

Bird Cards and Scenario Cards

The following bird cards and scenario cards have been adapted from the Flying Wild 'Home is Where the Forest Is' (page 95) cards to more accurately represent birds that breed in Maryland.

The bird cards should be printed as double sided sheets and may be laminated for durability. The first sheet includes larger birds such as the birds of prey which as top predators would naturally be found in smaller numbers in a forest. If your class size will require more than 18 cards it is recommended that you make additional copies of the 2nd sheet of songbirds which would be found at higher densities in a forest (and are impacted by the first and second scenarios).

The scenarios have been adjusted slightly from those given in the flying wild guide to match the bird species of Maryland. This activity can be followed by students suggesting ways that human impacts on birds can be reduced.

Scenario 1 Cowbird Delight

Cowbirds are native to the U.S. and so are protected under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#). In most instances it is unlawful to remove their eggs from a nest. However a few precautions can help reduce their numbers around new developments:

- Use feeders that are made for smaller birds, such as tube feeders that have short perches, smaller ports, and no catch basin on the bottom. Avoid platform trays, and do not spread food on the ground.
- Cowbirds prefer sunflower seeds, cracked corn, and millet; offer nyjer seeds, suet, nectar, whole peanuts, or safflower seeds instead.
- Clean up seed spills on the ground below feeders.
- Don't search for or visit a nest when cowbirds are around.

Adding native trees, shrubs and flowers to yards can help to replace habitat loss from the development. Although bird feeders can provide additional food in the winter, songbirds require insects, particularly caterpillars, to feed their young which can be provided by planting native plants.

<http://pattersonpark.audubon.org/programs/bird-friendly-communities>

Scenario 2 Pesticides, Caterpillars and Birds

Students can research other methods of controlling insect pests such as using beneficial bugs

<http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wabugs.aspx>



Cooper's Hawk



Dave Inman CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Great Horned Owl



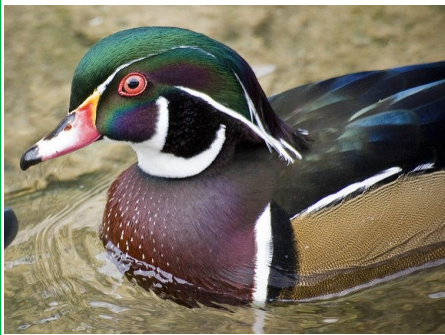
Tim Lumley CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Barred Owl



Michael Hicks CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Wood Duck



Selbe Lynn CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Pileated Woodpecker



Mick Thompson CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Wood Thrush



Russ Wigh CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Baltimore Oriole



Tom Murray CC By-NC-ND 2.0

White-Breasted Nuthatch



Matt MacGillivray CC By 2.0

Hairy Woodpecker



Ano Lobb CC By 2.0

BARRED OWL

I am 10 inches long. I have dark eyes and horizontal brown bars on my neck but vertical bars on my lower chest. I nest in a natural tree cavity or an abandoned stick platform nest in large woodlands. I hunt at night flying silently for mammals, birds and reptiles. Listen for my hoots 'Who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all?'.

GREAT HORNED OWL

I am 18-25 inches long and my wings span over 4 feet. I am dark brown and gray with a white throat patch and large ear tufts. I have big yellow eyes so I can see at night. I will take over an un-used nest of a hawk or crow, high up in a tree. I am a night-time predator and I eat mammals, birds, reptiles, and frogs. I'm called "the tiger of the woods".

COOPER'S HAWK

I am about 15-20 inches long. My feathers are a dark blue-gray color above. I have a white underside with rusty-colored bars. My nest is a mass of sticks placed about 20 or more feet above the ground in a tree. Watch out! I hunt during the day, and I eat small mammals and birds.

WOOD THRUSH

I am about 8 inches long. My feathers are brown above and white below with large blackish spots. I have a rich, flute-like voice. My nest is shaped like a cup and I like to place it in a bush or very young tree. I like to eat insects. I also like to eat berries, such as those found on dogwood and black cherry trees.

PILEATED WOODPECKER

I am a large woodpecker, about 16- 19 inches long and am quite shy. I'm black with white stripes on my neck. I have a bright red crest on my head. I use my beak to make large rectangular holes in trees. I make my nest in these tree holes, about 15-70 feet above the ground. I eat ants and other wood-boring insects. Sometimes I eat ber-

WOOD DUCK

I am 17-20 inches long. I am a beautiful, crested, multicolored duck. Many people think I am one of the loveliest birds in the world! I live in wooded rivers, ponds, and swamps. My nest is a cup of downy feathers in a hole in a tree or in a nest-box. I eat plants that grow in the water, small fish, nuts, and fruit.

HAIRY WOODPECKER

I am about 9-10 inches long. I have black and white feathers and a long beak. My nest is made of woodchips in a hole in a tree. I help trees by eating insects that bore in trees. I also eat berries and seeds. I drum on wood with my strong beak to let other Hairy Woodpeckers know I am looking for a mate.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH

I am 5-6 inches long. I have black on the crown of my head, a white face, a blue-gray back, and white underneath. I make my cup-shaped nest in a cavity in a tree or in a birdhouse. I eat nuts, seeds, insects, and fruits. I am a good gymnast—I often scamper down tree trunks headfirst in search of insects.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE

I am 8-9 inches long. I have a bright orange body, a black head and black and white wings. I build an amazing hanging sock-like nest, high in a tree close to a stream or the edge of a woods. I eat insects but particularly like fruit and nectar. I will visit back yard feeders that offer fruit.

