

Let's Go Birding!

Activity Booklet



After learning how to adjust a pair of binoculars and identify songbirds of the St. Croix River with Rivers Are Alive, your students can go further by reading our fact sheets, completing the accompanying crossword puzzle, and doing a fun word search.

All questions in the crossword puzzle can be answered by reading the fact sheets.

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Let us know if you enjoyed doing this activity booklet with your class or if you have suggestions for improvement! Teachers, contact Nicole Biagi if you would like access to the answer keys.
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DID YOU KNOW?



This iconic raptor with its 7-foot wingspan has been the national bird of the United States since 1782. However, just 50 years ago, the **bald eagle** was nearly extinct in the U.S. because of a chemical named DDT. Luckily, DDT was banned and today, bald eagles can easily be viewed flying over the riverway.

If you ask your grandparents how they know when spring has arrived, they might tell you that it is when the first **robin** arrives to start picking worms out from under the melting snow. Robins migrate south every winter to warmer places where they can find food. Once the snow melts in the spring and the ground thaws, the robins return. Some people like to keep a calendar to mark signs of seasonal change, such as the when the first robin returns in the spring or when the first leaves drop in the fall. Scientists call this study of seasonal change "phenology".



Don't let its name fool you, the **red-bellied woodpecker** actually has a red head and a pale white belly! While "red-bellied" might be misleading, "woodpecker" is the perfect name. With its long beak, this woodpecker can find food underneath the bark on a tree. It even has a tongue that wraps all the way around its brain to protect it when it bangs its head against the tree!



The **black-capped chickadee** is a tiny bird that spends all winter in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In the fall, this little bird does a lot of growing to prepare for winter! Unlike the black bear, this bird does not stuff its belly for the winter... it stuffs its head with more brain! The chickadee's brain grows larger in the fall to help it remember all of the places where it buries seeds for spring. Once it uncovers all of the hiding snacks in the spring, its brain shrinks back to its normal size!

It is very common for male birds to be more colorful than female birds. The male **cardinal** with its vibrant red feathers is a great example of a male bird that uses its color to attract a mate and protect its territory. The only resemblances between the male and female are the orange beak and the crest on their heads. Fun Fact: The St. Louis Cardinals baseball team was named after this bird.

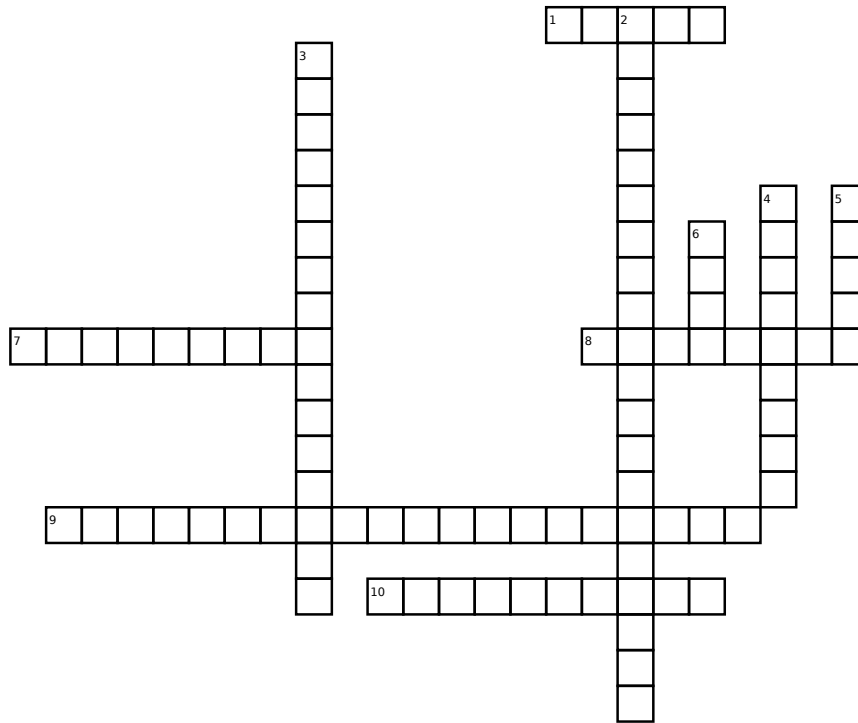


A plant or animal that is brought to a new place by humans and causes harm to the ecosystem or economy is called an **invasive species**.



Watch out for large groups of **European starlings** in downtown areas. This bird is hard to miss with its yellow beak and dark iridescent feathers that seem to change colors and sparkle in the sunlight. Although it may have beautiful feathers, the starling is a terrible invasive species in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Originally from Europe, this bird was brought to the U.S. in 1890 and quickly spread through the country. Starlings take away resources from our native birds and cause terrible damage to farm fields.

Let's Go Birding! Crossword



Down:

2. This tiny bird can be seen in Minnesota and Wisconsin all winter long, and with its black and white head, it is hard to miss. Yet, the coolest thing about this bird is that its brain grows larger in the fall and shrinks in the spring!
3. You will likely see groups of this invasive species in downtown areas. They are easy to spot because of their iridescent purplish-green feathers and yellow beak.
4. This bird has a white head and a 7-foot wingspan. It is also the national bird of the United States.
5. Birds, bats, and many insects have _____ to help them fly.
6. Birds often build their _____ in a tree and lay eggs in it.

Across:

1. This bird is often a sign of spring in Minnesota and Wisconsin. They are one of the first birds to migrate north after winter.
7. A medium-sized red bird that has the same name as a professional baseball team.
8. These come in many colors, shapes, and sizes, but they are often more colorful on male birds than female birds.
9. With a specialized tongue that wraps all the way around its brain, this bird can easily drill holes into trees to find food.
10. A tool that can help you see birds very far away.



"Bird" Search

B C A R D I N A L W
L I N U T H A T C H
U W N P F G Z B P J
E Z J O O C O L O R
J C H I C K A D E E
A S F N U U S A F H
Y I X E S C L O N S
C Z U S F F O A N Z
P E L T O J O Y R G
B A L D E A G L E S

Binoculars

Color

Focus

Chickadee

Song

Size

Cardinal

Bald eagle

Nest

Blue jay

Nuthatch



"Bird" Search

V S X J C H I C K A D E E C Z
B O R B B B X S O T E J H R U
N N F C A R D I N A L W M E N
E G O B B A L D E A G L E D U
S G C X Y H B N K S A P R T T
T G U P H B I G A L Q L F A H
G C S I X U N G R O U N D I A
Z O I E Q K O S G U E U B L T
T L D L V W C F B U E X L E C
B O E G X L U L P I T G U D H
R R N Q G J L Y Q R D N E H S
A S T E N A A O Q K B F J A I
N W I M K C R V A R H Y A W Z
C Q F Y Y D S E C F W G Y K E
H S Y T K M H R A O D E M O J

Red-tailed hawk

Identify

Flyover

Blue jay

Binoculars

Cardinal

Color

Focus

Bald eagle

Branch

Size

Song

Chickadee

Ground

Nuthatch

Nest

