

Urban EcoLab Curriculum

<http://www.urbanecolabcurriculum.com>



Bird and Plant Cards

Module 6, Lesson 6



This material is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation ("NSF") under Grant No. 0607010. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

American Crow



- **Physical description:** Large, black bird with dark, stout bill, iridescent violet gloss on body, and blue-black wings. Tail is fan-shaped in flight.
- **Habitat:** Thrives in suburban neighborhoods and urban parks
- **Nesting:** Nests built in sturdy pine or hardwood trees
- **Diet:** Will eat almost anything: insects, small invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and mammals, eggs and young of other birds, grains, fruits, and dead or decaying matter. They will also eat food discarded by people.
- **Predators:** red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, raccoons, humans, snakes, and cats.



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Corvus_brachyrhynchos_1_\(1\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Corvus_brachyrhynchos_1_(1).jpg)

Song Sparrow



- **Physical description:** russet-and-grey with bold streaks down its white chest. Known for its stuttering and clattering song.
- **Habitat:** open brush, abandoned thickets or woodland areas.
- **Nesting:** Ground nester
- **Diet:** seeds, grains, grass, berries and, on some occasions, [insects](#)
- **Predators:** [birds of prey](#). As nestlings they may be eaten by [snakes](#), [raccoons](#), [skunks](#), [cats](#), and [weasels](#).
- **Ecosystem role:** may help to disperse seeds



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melospiza_melodia_5.jpg

Tree Swallow



- **Physical description:** Known for areal acrobatics; blue-green feathers with white fronts.
- **Habitat:** suburban, agricultural, grassy, forested and open areas near water
- **Nesting:** holes in trees or mud nests attached to the sides of buildings, under overhangs; will nest in bird boxes
- **Diet:** insects, supplemented with fruit, seeds, grains, nuts
- **Predators:** eggs and nestlings are vulnerable to rats, snakes, raccoons, American crows, mice and feral cats; adults are taken in flight by hawks, falcons and owls



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Tree_Swallow_%28Tachycineta_bicolor%294.jpg

Black Phoebe



- **Physical description:** small, plump songbird with large head and squared tail; straight and thin beak
- **Habitat:** lives near water, backyards, parks, and ponds
- **Nesting:** creates a nest out of mud; attaches it to a ledge or overhang
- **Diet:** bees, wasps, flies, beetles, bugs, grasshoppers, damselflies, dragonflies, termites, spiders, minnows; occasionally small berries
- **Predators:** Cooper's Hawks, kestrels, shrikes, scrub-jays



Photo by: Read Howarth

Anna's Hummingbird



- **Physical description:** Iridescent emerald feathers and rose-pink throat. About the size of a ping-pong ball. Sound bursts are produced by their tail feathers.
- **Habitat:** chaparral, bushy oak woodlands, gardens
- **Nesting:** horizontal branches of oak, sycamore or eucalyptus trees or shrubs near a source of nectar
- **Diet:** nectar from flowering plants and eucalyptus, insects, tree sap
- **Predators:** domestic and feral cats, praying mantis, owls. Lizards, bats, squirrels, Cooper's Hawks and crows prey on eggs and nesting young



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c4/Anna's_hummingbird.jpg

Coast live oak



- Evergreen with prickly, irregularly-toothed leaves and small acorns with smooth caps; leaves curl or lie flat based on stress
- Grow on hillsides; neighborhood landscaping; can withstand air pollutants
- Drought tolerant
- Susceptible to sudden oak disease
- Attracts birds



Desert Willow



- Large deciduous shrub or small tree; grows along washes, rivers and creeks
- Fragrant trumpet-shaped flowers in spring; blooms May-September; looks dead when dormant
- Attracts hummingbirds
- Drops seed pods in winter



<http://www.laspillitas.com/nature-of-california/plants/195--chilopsis-linearis>

Fragrant Sage



- Perennial plant, native to Southern California, often used for landscaping
- Prefers dry summers
- Blooms in June-July
- Frequentated by hummingbirds



<http://www.wildflower.org>

Blue Gum Eucalyptus



- Native to Southern Australia
- Provides shade and wind break
- Fast growing, but requires a lot of water
- Susceptible to beetle borers and root rot



<https://selecttree.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/eucalyptus-cinerea>

California sycamore



- Deciduous tree, 30-80 feet tall, with deeply-lobed medium-green leaves covered with tiny hairs.
- Attracts birds
- Fire resistant
- Turns yellow-brown in late summer.

