

Bird Beak Buffet Worksheet

Directions:

Follow the prompts on this worksheet to reflect on what you already know about birds, learn about different bird beak adaptations, and test out how these adaptations function in the real world. Print this worksheet and write answers on the lines provided, or write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Part 1: Learning about Birds

1. Name one species of bird you know, that lives in New York City: _____
 - a. Where, specifically, have you seen this bird? _____
 - b. Do you know what this bird eats? If so, what is their food?

One of the most common species of bird that people think of when thinking about New York City is the Pigeon, which is also known as the **rock dove**.



Photo by Hudson River Park Naturalist, Keith Michael

Rock doves' natural diet mostly consists of seeds and small fruits.

2. Pause for a moment and write down what you notice about its beak. What shape is it? How about size? Do you think it is strong or weak?

If you look closely, you can see that its beak is small and pointy. This makes it easy for these birds to get a hold of small food items. It is small, but it is also tough. In NYC, we often see them pecking away at bread and other food scraps fallen on the ground. Sometimes they even take leftovers out of the trash. This is one reason that rock doves are so successful in urban environments; they are able to survive by

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eating foods that are outside of their natural diet. If they did not develop this ability to change their food source (a survival adaptation), there might not be so many pigeons in New York City during the cold winter months, when seeds and fruits are harder to find.

Hudson River Park provides habitat to over 100 bird species. Below are some photos of birds found in the Park captured by our wonderful Park Naturalist, Keith Michael.



A- Double-crested cormorant



B- Northern cardinal



C- Red-tailed hawk



D- Common tern



E- American robin



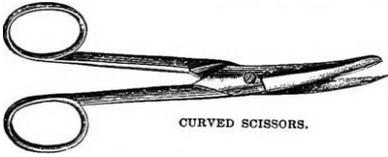
F- Mallard ducks

3. Describe some differences you notice about the beaks belonging to each species. Write down some observations about where each species is found. The birds' locations also inform what they might eat!

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Part 2: Bird Beak Matching Game

4. Let's try to match the beak shape to the food source! Draw lines on this worksheet, or on the screenshot on your touch screen device, connecting the following bird species, the tool that is most similar to how their beak works, and the food you think they eat based on this information. (Hint: consider their environment captured in the photos)

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|  |  <p>CURVED SCISSORS.</p> |  |
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After matching these elements based on your background knowledge and educated guesses, check out the **Bird Beak Buffet Matching Game Answer Key** to check your work.

Part 3: Bird Beak Buffet

In this demonstration, you will be using different tools to act like different species of birds and test how effective they are for gathering a particular kind of food.

First, gather your materials:

- 1 small bowl full of dried beads, pet food, or cereal to represent bird food
- 1 empty small bowl
- 1 pair of chopsticks to represent the common tern's beak
- 1 set of tweezers to represent the American robin's beak
- 1 timer

Then, set your timer for 20 seconds. Get ready with your chopsticks; press start on your timer and move as many items from one bowl to the other in the given time.

5. Write down how many pieces of food you were able to "eat" with your tern beak (chopsticks): _____

Next, set your timer for another 20 second. Get ready with your tweezers; press start on your timer and move as many items from one bowl to the other in the given time.

6. Write down how many pieces of food you were able to "eat" with your American robin beak (tweezers): _____



The common tern's beak is much like chopsticks, because while it is skinny and can grasp its food, it is much easier to pierce through food like small fish than to pick it up without poking through.



The American robin's beak is similar to tweezers, because it is pointy at the tip and good for grasping onto small food items like worms and insects.

7. Which bird do you think you were acting as in this activity? _____