

BIRD Feathers

An Activity Guide About the Songbirds of British Columbia



Songbirds

Colour Our Surroundings

GRADES: K-3

SUBJECTS: Science, Language Arts, Art

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to recognize similarities and differences between species of songbirds and expand their awareness of the diversity that exists among birds.

METHOD: Students analyse and colour pictures of different songbirds, and compare and contrast their body characteristics (bills, colour, body size).

BACKGROUND

Although in British Columbia, songbirds comprise only one of eighteen other orders of birds they make up over half of all species of birds found in our province. The variety of species within this group reflects the amazing diversity of animals on our planet. If we take a closer look at the different types of songbirds, we can see that although they share common features - bills, feet, wings, feathers, etc. - they have many different shapes, sizes and colours.

These differences have developed to serve specific functions that make each bird better able to survive in its environment. For example, the shape of the bill of a finch is very different from that of a wren and this can be linked to differences in what they eat. Finches have short, conical bills that are very strong. They use their bills to crack open hard shells to get at seeds. Wrens have long, slender bills that are curved slightly downward. They use their bills to search for insects in crevices.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to see the diversity among songbirds by looking at simple line drawings of five representative species listed below.



American Crow: black; large



Mountain Bluebird: bright blue; medium size



Black-capped Chickadee: small; short-winged; non-migratory



House Wren: small; long, slender bill for gathering insects from crevices



Evening Grosbeak: type of finch; medium size; heavy cone-shaped bill that can crack large seeds easily

MATERIALS

Line drawings of birds

Access to web "*Dee Byrd's Guide to Who's Who*" or some other source of songbird pictures

Colouring pencils or crayons

PROCEDURE

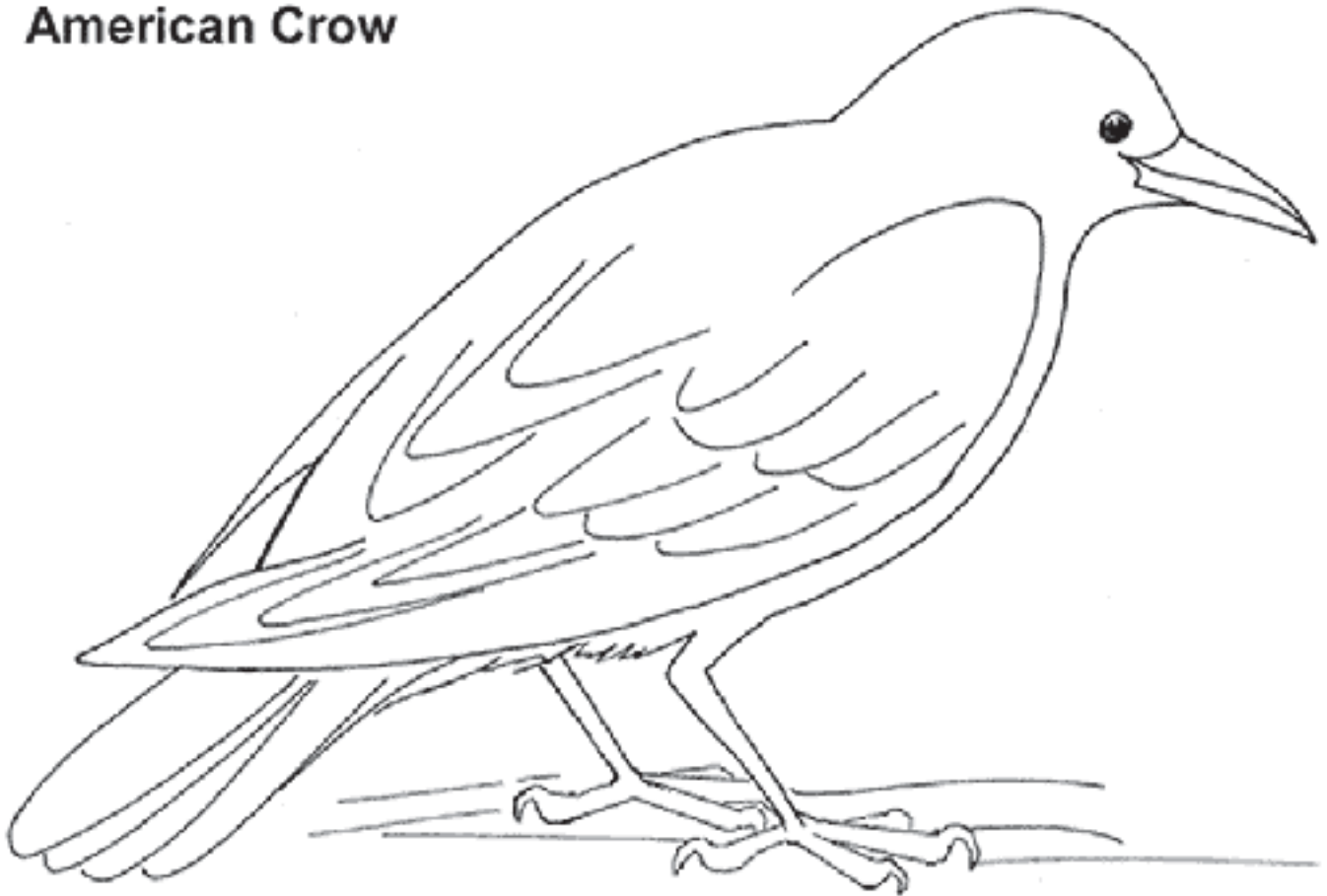
1. Click on the line drawings above to open up the full-sized drawings. Print out the line drawings of the five songbirds and make enough copies so that each student gets a picture of one bird. Try to evenly distribute copies of the different songbirds (e.g. make 6 copies of each bird for a class of 30).
2. Split the class into groups of 3-5 students and give each student in a group a different picture.
3. Ask the students to look for differences and similarities between the songbirds, referring to things such as the size and shape of the body and the shape of the bill. Look at the pictures provided in "*Dee Byrd's Guide to Who's Who*" or books to compare and contrast coloration.
4. List the students' suggestions and have a discussion on the diversity of songbirds. Explain how this diversity came about based on the birds' different surroundings and needs.
5. Ask the students to colour the birds.
6. Once they are finished, hang up their pictures and point out the diverse songbird collection that they have created.

