

# BIRD Feathers

An Activity Guide About the Songbirds of  
British Columbia



## The Toothpick-billed Ladler



**GRADES:** 2-7

**SUBJECTS:** Science, Language Arts, Art



**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use their imaginations to relate structure and behaviour of songbirds to their survival in local environments.



**METHOD:** Students design and construct a songbird out of household items and suggest how the bird is adapted to a particular environment.

### **BACKGROUND**

There's a new family of songbirds in British Columbia...Family Domesticidae. Unlike other songbirds, Family Domesticidae is made of common household items! This wacky new family includes species that can survive in any habitat in the province. They come in all shapes and sizes. In fact, the shape and size of their body, head, bill, wings, tail, legs and feet are all up to the imagination of the designer. But, before the students begin, here are a few things they should keep in mind:

- All of the materials they use must be found around the house or school.
- Students must be able to explain how all the materials they chose help the bird survive in a specific environment. For example, the Toothpick-billed Ladler has a toothpick for a bill so that it can search for insects in the muddy ground of the marshlands that it calls home. Its body is made of a ladle that it uses to carry mud for nest-building.
- In order to be classified as a songbird, these birds must have perching feet.



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There is an endless array of different habitats in British Columbia that songbirds can and do occupy. These include: coniferous forests, deciduous forests, mixed forests, alpine meadows, tundra, grasslands, deserts, temperate rainforests, marshlands, edges of watercourses (streams, lakes, ponds, etc.), coastal shores and even urban and rural environments.

### **MATERIALS**

Anything that can be found around the house (e.g., screws, nuts, bolts, aluminum foil, pliers, utensils, cardboard, blunt-ended scissors, toothpicks and clothespins).

### **PROCEDURE**

1. Students may choose a specific habitat and, using household items, design and construct an imaginary songbird that could survive in that particular environment.
2. Students can then name the bird and give an oral presentation to explain why the bird looks the way it does. Encourage the students to be creative and discuss all aspects of a songbird's life, including how it forages, what type of habitat it lives in, where it nests, what its nests are made of, mating displays and field marks. Students can even invent and perform the songs of their bird.

