

Boost the Boreal Forest



Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the boundaries of the Boreal forest region on a map.
- Understand that the Boreal forest region is Canada's largest forest.
- Learn the importance of this area to birds.
- Spread awareness about the Boreal forest region.



Method

Students investigate the importance of the Boreal forest region to wildlife, and birds in particular, and organize a display to make others aware of their findings.



Materials

- Writing supplies
- Research material

Background

The Boreal forest region covers slightly more than half of our country and spreads across nearly every province and territory. It is the largest intact forest left on Earth and contains more freshwater wetlands than almost anywhere on our planet. Not surprisingly, it is home to a vast array of birds and other wildlife species.

- Every spring, nearly three billion warblers, thrushes, flycatchers, hawks, sparrows, and other birds migrate to Canada's Boreal forest to nest.
- Every autumn, about five billion adult birds and their young migrate from this forest to their winter homes.
- About 60 percent of all Canadian land birds and nearly 30 percent of all land birds in North America breed in the Boreal region.
- About 200 land bird species breed in our Boreal forest; 14 of these species live only there and do not migrate.

The bad news is that many Boreal birds are in trouble. Several migratory species that depend on Canada's Boreal forest for nesting are declining. These include the yellow-bellied sapsucker, the white throated sparrow, the Boreal chickadee, Swainson's thrush, and many others. It's not clear why this is happening but increasing threats from industrial development play a big part.

For additional resources visit:

CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/Education

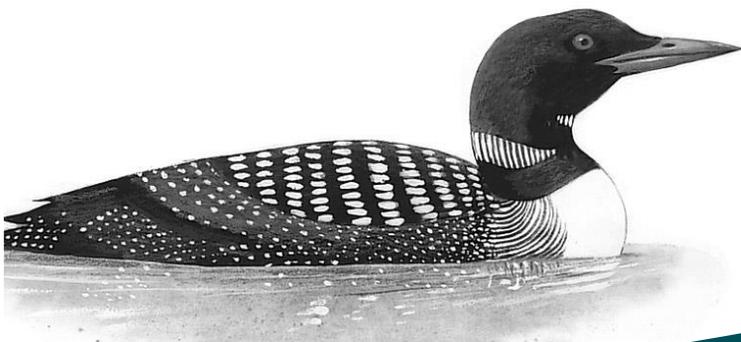
The good news is that Canada's Boreal forest still contains some of the world's last significant wilderness areas. One way students can help us learn to live in balance with its bounty of biodiversity is to educate others about the amazing Boreal forest.

Activity

1. Have students organize a Boreal Forest Day for the school as a way to spread awareness.
 - They should locate the best spot for the display (e.g., the school gym or a busy hallway).
 - Suggest that a large map will be a crucial element of a display for the event.
2. Next, students should brainstorm other creative elements to include.
 - This could include books, posters or recordings of Boreal birdsongs.
3. Have students research potential resources by visiting the Boreal Songbird Initiative (BSI). The BSI educates birdwatchers about the importance of the forest to migratory birds.
4. When Boreal Forest Day preparations are complete, students should spread the word about the event to conserve this crucial area for birds, wildlife and humans. These are some options:
 - Invite other classes, the principal, and office staff to browse through the display.
 - Write a press release and distribute it to local news sources.
 - Invite friends, family, and the members of your municipal council.

Extensions

- Research some of the bird species that use the Boreal forest. Integrate your findings on the map.
 - Which species migrate?
 - Which species live there year-round?
 - Which species have declining populations? Why?



For additional resources visit:

CanadianWildlifeFederation.ca/Education