EXTENSIONS

Go outside and look for different songbirds. Refer to "*Dee Byrd's Guide to Who's Who*" and "*Where's that Bird You Heard*" for some birds that are common to your region. This might require some assistance from local experts.

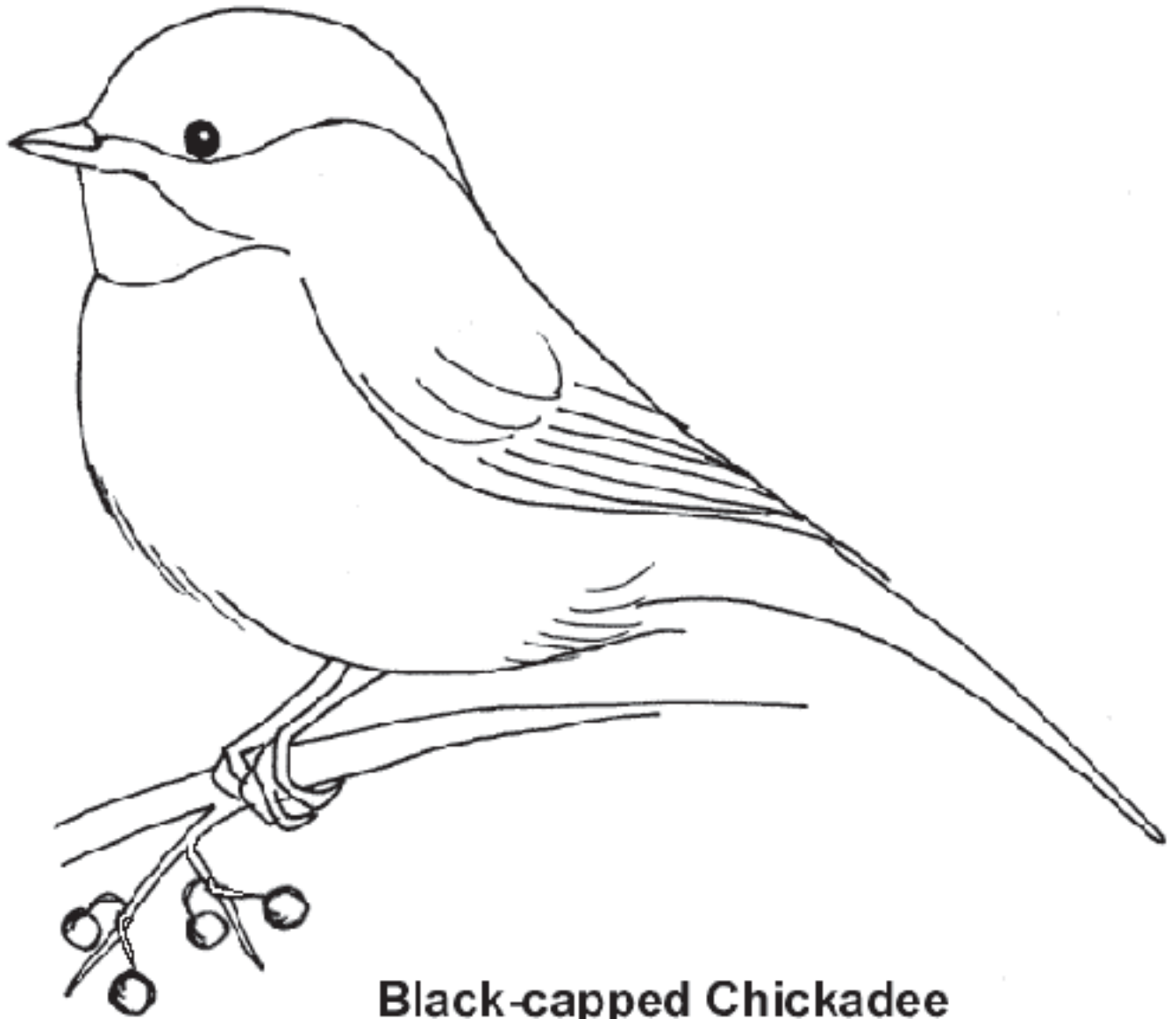


American Crow

