**WONDERFULLY WILD UNIT**

**LESSON 2: Grades 4-6**

**CALLING ALL BIRDS! (and WATCHERS)**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 4.1, 4.5, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 1, 3, 4; Mathematics: 1, 3; Science: 3, 4, 8; Social Studies: 7; Fine Arts: 1, 4

**Objective:** Students will become familiar with various native backyard birds. They will know how to recognize the birds and become aware of their dietary habits and preferences. They will understand the absolute importance of regular maintenance of a bird feeder and proper dietary needs. They will understand the dependence and responsibility feeding birds entails.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.5.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.**

**SL.5.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**

Encourage students to research the variety of wild birds native to your community. Make a list of the birds and then break students into groups, each ‘adopting’ one or two native birds. Have the groups do further research to determine the specific habitat needs of their birds. Report their findings to the entire class for discussion: What kind of food do they need? Why? How prevalent is their dietary needs? What kind of nesting areas/materials do they prefer? Why? Would you like to attract this type of bird to your school yard? How can this be done? What needs do these birds have if dependent on you for a food source? SHOULD this be done? Why or why not?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility, Respect, Caring

**Responsibility:** Follow the “golden rule”, treating the birds as you would prefer to be treated. This means to follow up on your commitment to feed them and provide proper nesting sites.

**Respect:** Give the birds the privacy and peace they deserve by allowing their feeding stations and nesting sites to be undisturbed.

**Caring:** Show you are concerned for the well-being of the birds you have attracted to your school yard. This includes ongoing feeding of the appropriate foods, maintaining clean feeders and providing proper nesting materials.

**STEM initiatives:** **Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**5-ESS3-1:** Research the birds that are native to your community. Why do they prefer your typical weather patterns? Do they visit in the summer, the winter or year-round? Why? What are their migration patterns? If you attract them to your feeders and nesting sites, how will that affect their natural development? What solutions can you offer to provide for their natural needs?

**5-ESS3.C:** What impact does human intervention (feeding) have on the natural activity of birds? Have students research the pros and cons and present them to the class in the form of a written or oral report. Have students list the comments on the board for discussion. Is it ethical to attract birds and then fail to provide for their needs?

**Materials Needed:**

* Pencils
* Notebooks
* Resource materials (internet access, books, magazines, posters, etc.) with information on backyard birds native to your area
* DOWNLOAD Handout: "This is for the Birds”

**Method** Birds are everywhere and anyone can attract them if they do a little investigating! Whether you live in the city or a rural area, you can attract birds if you follow some simple rules. Your class's bird watching adventures will begin in no time!

Use the handout entitled "This is for the Birds0" and discuss the content with the class. Once they have an understanding of what birds need and prefer, they will be able to build bird feeders and hang them up to attract birds to your school grounds for all to enjoy! Make sure they understand that maintaining the feeders is a responsibility that can't be taken lightly, especially in the winter when food is scarce and the birds are depending upon them to be fed.

Have the students share the available resources to find a particular native bird they would like to attract to the school grounds. Have them discover what the bird likes to eat, where they usually feed (trees, ground, etc.) and what type of feeder is preferable. Their assignment will be to use their ingenuity to create a feeder that meets their bird's criteria.

**Call to Action:** You can provide the materials (preferable recyclable, reusable and environmentally friendly) to build these in class or can ask them to build one outside of class and bring it in. Have each student present these to the class explaining their choice of bird, food and type of feeder. Hang these in the appropriate places around the school grounds, maintaining them regularly.

Have each student use a notebook to begin a bird watching journal. Designate 10 minutes a day to quietly go into the school yard to observe the birds and maintain the feeders. They can keep track of the number and type of birds they see. They can also record behavior they witness and draw pictures of the different birds. These can be put on display in the library so that other students may learn.

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children's Literature***for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web Sites:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Sites*** for animal-related web sites.

**HEY TEACHERS! If your students want more fun, here is an additional handout to download:**

“Wildlife Watch”