

# The Birds of Latin America

**Grade Level:** K-2, 3-5

**Courses:** Social Studies, Science, Music Appreciation, Art

**Topics:** Music, Latin American Birds, Animals in Latin America, Animal & Environmental Conservation, Conservation Fundraising, Advocacy through Art

## Teacher Preparation

Read this article to familiarize yourself with the music/albums referenced in this lesson plan: [These Bird-Inspired Dance Albums Deliver Catchy Beats and Conservation Funding](#)

### Album Links to Stream the Music:

A Guide to the Birdsong of South America [bandcamp](#), [Spotify](#)

A Guide to the Birdsong of Mexico, Central America, & the Caribbean [bandcamp](#), [Spotify](#)

## Objectives

- ✿ Students will be introduced to environmental conservation concepts. They will understand that human actions affect the world that we live in; this includes effects on the population, homes, and well-being of animals, such as birds.
- ✿ Students will learn about advocacy and how people participate in it to help causes that are important to them. They will engage in a discussion about advocacy in order to understand and relate the concept to their own lives.
- ✿ Students will learn names of and basic information about birds from Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **WCERS "I Can" and "We Will" Statements ([Google Sheets](#)) on [Wisconsin Career Readiness Standards](#)**

*Student "I Can" Statements for Grades K-2*

*LIF3A (Global competence): I can tell you about myself and my community, as well as ask questions about other people and places in the world.*

*Student "I Can" Statements for Grades 3-5*

*LIF3B (Global competence): I can describe how events in our country and around the world affect my life, community, and the world.*

*LRN2B (Critical thinking and problem solving), LIF3D (Global competence), LIF4B (Responsive leadership): I can share a problem I care about in my community and describe some steps I can take to make it better on my own or with others.*

URL (Statements):

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQ6Przd8CkGd\\_bqt2wq5MNTCGxJ05oyEKqslL\\_LL5WMMh05S\\_wgRj\\_-MNdHQwXhFvwbTfbuPmlm8vwSi1/pubhtml#](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQ6Przd8CkGd_bqt2wq5MNTCGxJ05oyEKqslL_LL5WMMh05S_wgRj_-MNdHQwXhFvwbTfbuPmlm8vwSi1/pubhtml#)

URL (Standards): <https://dpi.wi.gov/cte/resources/common-career>

## **From the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies**

This lesson plan was developed by undergraduate student Boston Peters in summer 2025 under a Support for Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF) grant through the UWM Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR), supervised by the UWM Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) Associate Director, Monica VanBladel.

This, and more teaching resources developed under the research grant, can be found on <https://uwm.edu/clacs/public-engagement/teaching-resources/k-12-lesson-plans-surf-2025-26/>.

Please note that the UWM CLACS website will be redesigned in 2026, resulting in a change of the website's stable URL. When this occurs, the link provided above will no longer be functional. The new website will prominently feature available educator resources, including this one.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies is a member institution of the national Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP). CLASP also develops and shares a wide variety of K-12 educator resources on its website: <https://claspprograms.org/k-12-educators/>.

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The following lesson may include state standards and/or "I can" statements related to the lesson content. These standards/statements were initially added as an educational framework for lesson design and may not be exhaustive.

This document may include hyperlinks. A page at the end of the document has been added to provide the URL included in each hyperlink, as well as other information about where the hyperlink leads. This information is intended to assist in finding the linked webpage if the hyperlink no longer functions.

## Activity Outline

If you are accessing this lesson plan as a PDF, a copy of the accompanying slideshow presentation is included at the end of this document. Otherwise, a .pptx file is available on the same website that hosts the .pdf and .docx files. The slideshow is provided in .pptx format so that you may make adjustments to the birds' description (if necessary) for students' reading level/comprehension.

### Vocabulary Terms:

- Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered (*These are terms the IUCN Red List uses to describe how at-risk a species is for extinction. The provided slideshow has a slide that explains, in simple terms, the IUCN's categories.*)
- Conservation, Habitat, Population, Invasive Species, Climate Change
- Advocate, Advocacy

Introduce the topic of endangered birds in South America, Mexico, Central America, & the Caribbean.

- Discuss the listed vocabulary.
- You could show students where these countries are located on a map for context.

Allow students to view the Birds of Latin America Slideshow. Each student should select one bird that interests them. Students will read their bird's short paragraph to learn a little bit about it.

