

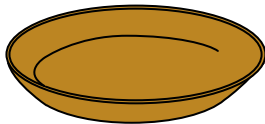
ACTIVITY SHEET III : INVITE BIRDS TO A BIRD BATH

In the story of the 'The Meditating Heron', a farmer from Bhutan introduces us to a heron in his neighbourhood as his fishing companion. The farmer gets to know this bird so well because he sees it every time he visits his favourite fishing spot. You could meet many birds in your neighbourhood by setting up a bird bath.

Aim:

- Set up a bird bath to invite neighbourhood birds to your school.
- Observe the neighbourhood birds that visit your bird bath.

You will need:



A shallow mud plate/bowl or an old plastic bowl with a thick rim (for your guests to perch on)



A few stones/pebbles (again, for your guests to perch on)



A source of clean water



A scrubber (to clean the bird bath)



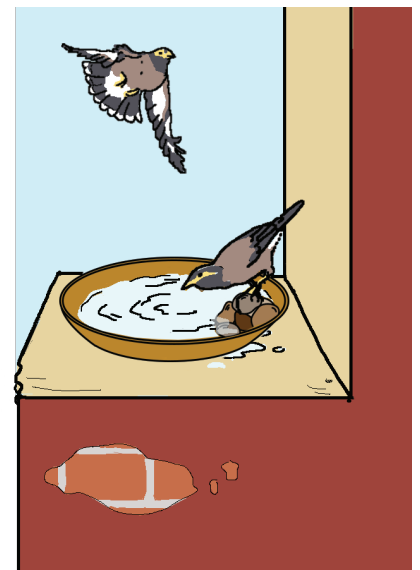
An observation notebook



A pen/pencil

What to do:

1. With your teacher's help, set up at least two bird baths in school. Choose different locations for them. It may be best to have them at locations where you are able to easily observe your bird guests every time you enter and leave the school.
2. Place the bowls at the selected locations. Fill them with fresh water. If the bowls do not have a wide rim, place some stones or pebbles inside so birds have something to perch on.
3. Check each bird bath at least once a day to make sure it is filled with water. You may need to check this more often on hot dry days.
4. Take turns to clean each bird bath at least once a week. You may need to do this more frequently if the water is dirty.
5. Take 5 minutes to observe birds to the bird bath at least three times a day: When you arrive in school, at meal-time, and just before you leave for home.



Observe and record:

- Do you know the names of any of the birds you see? If yes, write them down. These names could be in any language.
- How do the birds look? Record these details in **Table I**. Or you could draw the bird in your notebook.
- If you hear any of the birds calling or singing, describe that sound. Or try and learn to imitate their call.
- How do the birds behave? Do they take turns in using the water? Do any of the birds use the baths to bathe? Do any of them use it to drink water?
- Other animals may visit your bird bath. Record your observations of them too.
- Remember to make all your observations from a distance.

Think about:

- Why do you think birds visit a bird bath?
- Why is it important to describe your bird guests in detail? What does it help you learn?
- Go through your observations and record the following findings:
 - a) Which birds come every day?
 - b) Which birds come only at certain times of the day?
 - c) Which birds come only at certain times of the year (you will be able to answer this question only after one year of observations)?

Discuss:

1. Why do you think your teacher is inviting you to make all your observations of the bird bath from a distance?
2. Do you see any patterns in your observations? For example, do any of the birds visit the bath at specific times of the day? Can you think of an explanation for these patterns? Where might these birds be at other times?
3. What do you think will happen when several birds come to the bird bath at the same time? Think of a reason for your prediction. Compare this with your actual observations of how birds behave at the bird bath. Is it different from what you had predicted? Discuss possible explanations for this difference.
4. Share 1-2 of:
 - The observations that were most exciting for you.
 - The new things that you learnt from this activity.
 - The things you thought about birds that changed because of these observations.



Table I: Describe the birds that visit your bird bath.

Date: Location (if there is more than one bird bath):

Time: than one bird bath):

Name of the bird (Common English name/ Local name)		Description of the bird				Behaviour of birds**		
Size*	Colour (feathers and wings)	Any other features that stand out	Bird call (what does it sound like)	Bathes, drinks, or does both?	Waits its turn (Y/N)	Any other observation		
Any other visitors?***								

* How big is the bird? You could compare its size to that of a sparrow or a crow. For example, is it bigger or smaller than a sparrow?

** Does the bird wait its turn in using the water? Does it bathe, drink water, or do both? Did you notice anything else about the way it behaves?

*** Describe their size, features, and colour if you do not know their name.

1. This activity is designed as an extension of 'Activity 4: Prepare a birdbath—offer water to birds in the hot summer months' described in the Grade III EVS textbook (NCERT, 2024–2025, pg. 96–97). It can also be connected to 'Chapter 7: Water A Precious Gift' in Unit 3 of the Grade III EVS textbook (NCERT, 2024–2025).
2. It is designed to build and deepen students' affective skills of empathy and care for all living beings around us. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF–SE) 2023 suggests that: "*Empathy and compassion are not only values or dispositions; these are capacities that are developed through deliberate practice*".
3. This activity may be carried out by students as a year-long activity.
4. Start this activity by reading out the story 'The Meditating Heron' to the students. Then introduce the idea of setting up bird baths in school. Invite students to bring used or old shallow mud or plastic containers that are about 10–15 cm deep. Tell them that the containers can be of 2–3 different volumes.
5. Once you set up the baths, work with your students to set up a duty roster for maintaining them. Ensure that students take turns to clean the baths and refill the water in them. Doing these tasks collaboratively helps students build a sense of ownership and responsibility. These are important attributes in caring for others.
6. Share clear instructions for the tasks. Emphasize the instruction that students must observe non-human visitors to the bird bath without feeding or interacting with them. This will help them build skills of observing with attention and sharing space (and resources) with other living beings.
7. Clarify to the students that they should record their observations systematically and regularly in the format provided in **Table I**.
8. Encourage your students to observe visitors to the bird bath for at least 10–15 minutes, three times a day: When they enter the school, during their meal-break, and before they leave school. Encourage them to record their observations as soon as possible after each such session.
9. Plan a session for at least 30 minutes per week.
 - Depending on their class strength and the time available for discussion, divide students into pairs or small groups of 3–4. Facilitate the exercise of peer sharing and discussion. Clarify that students in each pair or group must take turns to share their observations and explanations. Encourage them to listen carefully to each other.
 - Once a month, use this session to invite students to share their responses to questions in the 'Think about' and 'Discuss' sections.
10. Make a note of any student questions that have not been addressed during these discussions. You could take these up at a later point. Or you may consider assigning it to students to explore on their own and share their findings with the class.
11. Encourage students to set up bird baths at home and maintain a journal of their observations for as many years as they can. As they do this, they will begin to recognise and infer patterns and rhythms over time. This can help your students become more aware and

sensitive to changes in their environment. This may build their capacity to respond in meaningful ways to many other changes around them.

12. Encourage students to think of the role their observations of birds play in their ability to care for these animals and be empathetic to their needs. By inviting students to observe their surroundings with attention, we can help them build care, empathy, and compassion.

Contributed by:

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