

Patch Program

Feathered Friends

This patch will encourage you to learn more about birds through hands-on activities and inspire you to take action to protect the birds in your area.

Grade level requirements:

- **Daisies (grades K-1).** Choose one activity from each category.
- **Brownies (grades 2-3).** Choose one activity from each category.
- **Juniors (grades 4-5).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Cadettes (grades 6-8).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Seniors (grades 9-10).** Choose two activities from each category.
- **Ambassadors (grades 11-12).** Choose two activities from each category.

Discover

We hear them everywhere. They tweet, hoot, and quack! They can be colorful or drab. They can be tiny or huge. They can nest above ground or underground. Birds represent a class of animals that is wildly diverse and exciting.

- **Explore the diversity of birds.** Check out a North American bird guide from your local library. How is the guide organized? Why? What types of information does the bird guide provide? How does that information help us understand birds?
- **Explore our local bird species.** Which birds call central Texas home? Which birds have you seen before? Which birds are common, and which are less common?
- **Be a bird species expert.** Are you interested in one bird species (owls, hummingbirds, eagles)? Find out all you can about them. What do they eat?

When are they active? How big are they? What colors are they? How do they nest?

- **Learn about Texas threatened or endangered bird species.** Check out [Texas Parks & Wildlife's list](#) of endangered or threatened bird species. The Golden-cheeked Warbler nests only in central Texas juniper and oak woodlands. What else can you learn about our local endangered bird?
- **Learn about birds from around the world.** Watch a nature documentary that is focused on birds (Attenborough's "Birds of Paradise" or "Paradise Birds" is a crowd-pleaser). How are the birds in the film similar or different to birds that you have seen before?
- **Be a migration maven.** Learn about bird migration. Learn about how light pollution can affect bird migration. What other threats do migrating birds face?
- **Be a bird beak observer.** Compare bird beaks across bird species. Bird beaks have adapted over time to benefit each species. What do you notice about the types of beaks you see? What purposes do beaks serve? What might each beak do best?

Connect

Get outdoors with your fellow Girl Scouts, friends, family, or experts and spot some of your favorite feathered friends.

- **Check out birds in action.** Watch a [live wildlife cam](#) or set up a chair outdoors. What observations can you make about birds' behavior? Do all species of birds have the same types of behaviors? What species did you see? What types of bird calls did you hear?
- **Be a birder.** Join a birdwatching event put on by your local Audubon chapter, join a local birdwatcher, or just go for a walk. How many bird species can you spot? How many bird songs can you hear?
- **Visit a local state park.** Talk to the experts that work there about the types of birds they see on a regular basis. What rare birds have been spotted in their park? What birds are commonly seen in their park?
- **Get creative.** Create a unique bird feeder design. Your design should solve a problem birds face (habitat, predators, food). What problem does your design solve? How?
- **Practice your binocular skills.** Learn about the different parts of binoculars and how to focus. Have a fun can-you-spot-it competition with

someone else. Who can find something fastest with their binoculars. Practice describing where objects in the distance are for others to find.

- **Dissect an owl pellet.** Learn what owls eat through examination of their regurgitant. Compare bones and skulls found to a bone chart and identify the owl's prey!
- **Cats can't catch me!** Did you know that domestic cats that are allowed to roam outside are the biggest human-caused threat to migrating birds? One solution that pet owners have created are "catios" (cat+patio). These feline enclosures still allow cats to get fresh air but protect birds from their hungry mouths! Look at some catio designs online and design your own. What features would your catio have?
- **Bird beak dinner.** Have a meal or snack using utensils that represent different bird beaks (chopsticks, soup spoons, toothpicks, tweezers, etc). What foods are hard to pick up? What foods are easy? Relate each utensil to the beak of a specific bird species. How might that species beak be best suited for its food?

Take Action

As a Girl Scout, you can make the world a better place for birds. Take a step to make things a little easier for our flying friends.

- **Support your local birds!** Make or install a bird feeder (consider recycling objects), plant hummingbird friendly plants, plant native plants, or set up a bird bath.
- **Lights out.** Most birds migrate at night and light pollution from our street and building lights can interfere with their ability to navigate using the moon, stars, and sun. Take action to make changes at your home to reduce light pollution. Inspire others to reduce light pollution through education or campaigning.
- **Call out the catio.** Teach others about the importance of protecting migratory birds from house cats.
- **Wisen up your windows.** Up to a billion birds each year are estimated to die after hitting windows. Make your windows safer by breaking up your windows' reflections with decals, film, or paint. Consider signing [this petition](#) to support the Federal Bird Safe Buildings Act.
- **Watch birds, share what you see.** Join a project such as [eBird](#), [Project FeederWatch](#), [Christmas Bird Count](#), [Breeding Bird Survey](#), or the [International Shorebird Survey](#) to record your bird observations. Your contributions will provide valuable information to show where birds are thriving—and where they need our help. ([Source: Cornell Lab](#))