- The following printout (next page) can be used by students to take notes from the slideshow, if desired.
- Once students have taken notes, work as a class to create a list of common threats affecting these birds. This discussion should introduce the idea that, in many cases, it is humans who are affecting the homes and populations of these birds.

Introduce the Birdsong Albums to the students. Explain that the albums were created to raise money for conservation efforts. These conservation efforts will support the birds featured in the albums by providing money to help improve their circumstances.

- Tell students that the person who coordinated the albums created them because he cares a lot about birds; he wanted to *advocate* for them.
- Ask students questions to get them thinking about advocacy.
  - *Have you heard the word "advocacy" or "advocate" before? What does it mean to you?*
  - *How is advocacy relevant to our day-to-day lives? To our community?*
  - *What is something you care about in your daily life? How about in your community? How could you advocate for it? (e.g., raise money, volunteer time, share knowledge, share other resources)*

Now, to finish out the lesson, students will make art of/a craft of their bird!

- The art can be a simple drawing of their bird with crayons, markers, etc... or, if possible, you could have students cut construction paper and layer/glue to create more complex bird crafts.
  - The more complex option could mirror the style of Scott Partridge, the artist commissioned to illustrate the album covers for the birdsong albums. You can find examples of his artwork and style on his website: [Scott Partridge - Illustration - Birdsong Project](#).

As students work on their art/craft of their bird, play the music from the birdsong albums.

- You can choose to limit the songs you play to only the birds that the kids have chosen, and can limit how long each song plays so that there is time for each bird's song to be played. Announce the bird name at the beginning of each song so students can be excited that it's their bird's turn!

Finally, form a circle. Everybody will take a brief turn to share a little about their selected bird and show their bird artwork to their classmates. Emphasize that students have now created art to honor these special birds, similar to the birdsong albums!

**My Name:**

**Bird Name:**

What country is my  
bird from?

What is my bird's  
habitat?

What does my  
bird eat?

Is my bird  
endangered?

## Bird List: Plain Text Names and Informative Blurbs

The following tables list all of the bird names and bird descriptions included in the slideshow presentation, in case a text-only format is useful.

South America	
Bird Name	Bird Blurb
Niceforo's Wren	Niceforo's Wrens are critically endangered birds. They live in the forests and shrublands of Colombia. These birds search the ground and trees for bugs to eat. They are critically endangered because many forests in Colombia are destroyed by humans who want to use the land.
Hooded Grebe	Hooded Grebes are critically endangered birds. They live in the wetlands and lakes of Chile and Argentina. Some travel to the ocean coast for the winter. They feed on insects that live in the water. They are critically endangered because of the American Mink, an invasive species that hunts the Hooded Grebe.
Cherry Throated Tanager	Cherry-throated Tanagers are critically endangered birds. They live in the forests of Brazil and search tree branches in order to find bugs to eat. These birds need a specific type of forest to survive. They are critically endangered because humans destroy the forests they live in.
Marsh Seedeater	Marsh Seedeaters are endangered birds. They live in grasslands and eat seeds from the grasses in their home. These birds are migratory, which means they do not always live in the same place. They live in Brazil and Paraguay and travel to Argentina and Uruguay to have babies. Human activity threatens the habitat of these birds and contributes to their endangered status.
Jocotoco Antpitta	Jocotoco Antpitta are endangered birds. They live in the forests of Ecuador and Peru. These birds often live near streams and eat worms and insects. Their endangered status is a result of habitat loss. Humans use the land where these birds live to harvest wood and mine gold.
Sun Parakeet	Sun Parakeets are endangered birds. These birds live in forests and savannas in Brazil and Guyana. They typically eat fruits, seeds, and insects. Humans often trap and remove them from their habitat to sell them as pets. This has contributed to their endangered status.
Royal Cinclodes	Royal Cinclodes are critically endangered birds. They live in the forests and wetlands of Peru and Bolivia. These birds will look for food under moss and leaves, which means they likely eat bugs. They

	are critically endangered due to habitat loss. Humans often take the land where Royal Cinclodes live and use it for farming.
Yellow Cardinal	Yellow Cardinals are endangered birds. They live in the savannas and shrublands of Uruguay and Argentina. These birds look for seeds and bugs to eat on the ground. Their endangered status is a result of human trapping. They are in high demand for trapping because they are considered exotic pets.
Grey-breasted Parakeet	Grey-breasted Parakeets are endangered birds that live in Brazil. They typically live in forests, though one group was seen building nests on a mountainside. These birds look for fruits and seeds to eat in the trees they call home. Their biggest threat has been humans trapping them to sell as pets. The destruction of their habitat has also contributed to their endangered status.
Austral Rail	Austral Rails are birds vulnerable to becoming endangered. They live in the grasslands and wetlands of Argentina and Chile. Their habitat is most threatened by farm activity. They likely eat insects and plant material.

