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Module 06: Urban Biodiversity

Urban EcoLab

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## Biodiversity Game - Bird and Plant Card

Center for Urban Resilience

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# Urban EcoLab Curriculum

<http://www.urbanecolabcurriculum.com>



## Bird and Plant Cards

**Module 6, Lesson 6**



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# American Crow



- **Physical description:** Large, black bird with dark, stout bill, iridescent violet gloss on body, and blue-black wings. Tail is fan-shaped in flight.
- **Habitat:** Thrives in suburban neighborhoods and urban parks
- **Nesting:** Nests built in sturdy pine or hardwood trees
- **Diet:** Will eat almost anything: insects, small invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and mammals, eggs and young of other birds, grains, fruits, and dead or decaying matter. They will also eat food discarded by people.
- **Predators:** red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, raccoons, humans, snakes, and cats.



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Corvus\\_brachyrhynchos\\_1\\_\(1\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Corvus_brachyrhynchos_1_(1).jpg)

# Song Sparrow



- **Physical description:** russet-and-grey with bold streaks down its white chest. Known for its stuttering and clattering song.
- **Habitat:** open brush, abandoned thickets or woodland areas.
- **Nesting:** Ground nester
- **Diet:** seeds, grains, grass, berries and, on some occasions, [insects](#)
- **Predators:** [birds of prey](#). As nestlings they may be eaten by [snakes](#), [raccoons](#), [skunks](#), [cats](#), and [weasels](#).
- **Ecosystem role:** may help to disperse seeds



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melospiza\\_melodia\\_5.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melospiza_melodia_5.jpg)

# Tree Swallow



- **Physical description:** Known for areal acrobatics; blue-green feathers with white fronts.
- **Habitat:** suburban, agricultural, grassy, forested and open areas near water
- **Nesting:** holes in trees or mud nests attached to the sides of buildings, under overhangs; will nest in bird boxes
- **Diet:** insects, supplemented with fruit, seeds, grains, nuts
- **Predators:** eggs and nestlings are vulnerable to rats, snakes, raccoons, American crows, mice and feral cats; adults are taken in flight by hawks, falcons and owls



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Tree\\_Swallow\\_%28Tachycineta\\_bicolor%294.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Tree_Swallow_%28Tachycineta_bicolor%294.jpg)



# Black Phoebe



- **Physical description:** small, plump songbird with large head and squared tail; straight and thin beak
- **Habitat:** lives near water, backyards, parks, and ponds
- **Nesting:** creates a nest out of mud; attaches it to a ledge or overhang
- **Diet:** bees, wasps, flies, beetles, bugs, grasshoppers, damselflies, dragonflies, termites, spiders, minnows; occasionally small berries
- **Predators:** Cooper's Hawks, kestrels, shrikes, scrub-jays



*Photo by: Read Howarth*

# Anna's Hummingbird



- **Physical description:** Iridescent emerald feathers and rose-pink throat. About the size of a ping-pong ball. Sound bursts are produced by their tail feathers.
- **Habitat:** chaparral, bushy oak woodlands, gardens
- **Nesting:** horizontal branches of oak, sycamore or eucalyptus trees or shrubs near a source of nectar
- **Diet:** nectar from flowering plants and eucalyptus, insects, tree sap
- **Predators:** domestic and feral cats, praying mantis, owls. Lizards, bats, squirrels, Cooper's Hawks and crows prey on eggs and nesting young



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c4/Anna's\\_hummingbird.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c4/Anna's_hummingbird.jpg)

# Coast live oak



- Evergreen with prickly, irregularly-toothed leaves and small acorns with smooth caps; leaves curl or lie flat based on stress
- Grow on hillsides; neighborhood landscaping; can withstand air pollutants
- Drought tolerant
- Susceptible to sudden oak disease
- Attracts birds





# Desert Willow



- Large deciduous shrub or small tree; grows along washes, rivers and creeks
- Fragrant trumpet-shaped flowers in spring; blooms May-September; looks dead when dormant
- Attracts hummingbirds
- Drops seed pods in winter



<http://www.laspillitas.com/nature-of-california/plants/195--chilopsis-linearis>

# Fragrant Sage



- Perennial plant, native to Southern California, often used for landscaping
- Prefers dry summers
- Blooms in June-July
- Frequented by hummingbirds



<http://www.wildflower.org>

# Blue Gum Eucalyptus



- Native to Southern Australia
- Provides shade and wind break
- Fast growing, but requires a lot of water
- Susceptible to beetle borers and root rot



<https://selecttree.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/eucalyptus-cinerea>



# California sycamore



- Deciduous tree, 30-80 feet tall, with deeply-lobed medium-green leaves covered with tiny hairs.
- Attracts birds
- Fire resistant
- Turns yellow-brown in late summer.