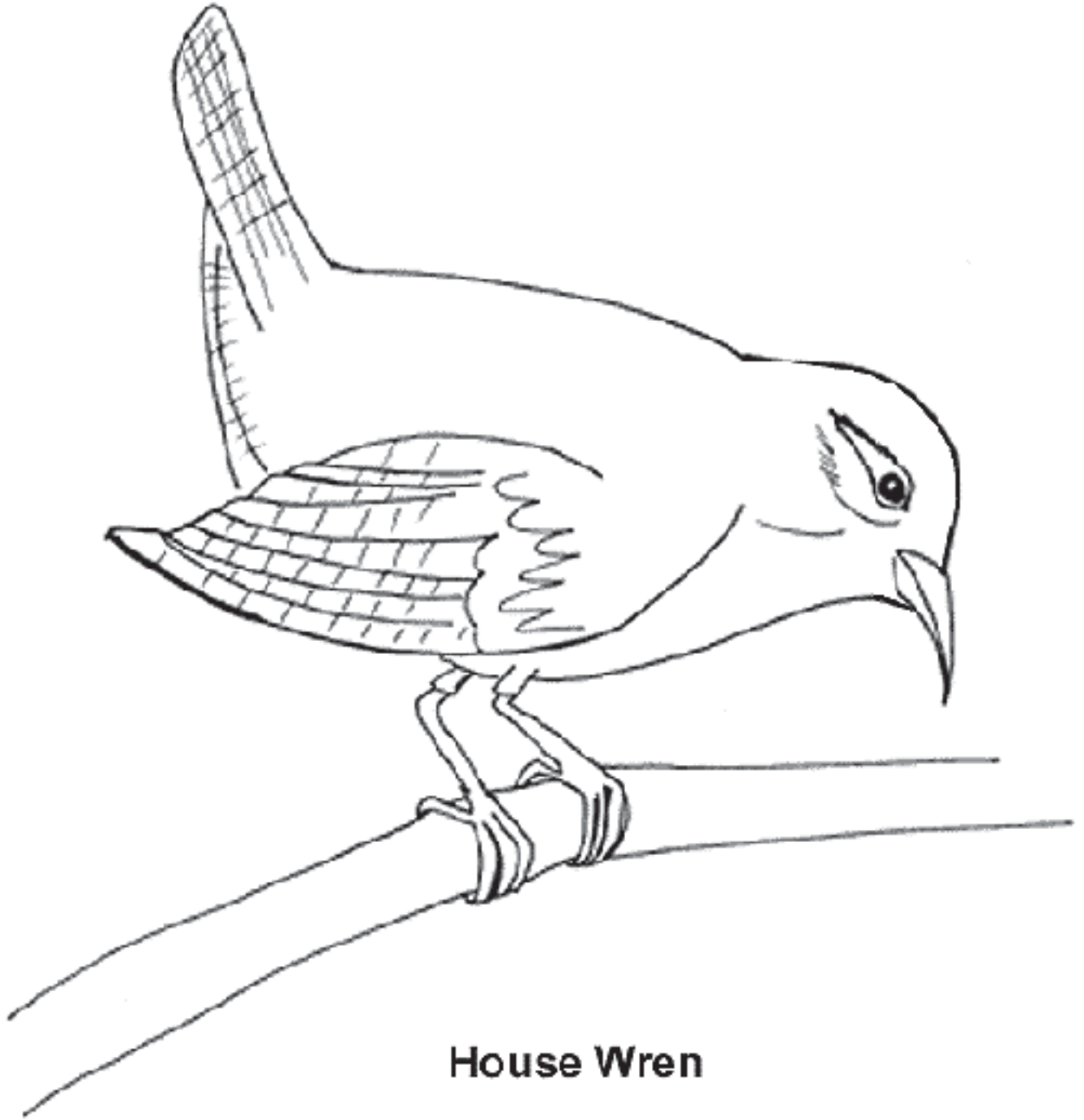




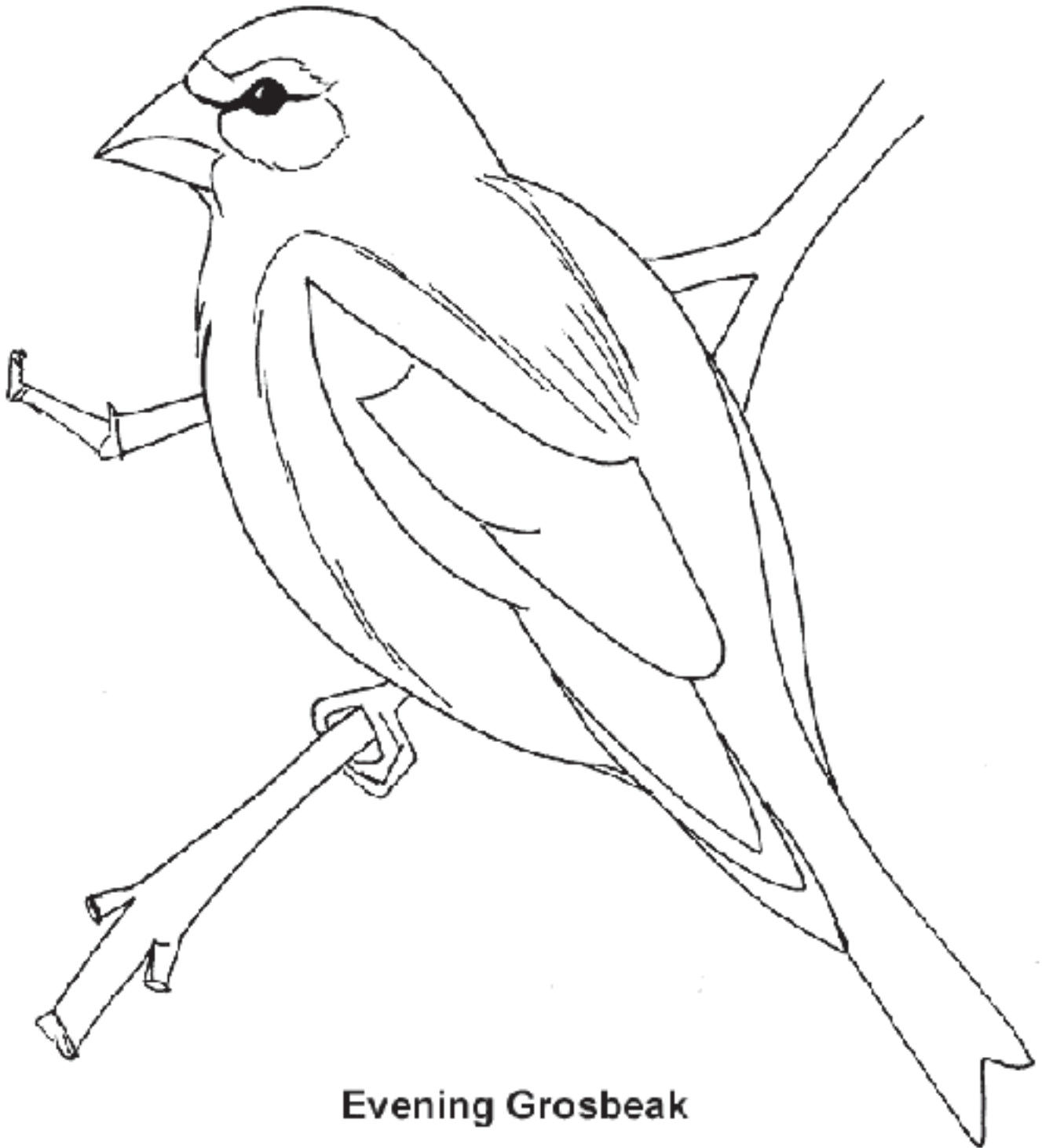
Mountain Bluebird



Black-capped Chickadee



House Wren



Evening Grosbeak