

Vaseux Lake Bird Observatory Migratory Bird Program

Pre and Post Visit Activities and Resources

September & October 2015

Following are some suggested activities to complement your visit to the VLBO Migratory Bird Program.

A great place to start is the [VLBO Blog \(https://vlbo.wordpress.com/\)](https://vlbo.wordpress.com/). You can find current data in the weekly blog as well as previous stats in the Annual Reports.

Activity: Student Banding (Art)

It is helpful for VLBO staff and parent volunteers to be able to address students by a name. An extension of a name tag, the student band is a take on bird bands. The teacher and/or the class can determine what information should go on their “bands.” The band could have the student’s actual name, or a bird species they will be known by for the field trip. Check the [VLBO Blog](#) for local species. Bird bands have a unique number, so the class may decide they should have numbers or other data on their “bands” too. The bands could be stickers worn on clothing or hats. They could be arm bands, but obviously, not attached to the neck.

Activity: I Predict - Formulating a Hypothesis (Science/Math)

Students will observe real Science in action during their visit to VLBO. It is a great opportunity to explain the Scientific Method. This Method involves: observation, hypothesis, experimenting/data collection and forming a conclusion.

Using data available at the VLBO Blog or elsewhere, students make observations. Individually, or as a class, one or more hypotheses can be formed to be tested during the Field Trip. For example, studying data on tables or graphs, the class might make a prediction about the species of birds they expect to see or hear the most. Another option is to look at groups of birds to make predictions. For example, students might predict where they might expect to see birds that hunt, or birds that eat berries for example.

During their visit, students should collect data. Does their data support the hypothesis? If not, what might be some explanations? How could they improve the experiment if they were to do it again?

Activity: Homemade Binoculars (Art)

This is a simple craft using toilet paper rolls to make binoculars. There are many sites online with instructions, such as <http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/binoculars-for-kids/>.

While these do not magnify like real binoculars, they are lightweight, inexpensive and help children to focus on specific objects.

Activity: Bird Trading Cards (Art/Science)

Similar to hockey cards, students design a trading card for a local bird. They would draw or copy a picture of the bird on one side and put the bird's "stats" on the other. The "stats" could include such things as relative size, range, habitat etc. This information is available in bird books and online sites such as [All About Birds \(Cornell U. website\)](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/).
<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>

Activity: Migration Obstacle Course (Science/PE)

Following is a Migration Obstacle Course. It requires a playing field and minimal equipment. Another more detailed version can be sent to you upon request.

<http://www.flyingwild.org/documents/218-220.pdf>

Owl Banding

In addition to the morning bird banding activity you will see during your visit, VLBO also does evening banding of Northern Saw-whet Owls. The process is similar to that shown in this video, which might be of interest to your students.

[Saw-whet owl banding video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plJhiJUSSW8) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plJhiJUSSW8>

Gray Cat Bird

Our "featured bird" this season is the Gray Catbird. Attached are two interesting sites with further information on this species.

[Catbird mimicry good intro to bird sounds too Cornell U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRgvpjcSNcM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRgvpjcSNcM>

[All about Gray Catbirds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Gray_Catbird/lifehistory)

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A Few other Online Resources

[Canadian Migration Monitoring Network](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/cmmn/main.jsp) <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/cmmn/main.jsp>

[Nature Canada](http://naturecanada.ca/) <http://naturecanada.ca/>

[Bird Studies Canada](http://www.birdscanada.org/) <http://www.birdscanada.org/>

[Journey North for Kids](https://www.learner.org/jnorth/KidsJourneyNorth.html) <https://www.learner.org/jnorth/KidsJourneyNorth.html>

[Journey North Habitat Projects](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/habitat_projects.html)

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