

Birding Activities

1. Check the [Vermont Audubon Society](#) to see bird lists for Vermont, information about migratory species and the Atlantic Flyway Initiative, bird banding, and the Christmas bird count.



- ☐ 2. Research how to start birding. Use the Audubon webpage [How to Start Birding](#).



- ☐ 3. Create a field journal of birds you see. Write descriptions and add photos, or create field sketches. Be sure to note the location as closely as possible. Is this bird one that is typically seen in Vermont?
- ☐ 4. Many dedicated birders have what they call a life list, a list of every bird that they have ever seen. Many versions are available for sale online, or you can create your own.
- ☐ 5. Research state birds. The Vermont state bird is the Hermit Thrush. Why was this bird chosen? What is the Hermit Thrush's range and habitat? What does it eat? Where does it nest, and what does

its nest look like?

- ☐ 6. Although it is illegal to collect feathers, even the ones you find on the ground, except under special circumstances (see the site [Found Feathers](#), which explains about the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918](#), or MBTA), you can still create a virtual collection by taking photos, or you can sketch the feathers you find and try to identify them.



- ☐ 7. Visit a local birding site. The [Eleanor Ellis/Springweather Nature Area](#) is one such site. A map of the trails is available online. Check out the [Birding Hotspots](#) in Vermont, which is an interactive website containing up-to-date information about various species of birds that typically can be seen around the state.



- ☐ 8. Learn about bird physiology and anatomy. How do birds fly? What are different species of birds known for? What do different species of birds eat? What about birds that don't fly such as penguins, ostriches, and kiwi birds? Why do birds have differently shaped beaks or bills? How do owls' eyes work in low light?
- ☐ 9. Explore how to create a more sustainable world for birds. What are steps you can take in your own backyard to make it more attractive to species of native birds?
- ☐ 10. Explore which birds that inhabit Vermont are native and which are introduced. Why were new species introduced? How do they affect native populations?
- ☐ 11. Build or buy a bird feeder. Be sure to check the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's [Backyard Birdfeeders](#) guidance about when to use bird feeders safely in order to avoid attracting bears. Check to see what local species of birds eat. The Backyard Birdfeeders site also contains the pages:

Getting Started Birding, Birds for Every Level, Top 10 Wildlife Management Areas for Birding, and Birding Ethics.



- ☐ 12. Buy or build a birdhouse. Choose a design that will attract a species you hope to see around your house.

- ☐ 13. Visit the [Vermont Institute of Natural Science, VINS](#), located in Quechee, Vermont to learn more about raptors. Use the library's VINS pass to visit at a reduced rate. Ask your school to take a field trip to VINS or to schedule a visit of an expert to your school.



- ☐ 14. Learn about bird communication. Visit [All About Birds](#) to get started. Other online birdsong sites include Bird Song Hero, an interactive game from the Cornell Lab Bird Academy. What are the distinctive calls of local birds? What do those calls mean? Learn to identify at least 10 calls from birds you see around your house.



- ☐ 15. Investigate extinct species such as the dodo and the passenger pigeon. What caused their extinction? What birds are currently considered endangered? What can be done to help?

- ☐ 16. Find old birds' nests and investigate their construction. Why do different species of birds build different types of nests? Visit the [Montshire Museum](#) in Norwich, Vermont to see their collection of birds' nests and birds' eggs.



- ☐ 17. Learn about homing pigeons. How are they trained? How have they been used throughout history?

Fiction about birds you might enjoy:

Picture Books	Through Grade 3	Grades 4-8
<i>Make Way for Ducklings</i> by Robert McCloskey <i>One Cool Friend</i> by Toni Buzzeo <i>Owl Babies</i> by Martin Waddell <i>Owl Moon</i> by Jane Yolen <i>The Best Nest</i> by P. D. Eastman <i>The Perfect Nest</i> by Catherine Friend <i>Mel Fell</i> by Corey R. Tabor <i>Tacky the Penguin</i> by Helen Lester <i>Three Hens and a Peacock</i> by Lester L. Laminack	<i>The Trumpet of the Swan</i> by E. B. White <i>Mr. Popper's Penguins</i> by Florence Atwater <i>Orris and Timble: The Beginning</i> by Kate DiCamillo <i>The Falcon's Feathers (A to Z Mysteries)</i> by Ron Roy and John Steven Gurney <i>Ben and the Bird Girl</i> by P. K. Butler	<i>Hoot</i> by Carl Hiaasen <i>The Ravenmaster's Secret</i> by Elvira Woodruff <i>Homer on the Case</i> by Henry Cole <i>Duet</i> by Elise Broach <i>Hummingbird Season</i> by Stephanie V. W. Lucianovic <i>The Secret Language of Birds</i> by Lynne Kelly

