



Dinosaur Train: Meeting Modern Dinosaurs — Birds!

Learning Goal: To encourage students to observe, document and identify different types of birds that live in the area.

Related Episodes: "The Old Bird" - "Confuciousonis Says" - "Surprise Party"

Subjects: Science, Math, Reading, Writing

Grades: PreK-1

Materials

- Pictures of a variety of birds found in your state/area (from library books or the Internet)
- Notebook
- Pencil
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Binoculars (optional)
- Field guide to birds in your area (available at the library, or on Internet)

Procedures

1. Ask students why there are no T. rexes or Triceratops in the world today. Many will know that these kinds of animals are extinct. In other words, the last of their kind died out. Most dinosaurs became extinct millions of years ago. But, believe it or not, some dinosaurs are alive today: Birds. Some birds that lived during the time of the dinosaurs did not go extinct when other dinosaurs did. Their modern relatives (their great, great, great ... for millions and millions of greats ... grandchildren) are all the birds we see in the world today. Explain that by looking at the fossilized bones of ancient birds like Archaeopteryx and comparing those



bones with those of modern birds, scientists see many similarities.

2. View video clip of "The Old Bird" which features a type of bird known as Archaeopteryx (pronounced ar-kee-OP-ter-iks) that lived during the Jurassic Time Period of the Mesozoic Era (Age of the Dinosaurs).
3. Show pictures of a variety of birds from your area. Ask students to comment on the different features they see. Have students compare these different birds. What do they all have in common? Look closely at their beak, feet, and feathers. How are they different? (colors of feathers, size, where they live).
4. Have students go outside to a nearby forest or yard. Note: If possible, visit a natural area in the early morning, when many birds are most active, and there are fewer human sounds to interfere. Help them use notebooks to sketch a picture of every bird they spot. Older children can write down the date and time of the sighting, as well as the weather conditions. Children can try sketching pictures of birds they see. If possible, allow children to use binoculars to get a closer look of the birds they find.

Extensions

1. Invite a member of a local birdwatching group to the class to talk about their hobby.
2. Have children participate in an online database project to track birds in your area. Two sample sites to consider:
3. See the related activity Drawing Birds

