

Bonding With Birds



Created by the
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What are Birds?

■ Birds are...

- Warm blooded animals
- The only living animals with FEATHERS!
 - R.I.P. the dinosaurs, their ancestors!
- Many birds, but not all, can fly
 - Others rely on running or swimming
- They do not have teeth
- They are more closely related to reptiles than to mammals
- They lay hard-shelled eggs



Eurasian Blue Tit



Why do Birds Matter?



Seagull



House Sparrow

■ Bug Control



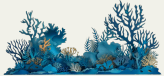
- Birds eat 400-500 million insects per year
- Mosquito control means less disease, along with happier and healthier people
- Keep bug population in check, so nature stays healthy

■ Spread Pollen



- Birds are pollinators
- They spread pollen, which is needed for plants to produce fruits or seeds
- Pollen is CRUCIAL for seed-producing plants - one out of every three bites of food we eat depends on animal pollinators!

■ Maintain Coral Reefs



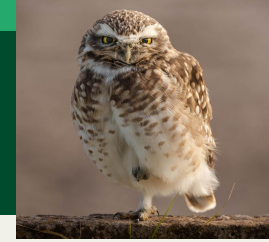
- Waste that seabirds drop is fertilizer for seaplants
- Fertilizer helps coral reefs get stronger
- Seabirds keep populations that threaten coral reefs in check



Types of Birds



Eurasian Jay



Burrowing Owl



Songbirds

European Robin

- Birds who can sing complex melodies
- Their feet are made to sit on branches
- Cardinals, Mockingbirds, Sparrows, Finches



Waterfowl

Mallard

- Birds that swim, and live near water
- Webbed feet to help swim
- Found everywhere but Antarctica
- Swans, Geese, Ducks



Raptors

Barn Owl

- Birds that survive through hunting
- Sharp beaks, talons, and great eyesight
- Carnivores
- Hawks, Eagles, Kestrels



Flightless Birds

Adelie Penguin

- Birds that live on the ground
- They lose the ability to fly through evolution
- Run to conserve energy
- Ostrich, Emu, Penguin, Kiwi, Kakapo



Woodpecker

Great Spotted Woodpecker

- Evolved to have their tongues wrap around their brains to cushion when they peck wood
- Claws to help them latch onto trees
- Downy, Flicker, Sapsucker, Wryneck



Gulls

Black Billed Gull

- Evolved to have their tongues wrap around their brains to cushion when they peck wood
- Claws to help them latch onto trees
- Downy, Flicker, Sapsucker, Wryneck



Humming Birds

Rufous Hummingbird

- Small birds that mainly eat nectar for survival
- No sense of smell
- Rotate their wings rapidly in a figure 8 pattern
- Sword Billed, Ruby Throated, Booted Racket Tail



■ Bird Habitat (Illinois)

- Backyard Songbirds
 - Forests, they hide within cavities of trees
- Waterfowl
 - Water Banks, Water Streams, Beaches
- Raptors
 - Forests, they hide within cavities of trees



Canada Gosling



■ Bird Diet (Illinois)

- Backyard Songbirds
 - Seeds, Fruit, Nuts, Insects, Worms, Grains
- Waterfowl
 - Aquatic Plants, Insects, Grains, Seeds, Fish, Crustaceans
- Raptors
 - Smaller Birds, Rodents, Insects, Reptiles, Young Mammals



Northern Cardinal



Bird Numbers Are Declining



Steller's Jay



Tufted Titmouse

What is happening?

- The number of birds all over the world is declining
- Many bird species are going extinct
- Biodiversity is decreasing, affecting other plants and animals. In the long run, this affects us too.

How fast is this happening?

- Since 1970, we have recorded a decrease of nearly **3 billion** birds
- Bird populations have continued to decrease exponentially each year

Why is this happening?

- Habitat loss: Due to human activities that convert natural landscapes into agricultural fields, urban developments, and logged areas
- Climate change: Birds are more sensitive to climate change than we are. They do not adapt as easily.



How can we Help?



Grey Crowned Crane



Red Fody

Take action at home

- Keep your cats indoors
- Participate in the annual Great Backyard Bird Count in February
- Plant native plants!
- Put up anti collision stickers on windows

Donate

- Conservation organizations help our birds and provide volunteer opportunities
- Do your research and donate to reliable places, such as Chicago Bird Alliance, National Audubon Society, and your local forest preserves

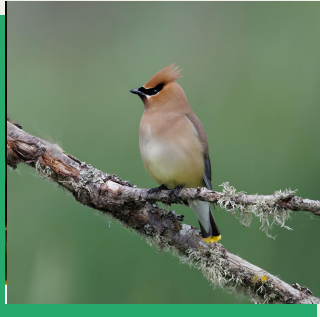
Educate yourself and others

- Attend community events about birds and other wild animals to learn how to support them
- Let others know what they can do to help
- Direct people to educational websites



Finding the Right Plants

If you want to attract more diverse birds, you have to look beyond the bird baths and bird feeders. Plant some native plants in your backyard! They provide extra food, shelter, and security for birds and other animals.



Cedar Waxwing



Northern Cardinal

www.audubon.org/native-plants



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