Warbling Vireo



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Carolina Chickadee



Henry T. McLin CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Yellow-throated Warbler



Russ Wigh CC By-NC-ND 2.0

American Redstart



© Pancamo Photography

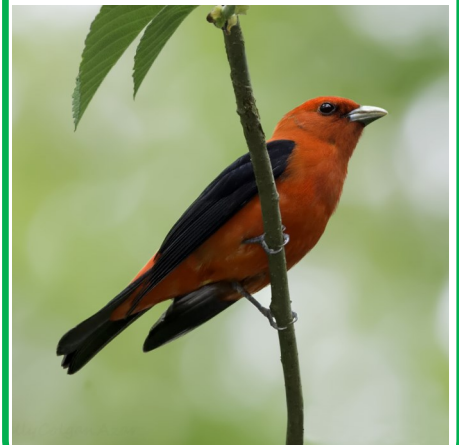
Dan Pancamo CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Scarlet Tanager



Kelly Cogan Azar CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Scarlet Tanager



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Warbling Vireo



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American Redstart



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Dan Pancamo CC By-NC-ND 2.0

Yellow-throated Warbler



Russ Wigh CC By-NC-ND 2.0

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER

I am about 4-5 inches long. I have a bright yellow throat, a face patterned with black and white, and gray on my head and back. For many people, seeing me return from my migration is a sign that spring has finally arrived. I often hang my cup-shaped nest in a sycamore or pine tree. I like to eat insects and spiders.

CAROLINA CHICKADEE

I am nearly 5 inches long. I have a black "cap" and throat, white cheeks, and a gray back. One of my calls sounds like a fast version of my name: "chick-a-dee-dee-dee." I make my nest out of plant fibers, feathers, and moss. My nests are usually in a hole in a tree or in a birdhouse. I eat insects, seeds, and berries.

WARBLING VIREO

I am 5-6 inches long. I am an olive green color and am hard to spot in the forest. I have a beautiful warbling song. My cup-shaped nest is made out of strips of bark, plant fibers, and even spider web. I often place my nest high up in a tall tree near a stream. I eat insects, spiders, and berries.

SCARLET Tanager

I am 7 inches long. I am unmistakable with a bright red body, black wings and tail. I like to feed and nest in large trees in the middle of the forest away from disturbance. I build my flimsy nest high in the tree but Brown-headed cowbirds will seek it out to lay their eggs. I like to eat insects.

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AMERICAN REDSTART

I am 5-6 inches long. I look ready for Halloween being mostly black but with bright orange patches on my wings, tail and body. I often startle my insect prey by flashing my wings and tail and never stay still. I weave a small but neat cup shaped nest in shrubs. I like to by in large areas of forest away from the edge.

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Scenario 1 – Cowbird Delight

A new suburban town called “Cowbird Delight” has just been developed. Eight sections of forest were cut to develop this town. *(Remove 8 sections from the forest. The birds that were in these sections must leave the forest.)*

This new development has opened many new areas for the Brown-headed Cowbird to feed. The Brown-headed Cowbird likes to feed along forest edges, farms, feed lots, roadsides, and towns. A female Cowbird flies into the forest and lays its eggs in the nests of 20 different Warbling Vireos and Scarlet Tanagers. The Cowbird eggs hatch first. When the Warbling Vireo and Scarlet Tanager eggs hatch, the young are pushed out of their nest by the bigger Brown-headed Cowbird. *(If you are a Warbling Vireo or Scarlet Tanager, your breeding has not been successful. You must leave the forest.)*

Scenario 2 – Pesticides, Caterpillars, and Birds

A large tract of forest habitat in a recreation area in your state has been infested with caterpillars. The people who use this area are complaining about the caterpillars. They are concerned that the caterpillars are destroying the leaves of the forest trees. They are also concerned because the caterpillars are found in such great numbers that they are ruining their recreational experience. The forest managers of this area have decided to spray a pesticide over this forest to control the caterpillars. The pesticide worked and greatly reduced the number of caterpillars.

A big problem, however, resulted from this spraying. Yellow-throated Warblers and American Redstarts could not find enough caterpillars to feed newly hatched babies. The nesting season was not successful and the warblers left this forest in search of a better area to live. *(If you are a Yellow-throated Warbler or American Redstart, your breeding has not been successful. You must leave the forest.)*

Scenario 3 – Where are the Birds of Prey

Bird watching is one of Jesse and Trina’s favorite hobbies. Each spring they look for birds in a forested area they have been visiting for the past 10 years. Some of their favorite birds to spot are birds of prey, such as the Cooper’s Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and Barred Owl. This spring when Jesse and Trina arrive at the forest, they notice that a large part of the forest had been cleared for a new development. Eight sections of forest were cut for this development. *(Remove 8 sections from the forest. The birds that were in these sections must move over into the remaining sections.)*

They also notice that after spending several days bird watching, they could not find any of their favorite birds of prey. They meet a wildlife biologist. She explains that clearing the land for the development caused many small mammals to leave this forest in search of other places to live. Hawks and Owls are birds of prey. They depend on small mammals for their food. Because there are fewer small mammals in this forest, many of the birds of prey left to find a better place to live with more food. *(If you are a Hawk or Owl, you can not find food and you must leave the forest.)*

The following scenario is an optional one to include to end the activity on a better note than originally written. Consider creating 3 new habitat panels that contain depictions of houses with native plants around them to use with this extension.

For more information on how to create backyard wildlife habitat, consider checking out our Wild Acres website here: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wildacres.aspx>

Scenario 4 – Bird Helpers

Some of the people who live in Cowbird Delight want to attract birds to their yards. They attend a workshop on gardening for birds and decide to plant native trees, shrubs, and flowers. They significantly reduce the amount of pesticides they use in their yards, and they add screens to their windows to make them safe for birds. Add in 3 new habitat sections of bird friendly backyards.

Which birds might be able to return and live in these new areas?