

# Make a Songbird Mobile

Celebrate spring and migratory birds by making a colorful mobile!



## Materials Needed:

Songbird Template printable (or draw your own), cardstock, watercolor paints, paintbrush, popsicle sticks (or wooden chopsticks or unsharpened pencils), string, scissors.

## Instructions:

**Step 1:** Print or trace the songbird template on cardstock. Cut out four songbirds, and paint them on both sides. Make them look realistic, or use your imagination! Let them dry for a few minutes.

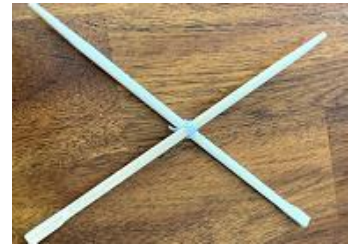
Alternatively, you can color the birds with crayons or colored pencils.

**Step 2:** Take two popsicle sticks, chopsticks, or unsharpened pencils. Use string to tie them together in an X shape.

**Step 3:** Use scissors or the tip of a pencil to make a small hole at the top of each bird. Tie a string through the hole. Make each string a slightly different length.

**Step 4:** Tie the other end of the strings around the ends of the sticks, one string per each of the four ends.

**Step 5:** Tie a string around the ends of one stick, so that it makes a loop (see picture). Hang up your mobile!



# Songbird Template Printable



# Bird Migration

Hundreds of bird species migrate to Alaska every year to raise their young and feast on the abundant and diverse plants and animals. In Fairbanks, Creamer's Field Migratory Bird Refuge is a great place to see sandhill cranes and other migratory birds.



Sandhill Cranes.

[Image: Friends of Creamer's Field.](#)

## Why Do Birds Migrate?

Birds migrate to move from areas of low resources to areas of high resources. The two main resources they are looking for are food and nesting locations. In the winter, they fly south to warmer places, where more food is available. In the spring, they return north as the weather changes.



Migrating geese. Image: pxhere.com.

Summer in Alaska is a great place to be if you're a bird. There are a lot of insects, lots of daylight, and less predators. It's also a great place to lay eggs and raise chicks!

Migrating birds use the stars for navigation, as well as the sun, wind patterns, and landforms, all of which help guide them to the same locations each year.

**Tracking Migratory Birds:** One way scientists track migrating birds is by attaching bands to their legs. The colored bands have numbers on them, allowing individual birds to be tracked. Banding helps us understand where birds migrate and where they make stops along the way.

If you see a banded bird, you can report it at: [www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/)



Arctic Tern.

[Image: allaboutbirds.org.](#)

**Did You Know?** The Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) has the longest known migration of any animal. It travels from its Arctic breeding grounds to Antarctica and back again, every year, covering about 44,000 miles (71,000 km). Scientists estimate that over its lifetime, an Arctic Tern migrates about 1.5 million miles (2.4 million km): equal to three trips to the moon and back!

# Alaska Songbirds

There are over 5000 species of songbirds, which belong to the order *Passeriformes*. They live all over the world. Songbirds are known for diverse and elaborate songs, which they use for attracting mates and holding territory. Many songbirds migrate to Alaska each summer to breed, feed on abundant insects and plants, and raise their chicks. Learn more about some of Alaska's songbirds below!



## White Crowned Sparrow

*Zonotrichia leucophrys*

You can find me around patches of grass. I like to nest and feed close to the ground.



## Ruby Crowned Kinglet

*Regulus calendula*

We like to live in mature forests. I sing loudly to establish my territory.



## Varied Thrush

*Ixoreus naevius*

You can see me in the morning and evening, singing a 2 second "whistle-hum" sound!



## Tree Swallow

*Tachycineta bicolor*

I like to nest in tree cavities and nest boxes. I sing with high-pitched sounds of chirps, whines, and gurgles.



## Yellow Warbler

*Setophaga petechia*

You can find me along streams and wetlands. I sing in a series of accelerating whistles.



## Hammond's Flycatcher

*Empidonax hammondi*

I might be small, but I get in fierce battles with other males in mid-air.

Discover more about songbirds: [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)

Images: Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: Kenneth Cole Schneider, Flickr.  
Varied Thrush: Mick Thompson, Flickr. All others: Wikimedia Commons.