

The Desert Speaks
#410 Birds in the Sonoran Desert
Teacher Information Sheet

Program Description

This program checks on a research project at Ramsey Canyon for banding hummingbirds, examines the effect of the different desert seasons on birds, offers tips on what to look for when trying to identify different species of birds, and offers techniques for observing behavior and attracting birds to your backyard. Find out how migratory and resident species use riparian areas.

Teaching Tips

1. Discuss vocabulary words
2. Introduce the episode by giving a brief summary of the program and telling students what information you would like them to gain by viewing the program.
3. Allow time at the conclusion of the program for discussion and the completion of the *Student Viewing Sheet*.
4. Investigate the related web sites listed below.

Vocabulary Words

- omnivorous feeding on both plants and animals
- carnivorous flesh eating
- scavenger an animal that feeds on dead organic matter
- terrestrial growing or living on the land or on the ground
- riparian of or dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water

Related Web Sites

Mirror Pole

A collection of photos and sounds of Arizona birds
<http://mirror-pole.com>

Arizona Wild Birds

A collection of Arizona bird lore and desert nature
<http://azwildbird.com>

Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory's Birding Guide: Tucson & Vicinity

A guide to birding opportunities in Tucson and vicinity
<http://www.sabo.org/birding/tucson.htm>



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Student Viewing Sheet

Use information in the video to answer the following questions.

1. What are the 2 hottest and driest months in the Sonoran Desert?

2. Name 2 ways that desert birds get water.

3. Name 2 things birds do to adapt to desert conditions.

4. How do birds' body temperatures help them survive in a hot climate?

5. Birds are primarily _____ eaters. Some exceptions are the American Kestrel and the Red Tailed Hawk, which are _____ .
6. Why is it easier for birds of prey and scavengers to meet their needs for water? _____

7. What special adaptations do sea birds have that allow them to take in sea water without being harmed? _____
8. Riparian areas provide three basic things needed by all animals, what are they?

9. What is the most helpful thing a beginning bird watcher can look for when trying to identify birds? _____
10. Name 2 helpful bird watching tools . _____
11. Name 2 things people can do to attract birds to their yards. _____

12. What kinds of information can be gained by banding hummingbirds? _____

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Answer Key

1. May and June
2. from water holes and succulent fruits
3. they seek shady places in the heat of the day; they are most active in the cool of the day; they build nests in shady spots
4. they have higher body temperatures than mammals do so their bodies do not have to work as hard to stay cool
5. insects; scavengers
6. they get fluid from the food that they eat
7. they have special glands that can excrete salt
8. food, water and cover (shelter)
9. the shape of a bird
10. binoculars and field guides
11. provide a natural landscape and bird feeders
12. age, weight, health and migration patterns