
Home Sweet Home

Home is Where the Heart Is



Purpose:

- Students will identify different the function of a bird nest as it relates to the nest's structure and composition. Students will differentiate between the life histories of birds based on their nest building habits.

Objectives:

- Students will work in groups to identify several types of bird nests using sets of informational cards.
- Students will discuss with partners how the structure of a bird nest relates to the function of that nest using sets of informational cards.
- Middle School students will discuss how resource availability can affect birds

Materials:

Provided:

- Bird Nest and Card (*in cardboard boxes*)
- Additional Bird Nests
- Slides of Birds and Bird Nests (*on flash drive*)
- Bird Guides

Appropriate grades: 3rd-5th; 6th-8th

Time Required: 1 hour

NGSS:

3-LS3-2:

Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment.

MS-LS2-1:

Analyze and interpret data to provide evidence for the effects of resource availability on organisms and populations of organisms in an ecosystem



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Activity:

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Instructor can play bird calls of several native species of the Rogue Valley or show one of several nests included in the Bird Kit to students.● Provide background information discussing some of the nests that birds build and the structure and function of those nests. Additionally, ask students why they think birds build nests.● Background information: Birds build a variety of nests to provide shelter from predators and adverse weather conditions during the breeding season. Nest building is instinctive for most birds, although different species use different materials to build different types of nests. Some birds do not even build nests!<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Birds have a seemingly unlimited choice of nesting sites. Several factors influence a bird's selection for nesting sites. Nesting sites must offer shelter from harsh weather, protection from predators, ample nest-building materials, nearby resources, such as food, and a suitable surface to build a nest.○ Birds build nests in a variety of different sites, some of which are quite unusual! The number of birds that successfully breed and produce offspring each year is affected by the availability of suitable nest sites.● Question prompts include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What materials do birds use to build nests?○ Do nests protect birds?○ Why do some nests look different than other nests?
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pass out the cards to students. Students can be in groups.● Have the nests from the boxes out on desks/counter with the label covered or facing away from the students● Ask students to read the information on the back of the cards containing pictures of birds found in the Rogue Valley with descriptions of their nests and additional natural histories of the bird species.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After reading the information on the first set of cards, students will match the bird card to the card with the correct nest and nesting sites.
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Debrief the lesson with students. Prompt a discussion reviews what students learned regarding the diversity of bird nest types.

Modifications:

Elementary:

Work through the activity together with one of the bird/nest examples.

Middle/High School:

Available nesting sites for North American bird species have been converted into agricultural fields, housing developments, or urban areas. Competition for suitable sites has increased between species. Competition has resulted in decreased bird populations. The introduction of nonnative species, such as the European Starling and the House Sparrow, outcompete native species for nesting sites.

Students can discuss the threats to nesting sites. Furthermore, students can present solutions to these issues, such as the conversion of nesting sites into land unsuitable for nesting and competition from non-native species.

Key Vocabulary

- **Instinct-** a natural or inherent aptitude, impulse, or capacity; a largely inheritable and unalterable tendency of an organism to make a complex and specific response to environmental stimuli without involving reason; behavior that is mediated by reactions below the conscious level
- **Nesting-** (of a bird or other animal) building or occupying a nest.



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