

# Birds Beak Buffet

## Age/Grade Range

- Ages: 5-8

## Group Size

- 12 students

## Time

- Prep time: 45 minutes
- Set-up: 15 minutes
- Activity: ½ - 1 hr

## Materials

- Paper on a clipboard + a marker (or small whiteboard)
- Two sets of bird picture cards (available on [nwtsciencefocus.ca](http://nwtsciencefocus.ca))
- Two large bird feathers tied to an elastic (or another bird hand puppet)
- Material for the stations:
  - ☐ Foam fish
  - ☐ Tea leaves
  - ☐ Red modelling clay
  - ☐ Plastic dog bone
  - ☐ Pipe cleaner invertebrates
  - ☐ A small strip of plastic bag
  - ☐ Dry rice
  - ☐ Popcorn kernels (or nuts)
  - ☐ Two different long tongs
  - ☐ Strainer (wire scoop wrapped in cheesecloth/netting)
  - ☐ Toy scissors
  - ☐ Scoop (made out of yogurt container/paper cup)
  - ☐ Chopsticks
  - ☐ Tweezers
  - ☐ Pliers (or a nutcracker)
  - ☐ Four containers (a combination of yogurt containers and larger Tupperware)
  - ☐ Foam tray (a meat tray works well)
  - ☐ A large piece of bark (spruce, or another type that has cracks)
  - ☐ Paper flower with a long narrow opening



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## Topics

- Ecology and Animals

## Objective

- Learn about birds' beaks and what they eat.



## Set-Up

1. At each station, there will be two different food types, two different bird picture cards and the beaks (tools that represent the beaks) that go with them. The kids have to try and match the bird to the right beak, and then try out the different beaks with the different food types to figure out which beak is best for catching/ eating each type of food.
2. Have the bird 'food' and pictures set up at each station before the kids arrive. Hide the beaks in a bag or under a cloth, with a separate set of bird picture cards.

### Station 1: Duck and Heron

- Heron food: Foam fish in a yogurt container with water
- Heron beak: Long pointy tongs
- Duck food: Tea leaves in a container with water (represents aquatic plants/ algae)
- Duck beak: Strainer

### Station 2: Hawk and Pelican

- Hawk food: Red modelling clay on a plastic dog bone (represents meat)
- Hawk beak: Toy scissors
- Pelican food: Foam fish in a wide-mouthed Tupperware container
- Pelican beak: Scoop made out of a cut-off paper cup or yogurt container

### Station 3: Shorebird and hummingbird

- Shorebird food: Pipe cleaner invertebrates buried in a container with sand
- Shorebird beak: Tongs (different from heron's beak, but still long)
- Hummingbird food: Strip of plastic (represents nectar) in long paper flower
- Hummingbird beak: chopsticks to probe flower

### Station 4: Woodpecker and Sparrow

- Woodpecker food: Rice (represents grubs/insects) in the cracks of a piece of bark
- Woodpecker beak: Tweezers
- Sparrow food: Popcorn kernels (or nuts with shells if there are no nut allergies in the group) on a tray (represents seeds/nuts)
- Sparrow beak: Pliers (if using popcorn) or a nutcracker

## Activity Directions

1. This activity works well as part of a rotation of activities if you have a big group.
  2. Have the group gather around the mystery bag/ cloth containing the beaks.
- Start with a bit of a discussion that compares how humans eat to how animals (eventually leading into birds) eat, using guiding questions such as: *Welcome to the bird beak buffet! Who can tell me what a buffet is? What kinds of things do you like to eat? What do we use to eat these different things (our hands? A fork? A spoon?) What would happen if we tried to eat soup with a fork? Do animals use utensils? What do they use to catch their food and to eat? (paws, talons, teeth, beaks, etc.)*





3. Draw a quick bird (but without a beak). Ask: What is missing? Have the kids tell you how to draw the beak. After you've drawn it, ask: Do all bird beaks look the same?
4. Make your hand into a simple bird puppet by attaching a couple of feathers to your arm with an elastic. Reach your hand into the bag to pull out the different beaks, one at a time. Show/explain how each beak would be used and have the kids guess what kind of bird would have this kind of beak before showing them the picture of the bird.
  - **Long pointy tongs:** For a tall bird with long legs that uses its beak to spear/catch fish: HERONS (and egrets)
  - **Strainer:** For birds that have fine combs along the edges of their bills to strain aquatic plants and algae from the water: DUCKS
  - **Scissors:** Represent beaks that are good at tearing meat off the bones of the bird's prey: HAWKS (and other raptors and owls)
  - **Scoop:** Represents the pouch-like beaks of birds that scoop fish from the water: PELICAN (also explain that where they live- not here)
  - **Other tongs:** Represent the long thin beaks that birds use to probe shallow water, mud and sand for small invertebrates: SHOREBIRDS
  - **Chopsticks:** For the birds that need long narrow beaks to probe flowers for the nectar they eat: HUMMINGBIRDS (again, mention they do not live here)
  - **Tweezers:** Represent the strong, pointed beaks used to drill or chisel into wood and probe for insects: WOODPECKERS
  - **Pliers/ nutcracker:** Represent the short, strong beaks of birds that can crack open nuts and seeds: SPARROWS (and finches/ other songbirds)
5. Exploration time!
  - a. Put the bird beaks with the stations they belong to.
  - b. Break the kids off into four groups and have them rotate around through the different stations, switching every 3 minutes or so.
  - c. As the kids try out the different beaks on the different foods, have them match the beak to the proper bird card, and explain what the bird eats. (They should be experts by now!)

## Pairs Well With

- Birds of Hay River
- Echolocation game
- Beaver activities

