

For the Birds Try-It

For Girl Scout Brownies

Purpose: This Try-It was created to help girls explore the world of backyard birds.

To earn this Try-It, complete two activities from the Discover section, plus one activity from Connect, and one Take Action project.



Discover:

Fun Bird Facts

Using a bird identification book, look up the following 11 birds which are commonly found in the Northeast. Then, choose two birds to learn more about. What are their habitats, diets, and migratory patterns? Are they nocturnal? After studying the birds, share what you've learned with your troop or group.

Black-capped Chickadee
Downy Woodpecker
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Tufted Titmouse
Red-tailed Hawk
Baltimore Oriole

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Bald Eagle
Northern Cardinal
Eastern Bluebird
Carolina Wren

Learn about Birds

Read a book about birds. Ask your local librarian for an age-appropriate book. Draw a picture of your favorite bird.

Bird Songs

Listen to bird calls on a tape or CD and learn to identify five different bird songs. Look for tapes at your local library or download bird songs from the following website: www.birds.cornell.edu/programs/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/

Connect:

Birds in Their Habitat

Attend a program event hosted by your Girl Scout council, Audubon Society, local bird sanctuary, or other venue where you can learn more about birds in your backyard and where you can find birds in their own habitat. During the event, look for and identify birds that you've studied.

Meet an Ornithologist

Contact an avid birder who can share her hobby with you. Many birders keep photo albums or sketches of birds they've spotted. Ask her to share it with you. Find out what has made her so interested in ornithology.

Connect with others

Connect with other girls and go bird watching together. See how many birds you can identify. Also look for evidence of birds: a nest in a tree, droppings, feathers, woodpecker holes, etc. You may want to make it into a scavenger hunt! What can you find together?

Take Action: Complete one of the following projects, or design your own Take Action project based on the things you learned while earning this Try-It.

Assist Scientists

Assist scientists by counting birds in your yard or at a local park. The Great Backyard Bird Count (<http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc>) is a joint project of the Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. By counting birds, you can provide scientists with vital information that assists them in tracking winter bird populations and understanding birds and their habitats. Learn why it's necessary to study bird populations and why birds are useful indicators of the quality of the environment. For more information, visit: www.birdsource.org/gbbc/

Be a Bird Home Builder

Create a new home for birds by making or purchasing a bird house. Set up the bird house in your yard, at a local park, or in a field near your school. Describe what birds you hope to attract and why. For free bird house plans, visit: www.craftybirds.com

Feed the Birds

Get to know the birds in your area by feeding them. Using one of the attached suggestions or designing one of your own, make a bird feeder and hang it in a place outside where you can watch the birds who visit your feeder.

Backyard birding can become a hobby that lasts a lifetime!

Developed by:

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Northborough, Massachusetts

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Bird Feeders

Pinecone Bird Feeder

Materials:

pinecones or bagels
ribbon, yarn or string

peanut butter

birdseed

Spread peanut butter on pinecones or bagels and roll them in birdseed. Tie a piece of ribbon, yarn, or string to the top of each pinecone or bagel and hang on a tree branch.

Suet Feeder

Materials:

1 cup lard
2 cups quick oats

1 cup peanut butter
2 cups yellow cornmeal

1 cup flour

Melt the lard and peanut butter together in a six quart pot over low heat. Take off heat and add remaining ingredients. Sunflower hearts, raisins, peanuts bits, or chopped dried fruit may also be added. Pour mixture into containers and cool in the refrigerator or freezer. Remove suet cakes from containers and hang outdoors for the birds.

Onion bags or small cans with a string in the center may be used for containers. If cans are used, place a string through the middle of the can as you fill it. Place the can in the freezer until the suet hardens. Open the bottom of the can with a can opener and remove the frozen suet by pushing the contents out of the can. Hang the feeder outdoors.

String Feeder

Materials:

fresh cranberries
orange slices

popcorn
Cheerios®

string, yarn or ribbon

String the ingredients onto a piece of yarn or string. Hang the string outdoors on a tree.

Box Feeder

Materials:

small box or milk carton
popcorn

string, yarn or ribbon
orange slices

birdseed
Cheerios®

Cut a hole in the box and put the birdseed and other ingredients in it. Poke holes in the sides to fit your string for hanging. Hang your feeder outdoors for the birds to enjoy.