

# Bird Feeder Survey

**Grade level:** Kindergarten

**Unit of study:** life science, science processes, observation, recording

## MI Grade Level Content Expectations:

- Inquiry Process

S.IP.E.1 Inquiry involves generating questions, conducting investigations, and developing solutions to problems through reasoning and observation.

S.IP.00.11 Make Purposeful observation

S.IP.00.13 Generate questions about living things based on observations

S.IP.00.16 Construct simple charts

- Life Science: Organization of Living Things, Evolution, Ecosystems

L.OLE.1 Life Requirements: organisms have basic needs (food, water, shelter, space)

**Key concepts:** basic needs of birds, common bird species identification, counting

## Resources & Materials needed:

Journals or clipboards and paper  
Writing utensils

Bird feeders, preferably an established area where feeders are filled regularly

Place to sit, inside or outside, for observation

Eastern Bird Field Guide

Great Backyard Bird Count website:

<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

All about birds website:

[www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)

Bird listing website: [www.ebird.com](http://www.ebird.com)

**Abstract:** A bird feeding area is a great place for students to conduct a survey. A bird survey is counting the number and types of birds in an area. Lead students in conducting a survey of the birds visiting your feeders. Students will enjoy watching birds and will be naturally curious about their habits. Turn their curiosity into a science lesson by guiding them to ask inquiry based questions.

## Activities:

### Learn to Identify Common Bird Species

Practice identification of common bird species to your feeder. In Michigan you are likely to see these birds at your feeders:

Northern Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, House Finch, Blue Jay, Mourning Dove, White-breasted Nuthatch

- Create flash cards
- Play bird bingo

Spend time watching the bird feeders, encourage students to ask questions about the feeders and the birds that are visiting.

Guided Inquiry: provide students some basic questions and concepts to explore

Examples: Over a period of time, do birds feed at the feeders or on the ground more often?; Are there more birds at the feeders in the morning or after lunch?

**Conduct a Bird Feeder Survey:** for at least 15 minutes monitor your feeding station, count how many of each type of bird visit the feeding station, record the highest number of each species that you see at one time.

- What is a Bird Feeder Survey?

A bird survey is counting the number and types of birds in an area. If a bird survey is conducted the same way, several

different times than the numbers collected can be compared and trends can be looked for.

We want to find out what types (or species) of birds are visiting the schools (or sanctuary's) feeders. We will watch the feeders and count the number of each type of bird that visits.

- How to count the birds?

Birds of different species look different. Compare pictures of a Black-capped Chickadee and a Blue Jay. How are they different? How are they the same?

But birds of the same species look the same. So it can be difficult to figure out how many are visiting the feeder. Record the highest number of the same species of bird that you saw at one time. For example, if you see two Cardinals, then three cardinals, then fifteen cardinals you would record fifteen cardinals. Because fifteen was the largest group of cardinals you saw at one time during your survey.

- How long to count the birds?

At least 15 minutes but as long as you would like. A new list should be created each time you start a new survey.

**Assessment:**

Student generate data sheets, anecdotal notes from teacher

**Connections:**

Share your data with others. Create an eBird account for your classroom. Survey results can be saved on the eBird website for future use by your classroom and thousands of other eBird users.