



Migration Game

Subject: Bird migration

Grade Levels: Pre-school – 8th grade

Time: 10-15 min

Audience Size: any

Objectives:

- Students will learn about the difficulties of bird migration

Materials:

- 10 Carpet squares

Introduction:

Do you know where birds go when the weather gets too cold? They take a long journey, or migrate, to another part of the world. This is a long journey—not all birds make it. Have you ever taken a long trip in a car? Did you have to make several stops or stay in a hotel overnight? Birds have to do the same thing—they don't have the energy to fly hundreds of miles without food or a nap. We're going to play a game to show you how birds migrate and what we can do to make their migration easier.

Procedure:

1. Take out carpet squares and put them out in a line across the floor—only leave a little space between each square.
2. Ask for a volunteer to be the “bird” and hop from square to square.
3. As the volunteer hops from square to square, explain that each square represents the following:
 - Trees
 - An overgrown field—many berries, seeds, and insects are available here
 - A family's backyard with a great habitat. You enjoy food from a bird feeder—you eat seeds, fruit, and insects.
 - A large lake with plenty of food, water, and shelter in nearby trees.
 - Park
4. Explain that this is how birds are supposed to migrate—but recently, their migration has gotten harder.

5. Now have another volunteer hop from square to square, but this time take away one square. Explain that the square (representing a safe place to eat/rest) was taken away because of one of the following reasons:

- Power lines
- Polluted marsh filled with trash
- A child with a bb gun is aiming at you as you are about to land in a wooded area
- Shopping mall has been built on the site—you used to stop here in past years but can't now
- A family's outside cat

6. Each time a square is removed, the child should have a harder time “migrating” from square to square. Keep taking volunteers until the children can no longer safely hop from square to square. When this happens, explain that the bird didn't make the migration and died.

7. Explain that there is good news—we can help birds complete their migration! Ask children what kinds of things they can do to help birds migrate. (Hang bird feeders, pick up trash/stop pollution, keep our cats indoors, encourage people not to shoot birds...)

8. For each action the children suggest, add a carpet square so they are eventually all back. Now have volunteers hop from square to square...thanks to their help, birds can now make their migration!

Teacher's note: Now would be a great time to make a bird feeder...