


Bird Graph

 Teacher-led Classroom Activity
Math, Reading Graphs, Reading Comprehension, Reasoning

How can we use graphs to communicate and understand how well bird populations are doing in specific types of habitat?

Objective:

Students analyze a graph that indicates the state of bird populations in certain types of habitat.

Students will need:

- The “Bird Graph” reproducible activity sheet (one for each student)
- Pencils

Suggested time:

One class period

What to do:

1. Have a whole-class discussion about why scientists study populations of birds and other animals. Explain that scientists have been studying birds for hundreds of years. They conduct studies to see how many birds there are in a particular place and whether their populations are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. When populations of bird species in a particular place change over time—especially if they decrease—scientists look for explanations. For example, a decrease might be because that bird species’ habitat is being harmed.
2. Distribute copies of the activity sheet to students. Review the graph with students to make sure they understand how to read it. Since each bar on the graph has two parts, you might spend some time making sure students understand how to read each part.
3. Have students answer the questions about the graph.
4. Follow up with a discussion of students’ answers and how they arrived at them.
5. Continue with a class discussion in which you invite students to speculate about why birds might be doing better in some habitats than others.

Extension:

Have students conduct research to try to figure out why populations of certain birds or populations of birds in certain areas are increasing or decreasing.

Answers:

1. Hawaiian; 2. urban areas; 3. Hawaiian, oceanic, grassland, aridland, arctic, coastal; 4. oceanic; 5. about 10%.