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Module 13: Birds in the Urban Landscape

Urban EcoLab

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## Sample Research Questions

Center for Urban Resilience

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*Experimental Design*  
**Designing a Strong Research Investigation**  
*It starts with a question ...*  
**Sample Research Questions**  
**Corvids & Feeder Birds**

Often times a research investigation starts with an “I Wonder” Question. Then the Research Question follows. Finally, the Methodology to investigate the question is determined and the research is carried out. Provided in Module 13, Lesson 4 is a Sample Blue Jay Investigation from the “I Wonder” stage to carrying out the investigation. Below are additional sample research questions that could be investigated, related to corvids and feeder birds. Remember, a good research question is testable and measurable. With each question, consider how it could be tested and measured. Then, design your investigation!

- What birds visit the feeder most often ... blue jays or crows? (Focus: visitation)
- What would be most likely to defend the feeder the strongest ... blue jays or crows? (Focus: defense behavior)
- How many seeds do blue jays crop compared to crows? (Focus: feeding behavior)
- How many different types and individual birds are visiting the feeders? (Focus: species composition and identification)
- Which and how many of those bird species are selective about their seed choice vs. others that are not? (Focus: food preference)
- What seed is chosen the most? The least? (Focus: food preference)
- What time of the day are visits to the feeder the highest? The lowest? (Focus: temporal = time of visit)
- What bird shows the highest amount of displacement behavior toward other birds? (Focus: displacement behavior)
- When more than one feeder is put out, which feeder do the different bird species prefer over another? (Focus: feeder preference)
- What is the percentage of tolerant behavior (feeding together) vs. aggressive displacement) at the feeder? (Focus: behavior)

These are just a small sample of the myriad of research questions that could be formulated about birds at feeders. Use your imagination and see what you can come up with!