

Pre-Organized Action Example

MWEE: Act4Birds (Audubon Conservation Team for Birds)

MWEE Organizer: Pickering Creek Audubon Center

School Partner: Dorchester County Public Schools - 6th grade Science

MWEE Outline

Driving Question: Is our schoolyard healthy for birds?

Issue Investigation + Outdoor Field Experience:

1. In class, students learned about the elements required for a healthy bird habitat. Students researched local birds and shared with classmates the food, water, shelter and space they require. Students created a list of the variety of habitat features required by local birds.
2. In their schoolyard, students identified the current population of birds and analyzed the current habitat state. The schoolyard was divided into mini survey sites, pre-determined as potentially feasible schoolyard habitat locations by teachers, Pickering Creek educators and school administration and facilities. Small groups analyzed each site for food, water and shelter options and gave each schoolyard site a habitat score. Back in class, each group shared their findings and their site's habitat score.
3. Students visited Pickering Creek Audubon Center (PCAC) to identify and record the bird population at the Center and analyze the Center's bird habitat.

Stewardship and Civic Action Project:

1. A previously acquired grant included funding to install schoolyard gardens at the three Dorchester Middle Schools. The schoolyard gardens would act as the *pre-organized* action project.
2. Students compared their schoolyard to the healthy and diverse bird habitats found at PCAC to get ideas for their schoolyard garden. Students revisited their schoolyard surveys and reviewed the habitat scores and locations of the sites analyzed within their schoolyard. Together, students determined the best location for their new schoolyard garden based on the habitat elements already present and the current use of the space.
3. Students researched local plants and selected species from a short list previously put together by Pickering Creek educators that would best serve the bird they researched during issue investigation. Students considered shelter needs and food that would serve the bird throughout their time in Dorchester County (migratory vs. residential bird's food needs).
4. Classes tallied up the plants each student selected for their unique local bird and determined the top 10 plants most often selected.

5. Students planted their chosen plants and completed a final bird survey to learn if the bird population changed. Students also created and submitted garden signs to educate other students about the importance of their bird-friendly garden.
6. *Student voice* included selecting the location of the garden within the schoolyard, selecting the plants that would best serve their native bird population and designing the garden sign.