



## ACTIVITY

# Bird Behavior Hike

### Summary:

*Participants observe different bird behaviors.*

### Grade Level:

3-6

### Time:

1 hour

### Learning Objectives:

*Participants will be able to:*

- ◆ Identify different bird behaviors.
- ◆ Observe several bird behaviors in the wild.
- ◆ Describe how different bird behaviors help the birds to survive.

### Materials Needed:

- ◆ Copies of the Bird Behavior Checklist
- ◆ Copies of the Bird Behavior Hike worksheet (optional)
- ◆ Regional bird field guides
- ◆ Pens or pencils
- ◆ Clipboards
- ◆ Clear contact paper and grease pencils (optional)



### Background:

**B**ird behavior is generally dictated by different needs, including protection from predators and the elements, feather and wing maintenance, mating habits, and obtaining food and water.

If you are a good observer, you can witness many bird behaviors. Most birds must be wary of predators to protect themselves or their young. For this reason those who stand still and make minimal noise will likely observe the greatest number of birds and their behaviors.

Bird behavior can be quite complex and different for each species, but some guidelines are highlighted below.

Birds protect themselves from predators in a number of ways. Some may actually use their beaks and talons, but a large portion of birds try to avoid predators by **hiding** from them. **Camouflage** and different types of cover (grasses, bushes, etc.) help them. In the absence of cover or other protection, many birds will stand very still, and predators like hawks, which fly high and watch for movement, may miss them.

Many species find safety in numbers in a **flock**. A flock can consist of one species, as with Canada geese, or several; birds like grackle

will tolerate many other species in their group. In a flock, many eyes and ears keep the group aware of any dangers present, as well as where to find food. Sometimes a flock will even band together to scare away predators.

Birds also sound **alarm calls** to warn the flock. Most calls are short and simple, and are usually the same from species to species.

**Bird songs**, on the other hand, are often very complex, and are so distinct a number of species can be identified from their songs. Normally, only adult males sing, and then only during mating season.

Courting time or not, almost all birds try to keep themselves clean. Many do this by **bathing** in water, while others roll around in dirt for a dust bath.

When they bathe, birds often get rid of feather parasites. By **preening** their feathers with their beaks and feet, they remove more parasites, arrange feathers, remove dirt, and help to waterproof their plumage.

All this maintenance work can help protect birds from the elements, and, if they **fly**, it can help them fly more efficiently. Some birds, like vultures, can catch air currents with their wings outspread and travel by soaring. Others fly by flapping their wings.





# Bird Behavior Checklist

WORKSHEET



Date:

Time:

Weather:

BIRD BEHAVIOR	TALLY MARKS	DESCRIPTION/ LOCATION OF BIRD(S)
Example: Flocking	////////	Looked like a flock of geese flying overhead, near lake
Hiding		
Flocking		
Bathing		
Flying		
Preening		
Singing		
Feeding		
Giving an alarm call		
Foraging		

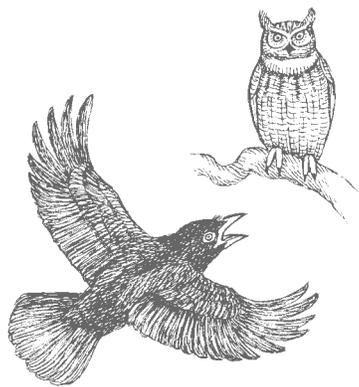




WORKSHEET

# Bird Behavior Hike

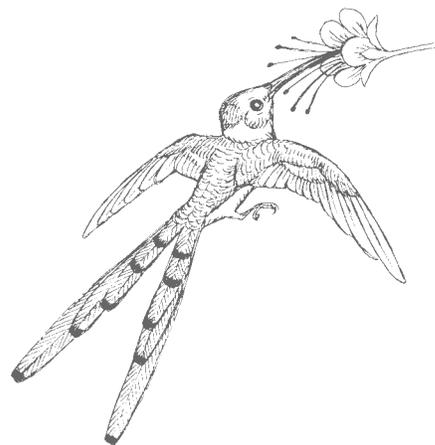
DIRECTIONS: Place a tally mark next to the behavior each time you observe it on your hike.



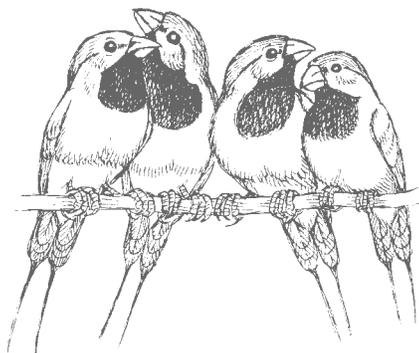
Alarm Call \_\_\_\_\_



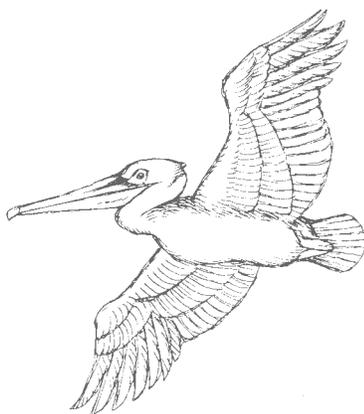
Bathing \_\_\_\_\_



Feeding \_\_\_\_\_



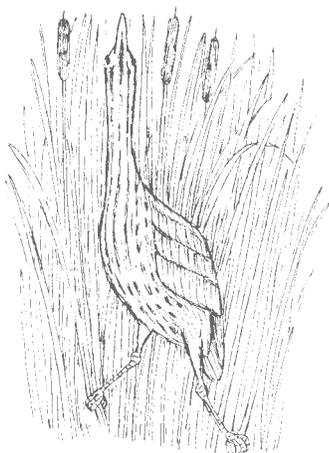
Flocking \_\_\_\_\_



Flying \_\_\_\_\_



Foraging \_\_\_\_\_



Hiding \_\_\_\_\_



Singing \_\_\_\_\_



Preening \_\_\_\_\_

