

## Bird Migration and Adaptation (for all ages!)

**Sandhill cranes travel over 4000 miles in a few weeks when they are migrating.** How do they prepare for this long journey? Check out this activity to learn more!



**Bird beak adaptation game.** To help birds survive their long migrations, they must eat a lot before they leave and along the way. Birds' beaks are **adapted** to eat specific things. Check out the game below to learn how different bird beaks are better or worse for eating different foods!

### Materials:

- **Bird beaks:** spoons, binder/hair clips, chopsticks, forks, straws, tweezers, clothespins or anything else that can pick up small items.
- **Food items:** paperclips, toothpicks, pompoms, hair ties, beans or any other small item that can be picked up with your "beak."
- **Cups** (one for each player)

### Procedure:

1. Each player is a very hungry bird getting ready for migration. Each player will choose a beak.
2. Scatter at least 4 types of food items throughout your area. **You can only use your beak to pick up food.**
3. Use your beak to pick up as many food items as possible in 30 seconds. Food items must be placed into the cup, held in your other hand close to your body, in order to be eaten.
4. Play as many rounds as you want and record your data in the table below. You can use the same beak or try a new one!
5. Some beaks are better at getting one food item than another. **Talk about this with other players!**

Round #	Beak type	# food item 1	# food item 2	# food item 3
Round 1	Beak type 1			
	Beak type 2			

*Look out your window or go for a walk with your family to spot some birds. What do their beaks look like? Do any of them look like the beaks that you were using? What do you think these birds eat?*

**Take it to the next level!** Here are a few things you can do to track birds that might be migrating through your neighborhood:

1. It's migration season! Track what birds you see by making observations at a similar time each day while looking outside your window or going on a walk with your family. More birds are out during sunrise and sunset, but this activity can be done any time of day. Create a daily or weekly log of birds that you see. You can use **iNaturalist** or **Merlin Bird ID** to identify your bird OR you can track your bird by what they look like (color, size, kind of beak, etc). You can use the following table to record your sightings. If you want to track bird migration, you can do this over a few months and see if there is a change!

Date	Bird species/description	Count

2. Graph the birds you see! By creating a graph of the data you record, you can see how the birds in your area change as the year goes on. This is a great way to track the phenology (seasonal changes) of birds. Use the graph below as an example, and you can draw or use a computer to make your graph!

