What to Expect
Our two- or four-hour All About Birds program at the Green Mountain Audubon Center is designed to provide students with opportunities for hands-on exploration of the amazing lives of Vermont birds led by a professional Audubon Teacher/Naturalist. After an introductory Dress a Bird activity, your students will receive a quick lesson in using binoculars and field guides to identify common Vermont species. We will take a hike through the fields, forests and wetlands of the Green Mountain Audubon Center, stopping to observe and identify birds in these different habitats. Your students will also get a chance to learn some common bird songs through a “mate match” game and to see a collection of real bird nests and eggs up close. Depending on what we see and your students’ interests and questions, each trip will be a little different, but every program delivers plenty of time for exploration and follow-up discussion that connects students’ observations with the essential questions and understandings listed below.

Essential Questions and Understandings

What makes birds special and what are birds doing in the spring in Vermont?
• Birds are the only group of animals that have feathers.
• Birds can be found in many different habitats, including in or near ponds, fields, forests, and wetlands.
• Different species of birds can be identified by observing a bird’s size, shape, feather colors and patterns, behavior, song, and habitat.
• Birds hatch from eggs.
• Many birds migrate to Vermont in the spring to mate and raise their young. They come here because there is a lot of food in the summer to feed to their young, particularly insects.
• Birds sing to attract a mate and defend a territory. Every species of bird has a different song.

Vermont Grade Expectations
S1-2: Scientific Questioning, Predicting & Hypothesizing - Students work with the Teacher/Naturalist to observe, ask questions about, and make predictions regarding patterns about birds and their habitats (i.e. Why are some birds brightly colored and other dull? What is that bird doing when it flies from its perch?).
S30: Structure and Function - Survival Requirements - Students observe and discuss different physical structures and behaviors birds have that allow them to survive and reproduce (i.e. brightly-colored feathers on males; hollow bones; migration; nest-building; feathers etc.).
S31: Life Cycles and Reproduction - Students observe birds in different habitats in the process of defending territories, building nests, and gathering food to feed to young. They also compare different bird nests and eggs and discuss the role of song in avian reproduction.
S38: Classification of Living Things - Using binoculars, students observe a variety of toy and real Vermont birds and classify them using field guides.

Key Words
1. Bird
2. Beak
3. Feather
4. Talon
5. Field mark
6. Song
7. Territory
8. Mate
9. Nest
10. Nestling
11. Migration
12. Preen
13. Fledge
14. Insectivore
15. Camouflage
Recommended Resources for Birds

**Children’s Books**

- **Lasky, Kathryn.** *She’s Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!*. Disney Press, 1999.
- **Winer, Yvonne.** *Birds Build Nests*. Charlesbridge, 2002.

**Teacher’s Resource and Activity Books**

- **BirdSleuth** [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdsleuth) Cornell Lab of Ornithology inquiry curriculum.

**Websites**

- **Audubon California Starr Ranch Sanctuary Wildlife Videos** [http://www.starrranch.org/wlifewvideo.html](http://www.starrranch.org/wlifewvideo.html)
- **BirdSource** [http://www.birdsource.org/](http://www.birdsource.org/) Provides links to several citizen science projects that you and/or your students could contribute data to (i.e. the Great Backyard Bird Count).