



Art | Education

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**GRAB N' GO ACTIVITY:**  
**Craft Bird Creations**

## OVERVIEW:

People often sketch, paint, or mold birds from their natural habitat if they can overcome the problem of the birds being flighty. In this activity, children learn about pyrography and wood burning as an art form.

## MATERIALS:

- An image that you would like to recreate
- A thin piece of wood that you can either purchase at a hardware store or a craft store
- Wood burning kit with various tips for different shading styles – purchased from any craft store
- Three basic wood burning tips: the skew, the writer and the flat shader

## TOOL TIPS:

The skew is useful for creating narrow edges and will give you fine, precise lines. The writer is a more rounded tip and is useful for writing words, shading or creating tight curves. The flat shader can come in various sizes and shapes. The shader is useful for filling in areas, creating tones or filling in black areas.

Before you start burning, it is useful to try out various tips on the back side of the piece of wood to see what shades the tips produce as well as to see how your individual piece of wood will burn. When you switch tips on the tool make sure it is completely cooled down before touching as it will be very hot.

Submit your work to the Get to Know Contest for a chance to win wild prizes & go to

**GETTOKNOW.CA**

to find more free resources and activities

## SOURCED AND ADAPTED FROM:

John Janzen Nature Centre  
Nature Line: 780-442-1443

**Ages:** 8 - 14

**Time:** 45 - 60 minutes

## PROCEDURE

**Step 2:** With a pencil, using your photograph as a guide, draw the outline of the bird and perhaps some scenery onto your piece of wood. You can go into as much or as little detail in this step as you like as you will use it as a guide for wood burning.

**Step 3:** Always make sure your wood burning tool is hot enough before you start burning. If you start too soon you will get inconsistent burning marks. When your tool is hot enough proceed with the outline first. It is important to not leave the burning tool on the wood for too long as it can create deep burn marks that are permanent.

**Step 4.** Once the outline has been accomplished using your skew or writer tip you can add different shading to create feathers or textures on the birds to create a more realistic image with the flat shader tip. This step will usually take several hours as you might need to use several different tips to get various different shading techniques.

**Step 5.** When you have successfully created the image on your wood, make sure it has a chance to cool down over night. This will ensure that all sections of the wood is equally cool. Adding lacquer is an option to your artwork. It is not necessary but it will prevent weathering and fading of the wood.



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## BIRD WATCHING:

Bird watching is a fun and relaxing past time and is most easily done when you have the appropriate tools to use. Some good birding tools can include binoculars, guide books, and patience. It is always a good idea to have a good pair of binoculars to help you see those birds high up in a tree. There are several techniques when it comes to locating birds in your area. We like to use the "6 S rule" when it comes to bird identification. The "6 S" consist of: size, shape, sound, sight, site and season.

**Size:** It is easy to group birds by looking at their size. If it is large or small, you can tell whether the bird might be a magpie or a sparrow.

**Shape:** Plays a large part in bird identification. Birds have distinct silhouettes that can be identified while perching or flying.

**Sound:** Every bird will has a distinct bird call and often many bird guides will paraphrase or describe what vocalization sound like.

**Sight:** Many birds have rather unique markings. These markings could be a face mask, really long tail feathers, or bright red bellies.

**Site:** Habitat is largely important for identifying different bird species. If they were to be perched high up on a power line it could be a raptor, or if it were sitting in the middle of a pond it could be a duck.

**Season:** The last "S" to use would be the season. Some birds migrate, some do not. In Alberta, there are some birds that will stay around during the winter season, such as sparrows, chickadees, and waxwings. Other birds will migrate somewhere else for the winter, like the red robin.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

It's important to understand your subject. The best time to find birds is early in the morning. Also be conscious of the weather. If it is really hot, cold, or rainy, the birds will most likely be hiding to preserve their energy so it may be difficult to spot them in those weather conditions.

Start by photographing birds in your own back yard to get the technique down. If you don't like the photos you are taking in your yard, a trip to the mountains won't change your photography skills. Use the longest lens you have available to you. Birds are often small and hard to approach so having that longer lens will make it that much easier to get a good photograph of them. If you don't have a longer lens, you can try to walk up to birds slowly without scaring them away. Always treat the birds with respect. Birds will take flight if they feel threatened by your presence. If you walk up slowly, and lower to the ground, not only will the bird feel comfortable with you but you will also have an amazing photo opportunity as you can potentially get very close to the bird.

It is also useful to go alone on photography hikes as there will be less distraction for the birds. The more practice you have taking bird photos the better you will become. There are always opportunities to join photography groups or courses to get some techniques, but it all comes down to putting in the time. With these photos you can create some amazing art pieces that won't disappoint you.





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### CRAFT IDEAS:

There are so many crafts you can make from using your own bird photos. Photos can provide inspiration to create sculptures, mosaics, wall hangings, collages, wood burnings and paintings. This article will give you a step by step guide on pyrography (wood burning).

Wood burnings are unique pieces of art in the sense that they are very natural looking. Try using a piece of wood that has bark around the edges to create an even more natural look. Try and incorporate any knots or irregularities on the wood into your picture to give your image a unique look.

With your burned piece, you can create wall hangings, or drill a hole in the centre to add in clock pieces and create a clock. You can burn smaller pieces of wood and make them into Christmas ornaments or necklaces. You can even incorporate carving and paint into your images as well and have a multi skilled art project. There are many different wood burning projects that you can achieve and create just by using a little bit of imagination and a bird photo.

