

Songbirds of Missouri

Mourning Dove



Vocabulary

Write a sentence using each word.
Share your sentences with the class

Gamebird – wild bird which is hunted for sport or profit

Habitat – the living area containing the natural resources an animal needs to survive

Pioneer – a person who was the first to enter or settle a region

Arid – dry, parched with heat

Livestock – domestic animals kept on a farm for use and profit

Clutch – the eggs laid by a bird during a nesting

Rival – animal pursuing the same object as another; competitor

Incubate – to provide the heat necessary for hatching

Nestling – baby bird that hasn't left the nest

Fledge – to acquire the feathers necessary to fly

(Missouri Show-Me Standards: CA.1, CA.6, Goal 2.1)

Classroom Activity

(Missouri Show-Me Standards: S.3, S.4)
Grade levels: 3-6

Objectives:

After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Explain why birds feed in different ways
- Explain how habitat changes can affect a bird's food sources
- Explain how these changes affect birds

Materials:

- An assortment of bird feeding arrangements, such as a tube feeder, platform feeder, suet feeder
- An open area where bird feeding activity can be observed
- Notebooks and writing materials

Background:

Observing birds at feeders is one way to learn about food preferences and habitat requirements. This activity will help students learn that all birds don't have the same food needs.

Procedure:

1. With the help of students, school maintenance staff and, if possible, local birding experts, set up an arrangement of different types of feeders in an open area where birds can be observed, preferably from indoors. Be sure to have an area for ground feeding, as well as have several hanging feeders and suet feeders.

2. Get information from bird experts or at bird-feeding stores about what to put in the feeders. Fill the feeders with the appropriate seed.

3. Divide class into groups, and set a schedule for regular observation times, such as two or three times per week. During these times, one group should observe the ground-feeders, one group should observe the suet feeders, etc. Have each group write down the birds they see at their assigned feeding station.

(Notice, as birds become familiar with your feeding site, that certain species will feed at specific areas. Mourning doves, and often cardinals, too, will feed on the ground, while woodpeckers and other insect-eating birds may be attracted to suet feeders. Finches and other small birds will congregate around tube feeders.)

5. After five weeks of observation, discuss the feeding trends you have seen. It's important to remember that you're looking for general trends in bird-feeding habits. Students will very likely have observed exceptions, such as a mourning dove trying to feed at a tube feeder. In general, however, students probably saw several species of birds with a preference for specific feeding arrangements.

6. Through research, find out what those species of birds feed on in the wild. Then, discuss how changes in the landscape have affected these birds. For instance, how has an increase in cropland helped a seed and grain-eating bird like the mourning dove? Or, how has the disappearance of forests hurt tree-insect eaters like woodpeckers? Discuss how, sometimes, these changes affect more than birds. Be sure to mention that food isn't the only factor affecting bird populations – nesting and brood-rearing habitat is also important.

Word Search

Find the vocabulary words

L	T	R	C	L	U	T	C	H	Y	M	Z	E	L	R
H	F	G	J	R	O	N	A	R	B	U	D	C	T	L
P	W	E	T	H	D	A	H	G	E	H	W	L	A	E
O	C	H	O	T	A	K	C	T	I	F	R	V	O	T
T	E	T	L	K	C	O	T	S	E	V	I	L	K	F
N	H	U	B	E	T	J	U	H	D	R	A	N	Y	D
L	E	S	I	P	J	E	L	K	R	A	N	B	F	S
U	N	S	S	V	N	B	C	I	T	O	N	W	B	A
V	H	K	T	E	O	W	M	A	R	I	D	T	E	N
M	K	E	Y	L	P	M	T	M	A	E	W	T	P	D
Q	W	M	O	V	I	I	W	L	N	C	P	L	H	R
S	E	V	C	K	B	N	C	W	A	I	I	S	G	I
E	Z	O	G	A	R	W	G	T	N	R	O	T	C	B
O	R	L	H	P	W	M	P	L	A	O	N	C	O	E
K	P	S	A	J	M	F	L	E	D	G	E	B	G	M
J	I	U	P	X	E	B	A	S	A	C	E	T	P	A
Z	O	Q	R	E	S	W	B	L	M	A	R	C	O	G
B	M	N	U	H	Y	S	A	P	N	C	A	S	K	U
R	J	Y	E	I	N	C	U	B	A	T	E	T	B	N

Short Answer Q&A

1. What is the approximate population of the mourning dove in North America? How many are hunted each year?
2. Name three factors that have contributed to the mourning dove population being so large.
3. What is the nesting season for the mourning dove?
4. How do mourning doves build their nests?
5. How many times per year does the mourning dove nest?
6. How many eggs does the mourning dove lay at each nesting?
7. How does the male assist the female during the nesting process?

(Missouri Show-Me Standards: CA.3, Goal 1.5)