<b>Mexico, Central America, &amp; the Caribbean</b>	
<b>Bird Name</b>	<b>Bird Blurb</b>
Thick-billed Parrot	Thick-billed parrots are endangered birds. They live in the forests of Mexico and often nest inside pine trees. They eat the pine seeds that come from these trees. Their endangered status is a result of habitat loss. The forests where they live have gotten much smaller because humans cut down trees for wood.
Black Catbird	Black Catbirds have the endangered status “Least Concern”. That being said, their population is decreasing. Their biggest threat is humans taking their land to use for houses and farming. These birds live in the forests and shrublands of Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala. They eat fruit off of the trees that grow in their home.
Bay-breasted Cuckoo	Bay-breasted Cuckoos are endangered birds. They live in the forests and shrublands of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. These birds eat lizards and insects. They are endangered because much of their habitat has been destroyed for human use, such as farming.
Ocellated quail	Ocellated quails are considered vulnerable to becoming endangered. They are mostly threatened by humans who take over their habitat to farm. These birds live in the forests and shrublands of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. They eat seeds, fruit, and insects.

Keel-billed Motmot	Keel-billed Motmots are considered vulnerable to becoming endangered. They are vulnerable because humans have destroyed much of their habitat. They live in the forests and wetlands of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua. These birds likely eat insects.
Jamaican Blackbird	Jamaican Blackbirds are endangered birds. They live in the forests of Jamaica and eat insects that live in the forest canopy. These birds are endangered because humans destroy their habitat to build farms and mines.
Black-cheeked Ant Tanager	Black-cheeked Ant Tanagers are considered “Near Threatened” birds. They live in the forests of Costa Rica and eat insects and fruit. Their population is stable because they have protected areas where they can live. Outside of protected areas, their home is threatened by humans who cut down forests.
Yellow-headed Amazon	Yellow-headed Amazons are endangered birds. They live in the forests of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras. These birds eat seeds from the trees where they live. They are endangered because of habitat loss and because they are often taken to be sold as pets.
Zapata Wren	Zapata Wrens are endangered birds. They live in savannas and wetlands in Cuba. These birds eat berries, insects, and lizards. They are hunted by invasive species, such as mongooses and rats. They are also threatened by fires that burn down their habitat.

## Links and Citations

“[These Bird-Inspired Dance Albums Deliver Catchy Beats and Conservation Funding](#)” by Catalina Maria Johnson (3 August 2020) published in the National Audubon Society’s Audubon Magazine, <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/these-bird-inspired-dance-albums-deliver-catchy-beats-and-conservation-funding>.

“[A Guide to the Birdsong of South America](#)” by Shika Shika (3 March 2015) on [bandcamp.com](https://shikashika.bandcamp.com/album/a-guide-to-the-birdsong-of-south-america), <https://shikashika.bandcamp.com/album/a-guide-to-the-birdsong-of-south-america>.

“[A Guide to the Birdsong of South America](#)” compilation by Various Artists (3 March 2015) on Spotify, <https://open.spotify.com/album/0DDsDqhH1cWmQ59cIWrxw3>.

“[A Guide to the Birdsong of Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean](#)” by Shika Shika (26 June 2020) on [bandcamp.com](https://shikashika.bandcamp.com/album/a-guide-to-the-birdsong-of-mexico-central-america-the-caribbean), <https://shikashika.bandcamp.com/album/a-guide-to-the-birdsong-of-mexico-central-america-the-caribbean>.

“[A Guide to the Birdsong of Mexico, Central America & the Caribbean](#)” compilation by Various Artists (26 June 2020) on Spotify, <https://open.spotify.com/album/38tpS9P3b0bUPb5J6Ci1U9>.

“[Birdsong Project](https://www.jevaart.com/artworkbirdsong.htm)” artwork by Scott Partridge, commissioned by Rhythm and Roots, <https://www.jevaart.com/artworkbirdsong.htm>.