

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

GRADE LEVEL: 4 - 8

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to identify birds common to the Falls of the Ohio area.

MATERIALS:

Posters of birds common to the Ohio Valley Bird identification books
Bird watching area

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce the bird poster and have students identify common birds from the poster. Students should be familiar with robins, blue jays, cardinals, sparrows and crows, to name some from their own experience.
2. Explain how we identify birds by their colors, shapes, sizes, type of tail, wing bars, type of feet, type of bill or beak, how they fly and what they eat. The bird identification book will show the important characteristics of the particular species of birds.
3. Observe some real birds at a school bird feeder and/or at the Falls Wildlife Observation room. Identify the birds. What characteristics are used for species determination?
4. Observe birds from a distance, such as the observation deck of the Interpretive Center. Have students identify the birds that are flying above the water. Determine which birds are hunting for aquatic life and which are hunting for insects. On a good day they will see herons, osprey and cormorants, gulls, ducks and bank swallows.
5. Start a journal listing of the types of birds that they see, where, when and how many.

EXTENSIONS/EVALUATIONS:

6. Choose a bird that is of interest to a student and write a life history of the bird. Include the following information: where the bird lives and

nests, if it migrates and where, what it eats, how it raises its young, what kind of nest it builds and any other interesting facts.

7. Research the laws concerning owning live raptors and migratory birds or their feathers.
8. Invite a state or federal fish and wildlife officer to discuss laws about birds and help them identify ways of helping the migratory birds.
9. Invite a member of the Audubon Society or Beckham Bird Club to help students identify birds and perhaps get involved with a bird population census.
10. Participate in the winter "Backyard Bird Count" sponsored by the National Audubon Society.



Turkey Vulture – from exhibit panel on the deck of the Interpretive Center



Osprey – from exhibit panel on the deck of the Interpretive Center

Answers to activity on following page : 1-I, 2-G, 3-A, 4-F, 5-D, 6-C, 7-B, 8-E, 9-H

Birds of a Feather **Activity**

The following birds are found at the Falls. What do they eat?

- ___ 1.) Cardinal
- ___ 2.) Cormorant
- ___ 3.) Heron
- ___ 4.) Hummingbird (Ruby-throated)
- ___ 5.) Kingfisher (Belted)
- ___ 6.) Mallard Duck
- ___ 7.) Osprey
- ___ 8.) Peregrine Falcon
- ___ 9.) Woodpecker (Downy, Hairy, Piliated, etc.)

Match the bird to its food.

- A. Nabs fish, frogs, insects
- B. "Dive bombs" for fish
- C. Dabbles for insects, plants
- D. Dives in head first for fish
- E. Grabs small birds out of the air
- F. Flower nectar
- G. Paddles underwater for fish
- H. Grubs
- I. Seeds



Double Crested Cormorants perched on a submerged tree at the Falls of the Ohio



Great Blue Herons search for fish in The rapids at the Falls of the Ohio