

WEEK 5

An extension to Drama, Creating a Woodland

Outdoor Learning: Winter Birds

Children birdwatch and take observational notes.

Big Ideas	Like humans, animals are part of interdependent communities that are affected by, and adapt to, the environment that surrounds them. Animals need food, water, and air to survive.
Guiding Questions	How do animals form communities, work together, and use and adapt to their environments, and how is this similar to and different from what people do? What do animals need to survive?
Materials and Preparation	Identify a space to observe birds outside or through a window. This might be a sheltered place with a tree/bushes and bench/tree stumps/logs to sit on outside. Alternatively, a birdfeeder can be put up. • photographs of colorful birds that stay around in the winter such as a cardinal, chickadee, goldfinch, or blue jay Photographs can be bound to make a small book or hung around the window. • binoculars • Audubon First Field Guide for Birds • birdfeeders and seeds • journal or paper Additional resources that could be helpful: • <i>About Birds</i> by Cathryn Sill • <i>Backyard Birds</i> by Robert Bateman • Winter Bird Identification website • Merlin Bird ID app

Activity	Children look for and identify winter birds outside or from a window. Keep binoculars nearby, along with the journal/paper and writing tools. Children reference the various resources and take observational notes. If using birdfeeders, invite children to fill them with different kinds of bird seeds.
Notes	Birds that stay around in the wintertime because they can find food. They either eat seeds all year round or they change what they eat in the summer months (e.g., worms) to something they can find in the winter months (seeds). Many of these birds are very colorful and can be seen clearly against the white snow (e.g., red cardinals, yellow goldfinches).
Facilitation	• What birds stay in Maine in the wintertime? Why do you think they do not migrate? • What do you notice about the way the birds move? • What are the different types of seeds that each of the birds eat? • What do you notice about the bird's colors? (Brightly colored birds are usually male as they attract predators away from the nest, while the females are dully colored so they can be camouflaged and harder to see).
Extensions	Have the children make a winter bird field guide by cutting out pictures of different kinds of birds they see outside or they can draw the birds. They can write the names of the birds next to the pictures.

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