

FEATHERED FRIENDS

Grades: 2, 3, 4, 5

Team Size: 1-2 Participants

Duration: 30 minutes

Goal:

Inspire kids to get outside, notice birds around them, and begin to think like naturalists.

Summary description:

Participants will be tested on bird identification skills and basic bird science. Bird vocalizations, habitat, behavior, specimen identification, and field guide comprehension will be included as part of this hands-on, multimedia event.

Concepts covered:

All grades share a Common Bird List. In addition, each grade level has a grade-specific bird list organized around a unifying theme. These themes become more challenging with each grade and are designed to encourage comparison among related birds.

For each bird, students should be familiar with:

- Visual identification (color, shape, relative size)
- Songs and calls
- Habitat preferences
- Diet and feeding behavior
- Migration patterns
- Special adaptations

Questions span a range of difficulty and are designed to assess age-appropriate knowledge and skills. Only common names needed (not scientific).

Each grade-level test will primarily cover birds from that grade-level and Common Bird list.

Rules:

- Spelling errors do not lower the score.
- No handwritten notes.
- Field guides permitted.
- No notes are allowed in the field guide. Field guides should be unmarked. Any groups with marked field guides will be supplied a different field guide for the test.
- Tabs with bird names are allowed in the field guide.

Materials distributed by WESO:

Field Guide: *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America: Second Edition* also known as "Sibley Birds East."

- Other published field guides are allowed, but not distributed.

Supplemental Material: A bird diet and other coaching worksheets will be posted on the WESO website.

Materials to bring to the competition:

- Field guide (limited guides available to borrow at event)
- All other materials for exam are provided.

Competition Format:

The team will be given a written test in which they identify birds by sight and sound and show off their knowledge of avian anatomy, behavior, and natural history.

Teams will complete a written test that may include:

- Bird identification by photographs or illustrations
- Identification of bird songs and calls
- Questions about anatomy, behavior, habitat, and migration
- Identification of specimens, which may include birds, nests, wings, feet, eggs, etc.
- Question formats may include multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and ordering questions.

Time is not a scoring factor in Feathered Friends. Students will (reasonably) be permitted to ask to hear or see a question again during, or at the end of the test. Bird calls can be replayed, and all are given enough time to clearly be identified.

Scoring: Highest score wins.

Tiebreakers:

- Visual identification of a bird on no grade list (field guide reference).
- Identification of a bird call not on the team's grade-specific list.
- An estimation question (for example, estimating the number of birds in a photo).

Materials useful for practice:

- Your field guide
- App for calls - Merlin, Chirp! USA (maybe others!)
- Merlin Bird ID (free app that identifies birds by sound for you when out walking)
- www.allaboutbirds.org (lots of info, but great for "Pokemon Card"-like info)
- Set-up a bird feeder station
- <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/learning-games/>
- Nature walks – guided (by Washtenaw Bird Nature Alliance) and unguided.

No cell phones or smart watches are allowed in event rooms. Participants who bring those items will be asked to leave them with the event supervisor for the duration of the event.

Event Questions

Please ask questions on Discord

Common Bird List:

American Crow	Blue Jay	Great Horned Owl	Northern Cardinal	Sandhill Crane
American Goldfinch	Canada Goose	House Finch	Red-tailed Hawk	Tufted Titmouse
American Robin	Downy Woodpecker	House Sparrow	Red-winged Blackbird	Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle	Eastern Bluebird	Mallard	Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch
Black-capped Chickadee	Great Blue Heron	Mourning Dove	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Wild Turkey

Grade 2: Big Birds	Grade 3: Beyond the Feeder	Grade 4: Raptors	Grade 5: Songbird Challenge	
Common Loon	Baltimore Oriole	American Kestrel	— Blackbirds —	— Warblers —
Great Egret	Barn Swallow	Barred Owl	Bobolink	American Redstart
Mute Swan	Chimney Swift	Broad-winged Hawk	Brown-headed Cowbird	Black-and-white Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Eastern Wood Pewee	Cooper's Hawk	Common Grackle	Black-throated Green Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	European Starling	Eastern Screech-Owl	Eastern Meadowlark	Chestnut-sided Warbler
	Gray Catbird	Northern Harrier	Orchard Oriole	Common Yellowthroat
	Hairy Woodpecker	Northern Saw-whet Owl	— Sparrows —	Magnolia Warbler
	House Wren	Osprey	Chipping Sparrow	Nashville Warbler
	Northern Flicker	Peregrine Falcon	Dark-eyed Junco	Northern Parula
	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	Red-shouldered Hawk	Eastern Towhee	Palm Warbler
		Sharp-shinned Hawk	Song Sparrow	Yellow Warbler
		Snowy Owl	White-crowned Sparrow	White-throated Sparrow