

Blair Outdoor Education Centre
Program Outline: Habitats and Communities - Winter Birds

- This topic can be a 1/2 or full-day program
- Outdoor activities will focus on expectations from the Science and Technology curriculum for Life Systems, Grade 4. These include some of the following:

Overall Expectations

By the end of Grade 4, students will:

1. analyse the effects of human activities on habitats and communities;
2. investigate the interdependence of plants and animals within specific habitats and communities;
3. demonstrate an understanding of habitats and communities and the relationships among the plants and animals that live in them.

Activities will be of a hands-on, experiential nature. In order to prepare your students, please try to present or review some of the above concepts prior to the trip. Also please ensure that they are well dressed for the season.

Bus Times:

Schools are responsible for booking the bus for the trip. Please complete the form, **Off-Campus Excursion Category 1 IS-11-FA** Busing costs are paid for by Learning Services, but you must book your bus through **STOCK Transportation (brendaj@stocktransportation.com 519 742-6224)**. When you book with STOCK please specify that it is an outdoor education field trip and they will bill Learning Services directly.

Please book your bus according to the following times:

If your school start time is between 8:30 and 8:50, book your bus to:			
Morning Programs		Afternoon Programs	
Arrive at Blair 9:15 a.m.	Depart from Blair 11:30 a.m.	Arrive at Blair 12:00 p.m.	Depart from Blair 2:15 p.m.
If your school start time is between 8:55 and 9:25, book your bus to:			
Morning Programs		Afternoon Programs	
Arrive at Blair 9:45 a.m.	Depart from Blair at 12:00	Arrive at Blair 12:15 p.m.	Depart from Blair 2:30 p.m.

- **All planning information for this trip is either contained in this document, or can be found on the Blair website.**

Blair Teacher Planning Page: <https://schools.wrdsb.ca/environmental-education/blair/blair-teacher-planning/>

- **Please complete the Blair Planning Form at least one week prior to your visit date.** This is the only written information I have regarding your class and I cannot be fully prepared for your visit without it. Of particular importance are life-threatening allergies that require an epipen or other medication.

Centre Visit Planning Form: <https://schools.wrdsb.ca/environmental-education/blair/centre-planning-form/>

If you have any other questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Nathan Mantey, OCT
 Blair Outdoor Education Centre
 653-9855
nathan_mantey@wrdsb.ca

Winter Birds - Blair Program

Half Day Programs: In order to make best use of the time, for half-day programs I recommend the binocular walk combined with the chickadee feeding. If you would like to include a different activity, please contact me in advance of your trip. See the descriptions below:

Full Day - Morning	Specific Expectations met By the end of Grade 4, students will:
<p>1. Binocular Walk: We will use binoculars to observe and identify birds at the feeders near the Centre building. The S-System is a method commonly used to help identify birds by certain characteristics (i.e. size, shape). Over the course of a “good” day, we might see/hear as many as 15 different species. We may combine this activity with reporting our results through a citizen science website such as ebird.org</p>	<p>– identify, through observation, various factors that affect plants and animals in a specific habitat (e.g., availability of water, food sources, light; ground features; weather conditions);</p> 
<p>Choose one of the following 3 options to complete the morning program:</p>	
<p>1. Owl Pellet Study: Students will dissect an owl pellet and sort the bones to determine the prey species. This leads to limitless explorations of food webs. If students have done this activity on a previous occasion, it should not be repeated as pellets have become very expensive (they are purchased - treated - from a science supply company).</p>	<p>– classify organisms according to their role in a food chain (e.g., producer, consumer); – demonstrate an understanding of a food chain as a system in which energy from the sun is transferred eventually to animals, construct food chains of different plant and animal species (e.g., grass’rabbit’fox), and classify animals as omnivore, carnivore, and herbivore;</p>
<p>2. Adaptations: This activity uses mounted specimens to focus our attention on the adaptations of birds’ beaks and feet. These two things determine what a bird eats, how it goes about gathering and eating food, and what habitat(s) it is best suited to live in.</p> 	<p>– describe structural adaptations of plants and animals that demonstrate a response to the living things in their environment (e.g., the height of a plant depends on the amount of sunlight the plant gets; many animals that live in the Arctic have white fur); – recognize that animals and plants live in specific habitats because they are dependent on those habitats and have adapted to them (e.g., ducks live in marshes because they need marsh plants for food and shelter and water for movement);</p>
<p>3. Nests: Observation of building materials, and measurements of size and shape of a nest shows us that each bird builds a structure typical for that species, no matter where it lives in the world. We use a key based on these characteristics to identify the kind of bird that built each nest.</p>	<p>– recognize that animals and plants live in specific habitats because they are dependent on those habitats and have adapted to them (e.g., ducks live in marshes because they need marsh plants for food and shelter and water for movement); – classify plants and animals that they have observed in local habitats according to similarities and differences (e.g., in shape, location).</p>
Full Day - Afternoon	
<p>1. Bird Sound Exercise: Hearing its song can be more useful in identifying a bird than actually seeing it. In this activity we listen to a tape of the calls of 7 common birds and write down a word or two to describe these sounds. Then we listen to the same 7 calls in a scrambled order and try to guess which birds they are.</p>	
<p>2. Chickadee Feeding / Birding Walk: Half the class will do an extended walk around the Blair property looking and listening for birds, and signs of birds (nests, woodpecker holes), while the other half visits a forest feeder site. If conditions are good, and the students’ behaviour is at its best, we may be rewarded by having chickadees feed from our hands. This is very exciting, and can create a profound impression of our interactions with wildlife, but of course we can’t guarantee that we’ll be successful on any given day. Both groups will do both activities.</p>	<p>– identify, through observation, various factors that affect plants and animals in a specific habitat (e.g., availability of water, food sources, light; ground features; weather conditions); – describe ways in which humans can affect the natural world – show the effects on plants and animals of the loss of their natural habitat</p>