



Winter Bird Observation :

Staten Island Bird feeders are lively places during the winter months!

Though most birds can thrive during the hardships of winter, with natural food sources becoming fewer due to the loss of habitats, feeders can help fill a food void in our natural landscapes.

Feeding winter birds can be a fun and educational activity for the entire family.

Here the **Greenbelt Education Department** has provided you with resources you and your family can use at home to learn about different species of birds within your backyard or neighborhood, while also learning about their habitats, diets and winter survival tools.



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Helpful Materials for Birdwatching with Kids!

Materials

Binoculars

Migratory Flyways map (11x17)

Variety of NYC bird pictures (birds of prey, songbirds, waterfowl)

Identifyer (if available)

Birding Basics Guide (Fall, Winter, or Spring)

Field Guide to Birds of North America by Kenn Kaufman

Binoculars

OR

Clipboard with a blank sheet of paper

Color crayons or pencils

Flip chart paper or dry erase board and markers

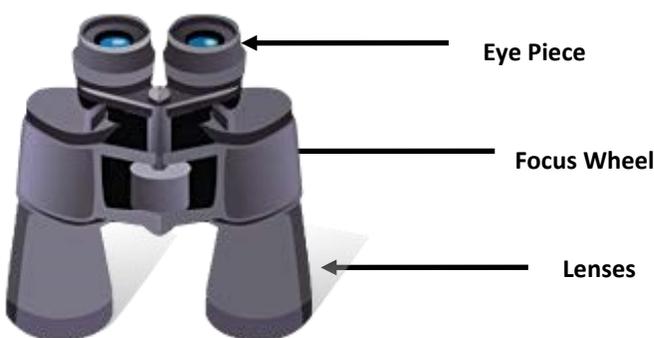


Binoculars

Eye Piece – the eye piece is the part of the binocular that you look through. Instruct students to hold the binoculars up to their eyes and look through. Explain if their binoculars are clear the picture is already in focus and what they see will show up larger. Explain to students that binoculars are not always clear right away, and can be focused to make the picture clearer.

Focus Wheel – the wheel located toward the center of the binoculars just past the eye piece. It is located here so your fingers can turn the wheel while you are looking through the binoculars.

Lenses – the lenses are larger and on the opposite side of the eyepiece. The lenses pick up the light needed to pass the picture through the mirrors to the eyepiece.



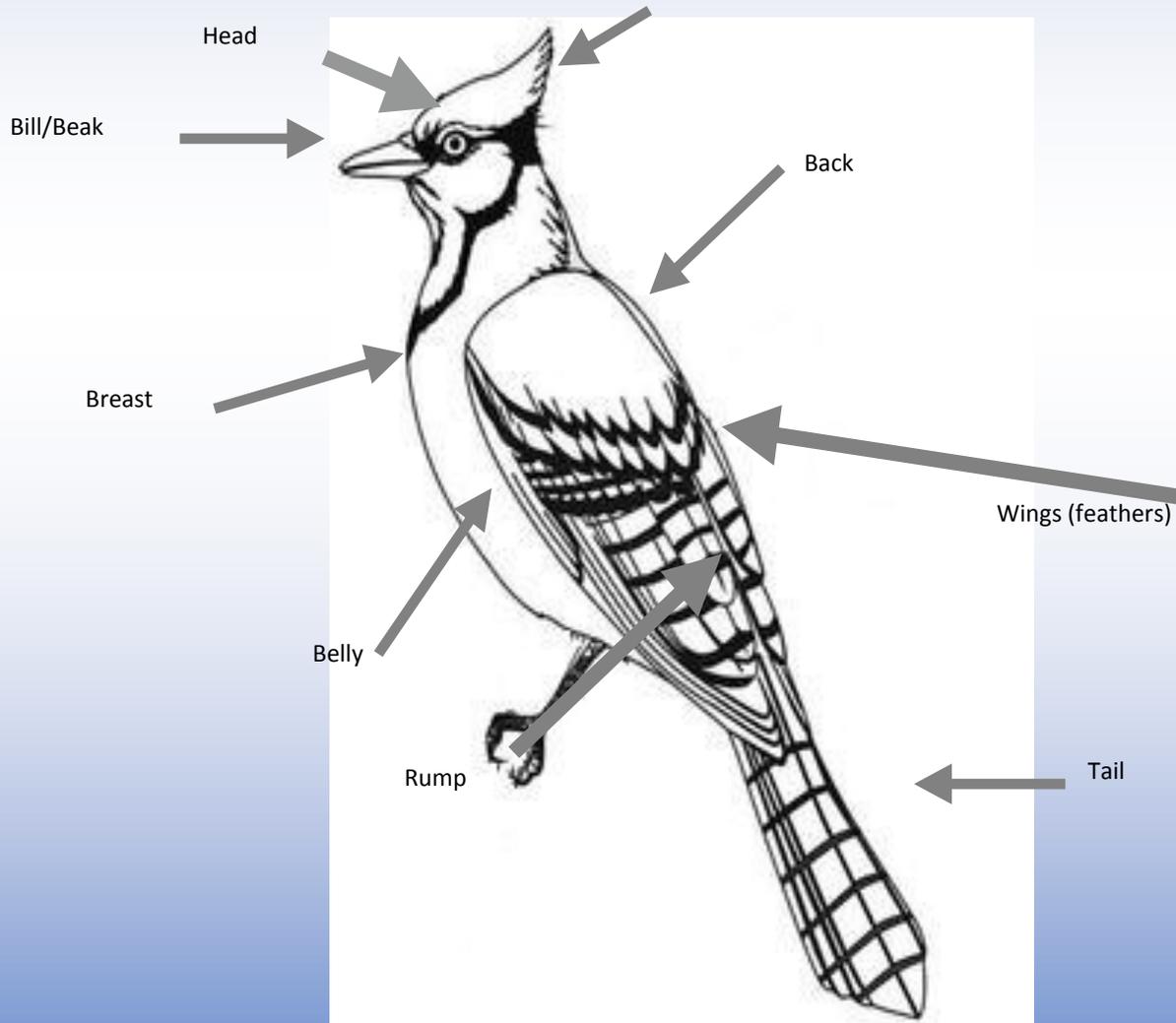
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Get To Know Birds!

