



# Eating Out: Migration

## Introduction

**When the weather changes, so do bird diets.** In the winter, some birds will try to eat as many fatty foods as possible to increase body fat for additional warmth. Some, like the chickadee, will change its food preference in the winter. Instead of mainly eating insects as it does in the warmer months, it switches to seeds.

But many birds have to simply search for food elsewhere. To get food, they have to move to a different area to find the food that they need. Some 350 North American bird species migrate long distances every year. In this migration simulation, kids can experience some of the many natural obstacles and increasingly more human-created obstacles that birds face when migrating.

## 1. Migrate like a bird

### SUPPLIES

- Balloons
- Sticky notes
- Pieces of cardboard or something to use as a fan

### GET KIDS THINKING ...

**ASK KIDS:** Why do people move from one place to another? Talk about the different reasons people move. **ASK:** Why do birds migrate? What obstacles do they face in migrating?





## Start with a Book: Bird Buddies Toolkit

# Eating Out: Migration

## Let's get started!

To find food or a nesting location, birds must fly through rain storms; face tremendous winds that blow them off course; dodge tall, well-lit buildings that attract them; or deal with a housing development that was once a refueling stop. They have to face these dangers twice a year — when they leave their nesting grounds in the fall and then return to nest in the summer.

**IN THIS ACTIVITY, KIDS WILL HELP A “BALLOON” BIRD MIGRATE ACROSS THE ROOM OR AN AREA OUTSIDE.**



**STEP 1:** Hold up an inflated balloon and explain to the kids that it represents a migrating bird (you can draw a bird on it if you like).

**STEP 2:** Tell them they are going to help this bird migrate to its winter home and then back to its nesting grounds by batting the balloon to the next person in line and not allowing it to touch the ground.

**STEP 3:** Have all but one of the kids lie down on their backs about 4 feet apart, heads in the same direction.

**STEP 4:** Depending on the size of your group, give every other or every fourth child on the floor a sticky note. **Kids with sticky notes are “rest stops” for the bird and can hold it for a few seconds when it comes to them.**

**STEP 5:** Everyone else who is lying down may not catch the bird, but keep it moving on course by batting it to the next person.





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**STEP 6:** One child stands about half way along the bird's course between two kids, near their feet, **fanning the air to simulate a storm**. If the fan blows the bird off course two times, the fanning (i.e., the storm) stops. Give the bird back to the first person in line and let fall "migration" begin again.

**STEP 7:** When the bird reaches the last person in line, that child should catch the balloon and hold it for a few seconds before sending the bird back on its spring migration.

**STEP 8:** After spring migration is complete, repeat the migration cycle. But this time, have some kids who were "rest stops" **get on their knees or stand up to create tall, lit-up buildings** — one of the obstacles migratory birds face every year. Start the fall migration and the storm.

**STEP 9:** Repeat for spring migration.

**ASK KIDS** which of the two migration cycles was easier. Why? Talk about what other obstacles may interfere with birds' migration. **THEN ASK:** How can humans help eliminate these obstacles?

**IN THE NEXT ACTIVITY, HELP KIDS TO SEE THAT MIGRATION IS EXHAUSTING AND HUNGRY WORK!**

Audubon's national program to help provide safe passage for nocturnal migrating birds

Every year, billions of birds migrate at night, navigating with the night sky. As they pass over big cities, they can become disoriented by bright artificial lights and skyglow, often causing them to collide with buildings or windows.

The Lights Out program encourages building owners to turn off extra lighting during migration season.

**Is there a Lights Out program in your city?**

[audubon.org/lights-out-program](http://audubon.org/lights-out-program)

