



Be Recognized As a Schoolyard Habitat Hero!

Share your schoolyard habitat improvements and you might be awarded a **\$100 to \$750 mini-grant** plus support from Pennington and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology!

1. Get inspired at the BirdSleuth Action Map! Plus, see what other schools have accomplished in their schoolyard habitats.
2. To participate, place your schoolyard habitat improvements on the interactive Action Map.
3. We will choose submissions and award mini-grants on a rolling basis from September 2014 to May 2015.

Get on the map at www.birdsleuth.org/action-map



Whether you are awarded a mini-grant or not, participating makes your school a Habitat Hero!

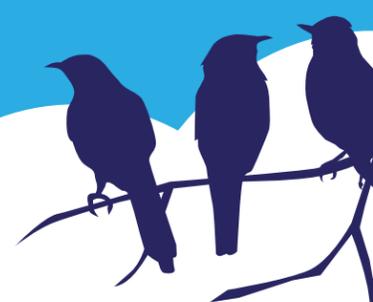
Find further details about the mini-grant, and additional resources and activities at www.birdsleuth.org/habitatchallenge.



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Habitat Heroes

Creating Habitat for Birds



Schoolyard habitat can provide for the basic needs of birds—food, water and cover. We invite you to create a bird-friendly schoolyard habitat action plan. Because each species has different adaptations and habitat needs, a diverse schoolyard habitat will attract a wider variety of birds. Here are some great ideas to help get you started.



FOOD SOURCES

In addition to backyard feeders, think plants. They provide food for birds through their seeds and nectar while attracting insects, a major source of protein for adult and nestling birds.



For example, plants like goldenrod, thistles, and sunflowers provide valuable nectar sources for butterflies and bees. After the flowers are gone, they form seedheads that attract goldfinches and other songbirds as one of “nature’s” feeders.



Try to choose plants that maximize flowering and fruiting, and keep in mind that nectar-rich native wildflowers offer more to wildlife in addition to adding beauty to the landscape. Finally, make or purchase feeders to add to your schoolyard to supplement “wild” food!



WATER SOURCES

A simple birdbath that you make or purchase will draw birds in like a magnet! A small pond can provide a home for amphibians and aquatic insects and drinking water for all kinds of creatures—these insects and other animals are a good food source for birds, too.



COVER / SHELTER

Although dense shrubbery, tangled vines, and dead trees may challenge your image of an orderly schoolyard, they mimic natural areas and create ideal nesting and foraging sites. Does your schoolyard have a thicket that birds could use for nesting, perching, or escape? If not, consider planting some trees and shrubs or make a hedge. You can also add nest boxes to your schoolyard habitat.





Habitat Heroes

PENNINGTON
THE BIRD FOOD PEOPLE

FEATHERED FRIENDS



Here are a few easy ideas to help you start improving your schoolyard habitat...



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FEEDER

One bird feeder—or a whole group of feeders—can attract a variety of seed-eating birds to your schoolyard. You can even use bird feeding as a way to talk about beak adaptations and food webs.



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NEST BOX

Students enjoy making and decorating bird boxes, which will attract cavity-nesting birds. If you build the boxes yourselves, you can teach students that different birds have different preferences in the size of the nest box and the hole.



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Photo courtesy of Urban Divers Estuary Conservance

BIRDBATH

A birdbath, either made from recycled materials or purchased, provides birds with drinking water and a place to bathe. Water is an important habitat feature to support wild birds in your schoolyard, community, and backyard.



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PLANTINGS

Consider planting bird-friendly plants, especially native plants, that will provide both food and cover for birds. Whether you use sunflowers in pots, landscaping around the school, or a bird-friendly garden, your students can improve habitat for birds!



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The **Cornell Lab** of Ornithology



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Bird-Friendly Checklist for Schoolyards:



By meeting the habitat needs of birds, you'll attract more species to your schoolyard, leading to better opportunities to teach science and other subjects through these feathered visitors.

- Plant trees and native vegetation to provide shelter, breeding habitat, and food sources for birds.
- Attract cavity-nesting birds by putting up a nest box.
- Maintain dead or dying trees (also called "standing snags") if you can. They provide prime habitat for insects that attract birds and other wildlife.

- In early spring, set out nest-building materials such as short lengths of yarn, thin strips of fabric, and human or pet hair.
- Put out a birdbath and clean it regularly.
- Hang a bird feeder outside, and be sure to keep it filled all winter long.