Identifying birds from another bird can be tricky. Many birds may look the same, or be a similar size. There are ways to narrow down what type of bird you may be observing.

You can laminate the following page and use a copy of the bird anatomy worksheet and a wet erase marker to label different bird parts. You can ask your student/child to fill it in the best they can using the key words at the top. Once everyone has had time to work on it, review the worksheet with the class using the Blue Jay diagram to help students locate the most notable features.

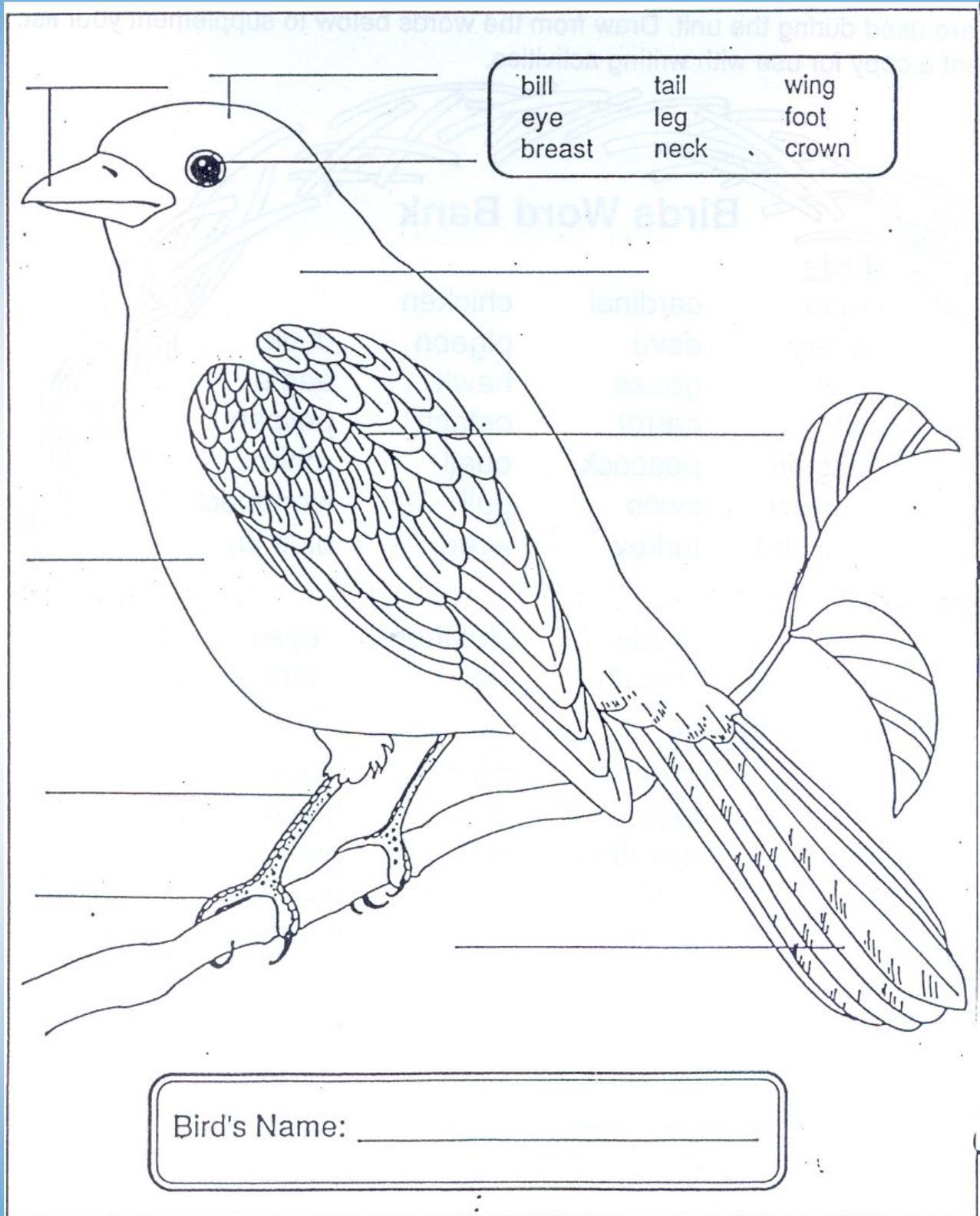


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Greenbelt @ Home: Bird Anatomy

Use the vocabulary words provided in the box to label parts of the bird.



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Make a Bird Feeder!



Instructions

What You'll Need

Equipment / Tools

- Scissors
- Plates or bowls
- Knife/Popsicle sticks

Materials

- String or ribbon
- Pine cone
- Bagel
- Birdseed
- Peanut butter or cooking lard/fat
- Cereal, such as Cheerios
- Toilet paper or paper towel roll
- Orange

Instructions: Pine Cone Bird Feeder

One of the most common bird feeders for kids to make, the pine cone bird feeder is also one of the easiest.

- Gather up a few pine cones from your yard and tie strings to the top of them. Do this step first, as the pine cones can get sticky and messy.
- Using a butter knife, spread peanut butter or cooking lard all over the surface of the pine cone.
- Roll the pine cone through a bowl of birdseed.
- Hang the pine cone from a high surface, such as a tree or a porch.



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Audubon Society's Recommended List of Bird Feeders

1. Ground-feeding table

This screen-bottomed tray sits several inches off the ground and is useful for helping to keep grain and bird excrement from coming in contact with each other. Some designs have covers to prevent snow from accumulating over the seed; others are surrounded by wire mesh to keep out squirrels and large birds such as crows and grackles. Place the feeder in an open location, at least 10 feet from the nearest shrub, to give birds a chance to flee in the event of a cat attack. Ground feeders are especially favored by doves, juncos, sparrows, towhees, goldfinches, and cardinals.

2. Sunflower-seed tube feeders

If you are going to put out just one bird feeder, this is the best choice. Be sure to select a model with metal ports around the seed dispensers to protect the feeder from nibbling squirrels and house sparrows. Hang the feeder at least five feet off the ground and position it near a window, where you can enjoy the visitors. These feeders are especially attractive to small birds such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, goldfinches, siskins, and purple and house finches.

