



IS IT A BIRD?

Determine what animals are considered birds based on physical characteristics



GRADE 4

KEY WORDS

- adaptations
- beak
- talon

STANDARDS

- SCI.4.3.2
- SCI.4.3.3

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the characteristics of birds that separate them from other types of animals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Birds' beaks, or bills, have been adapted for use as weapons or tools. Only eagles (who use both beaks and claws as weapons) and parrots (who can hold food with their claws) use their feet as hunting devices.
- Beaks are made of the same basic material as horns, claws, hooves, and fingernails. They grow continuously so they are never worn out. Birds use their beaks as spears (kingfishers), chisels (oyster catchers), hammers and drills (woodpeckers), strainers (flamingos), and scoops (spoonbills), just to mention a few.
- Birds of prey have the most acute vision of any predator. Birds' eyes are relatively larger than humans' and have a retina more sensitive to color.
- Grasping claws are used by birds of prey (eagles, hawks, and owls) to hold down prey while tearing it with the beak. Fishing birds, such as ospreys, have talons modified for holding slippery prey.

PROCEDURE

- Have the students complete the worksheet about bird characteristics.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT

- Answers: The butterfly, bat, and flying squirrel are not birds.

EXTENSIONS

- Complete the activity entitled "Camouflage: Birds and Worms". What adaptations have birds developed that help them in hunting for worms?
- For a more in-depth look at bird features and adaptations while at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, complete the activity "Birds of a Feather".





IS IT A BIRD?

Birds have adapted to their environment in order to survive. They all have common features that make them birds. Do you know a bird when you see one?



Name _____

A bird:

- a) has feathers
- b) lays eggs
- c) has a beak
- d) has two feet
- e) has two wings



Three of the animals on the right are not birds. List the three animals below and give two reasons why they are not birds.

1. Name of animal: _____

It is not a bird because:

a) _____

b) _____



2. Name of animal: _____

It is not a bird because:

a) _____

b) _____



3. Name of animal: _____

It is not a bird because:

a) _____

b) _____

