students will:

- Complete the Take Action! pledge
- Plan a service-learning project
- Create a bird habitat in their schoolyard
- Make observations and record birds that visit the habitat

Background Information

What is a service-learning project? Service-learning is a learning and teaching strategy that integrates some level of community service into the learning experience. A service-learning project can help integrate school curriculum with some environmental need. This is a great way for students, teachers and possibly other community members to identify a need, set project goals, and take action!

In this service-learning project you and your students can help improve your schoolyard habitat for birds. A great way to get started is to identify what birds can be found around your area. The “*Counting Birds*” lesson plan is a useful resource. Students can then determine specific habitat needs to attract a variety of birds to the schoolyard habitat and provide the correct food, water, shelter, and space for the birds.

There are a number of great service-learning resources out there to look into. Here are a few of them.

- National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitats: A How-to Guide for K-12 School Communities. www.nwf.org/schoolyard/
- Project WILD’s WILD School Sites: A Guide to Preparing for Habitat Improvement Projects on School Grounds. www.projectwild.org
- Klamath Basin Research Extension Center (OSU)
- Klamath Bird Observatory Handout for Native Plants

Lesson Plan

Getting Ready!

1. Read the background information and go over the *Counting Birds* background information and lesson plan.
2. Determine computer research site for students.
3. Make copies of the *Student Journal: Take Action!* and *Counting Birds* sheets.

Discuss!

1. Explain to the students what a service-learning project is and inform them that they are going to come up with one focused on birds.
2. Let them know that there are a number of different phases that need to be completed in order to make the project a success.
3. Explain the phases to the students. Take Action! pledge, investigate, plan and carry out the project.
4. Pass out the Take Action! pledge of the *Student Journal: Take Action!* and discuss each step of the pledge and its conservation importance as the first phase of their project.

Investigate!

1. Choose a location with your students that you would like to turn into bird habitat. Discuss with your school or check with managers of bird habitat sites.
2. Go over the *Counting Birds* lesson plan with the class and make copies of the *Student Journal: Counting Birds*.
3. Take your students outside to the schoolyard location that you want to turn into bird habitat and conduct a bird count to see what species are currently found there.
4. Take students to the computer lab to research birds that they would like to attract and what your site would need to attract them. Habitat information can also be obtained from the *Birds of Oregon* field guide.
5. Students are now ready to start the project planning phase!

Plan!

1. Conduct a walking tour with your students of the location you have chosen to be a bird sanctuary.
2. Have the students draw a map of the site and list all of the natural features or structures that are currently found there.
3. Take the students back to the classroom to discuss their findings.
4. Discuss any potential problems that the site might have for birds and what needs to be done to fix those problems and make the site more bird friendly.



Possible Material Donors

Some good sources to look into for donations would be local bird shops, nurseries, local outdoors stores, local hardware stores or co-ops, and your local Audubon Society.

Lesson Plan

5. Discuss what will need to be added or changed at the site to create a bird habitat.
6. If necessary think about sources that might be willing to give your class a donation for something like bird feeders, bird seed, bird houses, etc.

Carry out the project!

1. Collect any materials that you will need to complete the project and get started!
2. Schedule times during class or after school to work as a team to turn the site into a bird sanctuary.

Follow-up!

1. Once you've created the perfect schoolyard bird habitat, it's time to start monitoring the site to see what birds visit it and when. You can use the *Student Journal: Counting Birds* to observe and record bird activity at your site.

Suggestions for Creating Bird Habitat

- Plant native plants in mixed species clumps
- Create an understory using native grasses, shrubs, and forbs
- Leave dead or dying trees in your yard
- Avoid mowing, spraying, brush clearing and building activities from mid-April-July in the Klamath-Siskiyou region.
- Create water sources if you don't have any nearby
- Reduce predators— keep cats indoors and eliminate outdoor sources of food which attract rats, opossums, skunks, foxes, and jays. These are all nest predators eating eggs and young!
- Discourage non-native predators such as House Sparrows and European Starlings— take down nest boxes being used by these species (for more on safe nest boxes see our nest box handout)
- Leave brush piles and pruning debris through the winter to encourage quail and winter sparrows
- Use only selective bird feeders, those that exclude jays, cowbirds, starlings, and crows