3. Suet feeder

Suet is readily eaten by titmice, chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. In addition to the regular suet-feeder visitors, wrens, creepers, and warblers occasionally pick at these mixes. You can hang suet chunks from a tree in an onion bag or a half-inch hardware-cloth basket, or in a more durable cage feeder like the one shown here. You can also make your own suet pudding and feeder. Suet puddings are made by grinding and melting suet and adding seeds. (There is no evidence that suet puddings are more attractive to birds than chunks of suet.) Pack peanut butter-cornmeal blends (when you mix the peanut butter with cornmeal it not only stretches the expensive peanut butter but also makes this sticky treat easier to swallow) and suet puddings into the crevices of large pinecones or into one-inch-diameter holes drilled into logs. Hang the pinecones and the logs from poles near other feeders, from trees, or from a wire stretched between trees. Avoid feeding suet when temperatures climb into the 80-degree range; it turns rancid and drippy and may damage feathers.

4. Hopper feeder

Hopper feeders provide dry storage for several pounds of mixed seed, which tumbles forward on demand. Position hopper feeders on a pole about five feet off the ground. Hopper feeders attract all of the species tube feeders attract, as well as such larger birds as jays, grackles, red-winged blackbirds, and cardinals.

5. Thistle feeder

Especially designed to dispense niger seed, also known as thistle seed -different from the prickly garden weed-these feeders typically have tiny holes that make the seed available only to small-beaked finches such as goldfinches, redpolls, and pine siskins. Thistle-seed-dispensing bags are not recommended, since squirrels can easily tear holes in them and waste this expensive seed. Hang your thistle feeder from a tree or place it on a five-foot pole near other feeders, taking care to protect it from squirrels with a special baffle.

Contribute to a Citizen/Community
Science Project

Identify and Count: Contribute your data to the Great Backyard Bird Count

If you're reading this in the winter, keep in mind that four days each February is when a wonderful citizen science project called the Great Backyard Bird Count occurs.

People of all ages from all over count birds and contribute their data to the project. It is super easy to get involved.

Visit: <https://www.birdcount.org>

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please visit us at SIGreenbelt.org



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