

## **"Bird Feeder Buffet"**

Mr. Mark Musselman

Audubon at the Francis Beidler Forest

Overview: Did you know that birding is the number one sport in America? According to US Fish and Wildlife Service, there are currently 51.3 million birders in the United States alone, and this number continues to grow! Bird watching is inexpensive and can be enjoyed by beginners to experts. Best of all, birds are in every habitat during all times of the year! Building feeders provides the opportunity for adults and children to work together and will bring birds closer for observation without binoculars.

### Connection to the Curriculum:

- K-2.1 Recognize what organisms need to stay alive (including air, water, food, and shelter).
- 1-1.3 Carry out simple scientific investigations when given clear directions.
- 2-2.1 Recall the basic needs of animals (including air, water, food, and shelter) for energy, growth, and protection.
- 3-2.2 Explain how physical and behavioral adaptations allow organisms to survive (including hibernation, defense, locomotion, movement, food obtainment, and camouflage for animals and seed dispersal, color, and response to light for plants).
- 4-2.5 Explain how an organism's patterns of behavior are related to its environment (including the kinds and the number of other organisms present, the availability of food and other resources, and the physical characteristics of the environment).
- 5-2.5 Explain how limiting factors (including food, water, space, and shelter) affect populations in ecosystems.
- 6-3.2 Summarize the basic functions of the structures of animals that allow them to defend themselves, to move, and to obtain resources.
- 7-4.2 Illustrate energy flow in food chains, food webs, and energy pyramids.
- 8-2.7 Summarize the factors, both natural and man-made, that can contribute to the extinction of a species.

Suggested Grade Range: K-8

Time: 45 minutes

### Materials Needed:

1. Homemade Suet Recipe (Bird Pudding)<sup>1</sup>
  - a. 1 cup melted suet (lard)
  - b. 4 cups water
  - c. 1 cup sugar
  - d. 3 cups cornmeal
  - e. 2-3 tablespoons peanut butter
  - f. 1 cup of bird seed (mixed or other)
  - g. Optional:
    - i. 1-2 old cookies
    - ii. stale nuts
    - iii. a few pieces of dried fruits
2. 2-liter Bottle Bird Feeder<sup>2</sup> (see drawing)

- a. 2-liter bottom
- b. Drill with 1/8" and 5/16" bits
- c. Wire or metal coat hanger
- d. 5/16" dowels (or sticks); 2 per feeder
- e. Bird seed

Objectives:

1. SWBAT follow instructions to create suet and a bottle bird feeder.
2. SWBAT recognize that birds require food to survive.
3. SWBAT explain how birds move and obtain food.

Procedures:

1. Homemade Suet
  - a. Mix first three ingredients together in an adequately-sized pot and bring to a boil for 1-2 minutes.
  - b. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.
  - c. Pat the mixture into a shallow, square pan (such as a 9 inch by 13 inch pan). The mixture should be about 1 inch thick.
  - d. Chill in refrigerator overnight.
  - e. Cut into shapes (that fit your suet feeder).
    - i. One option: Scoop out an orange half, fill with homemade suet and place in crook of a tree branch.
  - f. Store squares in your freezer.
3. 2-liter Bottle Bird Feeder<sup>2</sup> (This would be a wonderful opportunity to invite parent to bring their tools and knowledge into the classroom and interact with students.)
  - a. Remove bottom and label.
  - b. Drill 1/8" hole in bottom
  - c. Install wire
  - d. Drill or cut 5/16" holes for dowels (or sticks) – may be precut for younger students
  - e. For niger or thistle, drill or cut 1/8" wide by 1/4 " high slots
  - f. For black oil sunflower, drill or cut 5/16" round holes
2. Now sit back and enjoy watching the birds eat at your Bird Feeder Buffet.

Suggested Evaluation:

1. Bird feeder completed according to instructions.

Extending the Lesson:

1. Participate in Great Backyard Bird Count at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>.

Resources:

1. Bird Pudding recipe provide by Gerry Morgan and fellow Mississippi Master Naturalist Volunteers.
2. Adapted from "Building Nest Structures, Feeders, and Photo Blinds for North Dakota Wildlife" by Chris Grondahl and John Dockter. Published by North Dakota State Game & Fish Department, Bismarck, ND.
3. Great Backyard Bird Count at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>.