



Pileated Woodpecker
Photo by Loretta Kuse

Birds

- Be a bird watcher or ornithologist. What questions will you ask? What equipment would help you? Find field guides specific to the local area.
- Read children's books about birds you expect to look for to learn about their habits.
- What are the best places to look for birds? Why are some places better than others?
- Use the list of birds seen in the Kuse Nature Preserve during winter bird counts as a guide for birds that you might see on a walk. How many of them do you see? (Blue jay, cardinal, chickadee, common crow, mourning dove, goldfinch, house finch, purple finch, junco, red-breasted nuthatch, white-

breasted nuthatch, pine siskin, redpoll, starling, turkey, weaver finch, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, Pileated woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker)

- What bird calls might you hear in winter? What tapping sounds do different species make?
- Look at the “Wood Duck or Merganser Box” near Bench A. No ducks would be in the box at this time of year, but squirrels or owls might move into such a box in winter. Does there seem to be any evidence of winter inhabitants?
- Look for cavities birds have made in trees. What birds may have made them? Why?
- Look at other bird houses along the trails. What birds used them in spring? Are any being used as winter roosts or by other animals, such as mice? Why might people wait until spring to clean their bird houses?
- Why do different kinds of birds come to trees in winter? How and where do they sit on or in the trees? (Roosting, seed gathering, shelter, look out or hunting locations, food collection under bark)
- Find bird nests from last year in bushes and trees. What kinds of birds may have built the nests? Take photos of the nests. Why might the birds have chosen each of these places for their nests? (Oriole nest high in a maple tree, nest in a conifer, etc.) Which birds built their nests in cavities? What cavities were made by animals and which cavities were provided by people?
- Why might it be good to leave old nests in trees or bushes?
- What evidence of the presence of birds other than the birds themselves is seen? (Feathers, tracks, parts of dead birds, partially eaten food, owl pellets, droppings)
- Listen for sounds of owls at night. Look in the snow for evidence of owls that may have pounced on small animals under the snow.
- Be a citizen scientist. Participate in bird counts or Project Feeder Watch.