



Ten Common Birds of Atlanta

Atlanta Audubon Society's *Learning About Birds* Curriculum Series

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Grade Levels
1 - 5

Objective

Students will learn how to identify ten common birds and compare and contrast characteristics of each.

Background

There are over 250 species of birds that can be found throughout the year in the metro Atlanta area! Using birds as subjects for your scientific studies and skill building is a wonderful way to engage people of all ages simply because birds are everywhere. To make learning about birds manageable and applicable to all audiences despite their specific location, ten common birds are the focus of these activities. They include the Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal, American Robin, Rock Dove (Rock Pigeon), Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, and Carolina Wren.

What do these species have in common: they are found in a variety of habitats; they are easy to observe by sight and sound; and all can usually be found in a backyard, schoolyard, or park. This selection of common birds is representative of the Southeast region of the United States. All of these species are perching birds, or *Passerines*, except for the Red-Bellied Woodpecker. These species will all visit a feeder or a water bath.

The accompanying "Ten Common Birds of Atlanta" student guide is a good way to get to know these birds. Having a field guide on hand will also help you understand more about each species. Students of all ages will inevitably ask about other birds that they have seen. You should not feel as if you need to have all the answers - that is what field guides are for! Be ready to suggest resources or other ways of learning more about the birds not included here. Please see the Resources section of this guide for specific suggestions.

Vocabulary

Habitat - A place where an organism makes its home that meets all of its needs for survival—food, water, shelter, and space.

Mnemonic - A clever way to associate sounds using easily remembered phrases.

Content and Skills aligned to Georgia Performance Standards

Science - S1L1d; S2L1a; S3L1c; S4L2a; S5L1a; S5L2a.

Observation - S1CS1a; S1CS7d; S2CS1a; S2CS7d; S3CS1a; S4CS1a,b; S4CS4b; S4CS8a; S5CS1a; S5CS4b; S5CS8a.

Estimation - S1CS2d; S1CS4c; S2CS2a; S2CS4d.

Instrument Use - S1CS3a,b; S2CS3a,c; S3CS8c; S4CS8c; S4CS8c.

Communication - S1CS5a,b; S2CS5a,b; S3CS4b; S3CS5d; S3CS6a; S4CS5d; S4CS6a; S5CS5d; S5CS6a.

Activity 1 - Find the Pairs

Essential Question: What are ten common birds you can observe in your environment?

Suggested Time: 20-30 minutes

Space: Flat surface with room to sit around a game

Materials: Marker board/easel paper, [Common Birds of Atlanta](#) or other field guide with large photos, with the pages pre-marked to the birds you will focus on, 1 set of Atlanta Audubon Bird Cards per 2-6 students.

Instructional Methods

1. NOTE: It is suggested that this activity be done simultaneously with Activity 2 if you only have one deck of cards for a large group of students.
2. Ask students what birds they see outside at home, at school, and other places they visit. List their contributions on a marker board or easel paper.
3. Introduce the birds that you will focus on by showing students photos in the field guide. NOTE: With younger students, consider introducing fewer than ten birds at a time.
4. Compare the birds in the field guide to the list generated by the group. Are any of the birds that students have seen one of the common birds?
5. Explain that students will play a memory game to learn the names of the birds that were introduced to them. Show them the Bird Cards to familiarize them with the names and photos.
6. Review the rules of the game with the group. Explain that students will be placed in small groups. Cards should be placed face down in a rectangle and students should sit around them.

Activity 1 - Find the Pairs Continued

Students take turns flipping over two cards of their choice to try to find a pair. With each flip, Student says the name of the bird aloud to the group, asking help, if needed, from other group members. If Student flips over a pair, he/she takes the pair out of the square. (No extra turn for finding a pair!) If no pair is made, the cards are flipped back over and the next student takes a turn. Game ends when all pairs are made. As students get to know these birds, have them say one fact about each bird along with the name.

7. You can easily add more species of birds beyond the ten common ones suggested. Pick birds from the list brainstormed by the students or focus on those found nearby to make additional pairs of cards.
8. Make the game available during free study or recess periods. Add to your science or nature station in the classroom.

Activity 2 - Bird Profiles Continued

with Activity 1.

4. Hand out *Ten Common Birds of Atlanta* student pamphlet and Bird Profile worksheets to students.
5. Instruct students to use the guide, field guides or other resources to familiarize themselves with the birds that they are responsible for. They may begin to answer the questions on the worksheets.
6. If going outside, hand out clipboards and instruct students to gather their guides, worksheets, pencils, coloring tools, and binoculars if available. Guide students to an outdoor area or along a pre-determined route. Allow students time to make observations and work on their bird profiles. Some students may want to color the birds while outside; others may prefer to use resources inside.
7. Allow ample time for students to complete the assignment in session and at home. The Bird Profiles can be combined to create individual or team field guides.

Activity 2 - Bird Profiles

Essential Question: How can birds be distinguished from each other?

Suggested Time: 20-30 minutes per bird

Space: An area for completing worksheets; Outdoor area or route for bird watching.

Materials: Copies of Bird Profile worksheets, pencils, colored pencils/markers, clipboards, *Ten Common Birds of Atlanta* student activity pamphlet, field guides. *Optional:* bird seed, bird feeder, binoculars.

Instructional Methods

1. First decide (a) if you would like students to work individually or in teams, (b) how many bird profiles each individual or team is responsible for at a time, (c) if you can set up a bird feeder nearby, and (d) if you will be able to take students outside to look for birds and where you will go. NOTE: Setting up a feeder near or on a window is an excellent way to get an up close view of birds while avoiding weather and outdoor space issues. If a manufactured one is not available, homemade feeders are a fun, inexpensive alternative.
2. If you have not introduced studying local birds to the group yet, refer to steps 1-3 in Activity 1.
3. NOTE: This activity may be used simultaneously

Extension Ideas

- Combine these activities with *What Makes a Bird... a Bird Learning About Birds* curriculum.
- Have your group take parents or other students on a bird walk or give a presentation on these birds.
- *Technology Integration:* Use an online field guide such as Cornell Lab's *All About Birds* (www.allaboutbirds.org).
- To explore more birds of Atlanta, contact Atlanta Audubon Society to obtain a copy of a PowerPoint.

Performance Tasks and Assessments

- Use the Bird Profile worksheets to assess writing and observation skills.
- Assign students to do further research on one bird's life cycle, habitat, or adaptations.
- Older students can investigate how to classify these ten birds.

Additional Resources

- Kaufman, K. 2005. *Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America*. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.
- Peterson, R.T. 1980. *Peterson First Guides – Birds*. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.
- Sibley, D.A. 2003. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York.
- Wilson, J. and A. Atkins. 2005. *Common Birds of Atlanta* (5th ed).



For more information on Atlanta Audubon Society's Learning About Birds curriculum series, please visit the Atlanta Audubon Society website at www.atlantaudubon.org.

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