

Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts

For the Birds Try-It

For Brownie Girl Scouts

Purpose: This badge was created to help girls explore the world of backyard birds. Girls must complete four of the following six requirements to earn the For the Birds Try-It.



1. Fun Bird Facts

Study a bird identification book and learn about the following 11 birds that are commonly found in the Northeast. Break into groups and learn about two of the birds in each group. What are their habitats, diets, and migratory patterns? Are they nocturnal? After studying the birds, each group shares what they've learned with the troop.

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

Read a book about birds. Ask your local librarian for an age-appropriate book.

2. 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/

3. Birds in Their Habitat

Schedule a field trip to a local bird sanctuary, a recreational park, or a state forest. While on your field trip, look for and identify birds that you've studied. Take notes about what you see and share what you discover. Make a sketch of one of the birds.

4. Assist Scientists

Assist scientists by counting birds in your yards or a local park. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of the Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. By counting birds, your troop will provide scientists with vital information that assists them in tracking winter bird populations and understanding birds and their habitats. Explain 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/

5. 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, in 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

6. Feed the Birds

Get to know the birds in your area by feeding them. Make one of the following bird feeders with your troop:

- **Pinecone Bird Feeder**

Ingredients:

pinecones or bagels 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 them on tree branches.

- **Suet Feeder**

Ingredients:

1 cup lard 1 cup peanut butter 1 cup flour
2 cups quick oats 2 cups yellow cornmeal

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**

Ingredients:

fresh cranberries popcorn
orange slices Cheerios

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

- **Box Feeder**

Ingredients:

small box or milk carton string birdseed
popcorn orange slices Cheerios

Cut a hole in the box and put the birdseed and other ingredients in it. Hang the feeder outdoors.

Backyard birding can become a hobby that lasts a lifetime!

Developed by:

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