

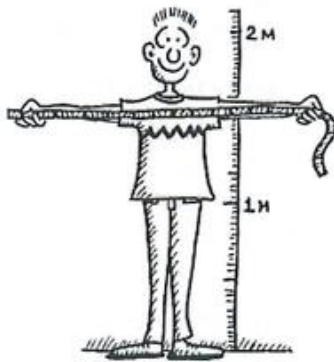
Birds of a Feather

Nature Van Activity



Birds are amazing creatures! They have feathers, wings, beaks, and lay eggs. Even with these things in common, birds come in different shapes and sizes, from the tiny Anna's Hummingbird to the large California Condor. The chart below shows how our own wingspans compare to those of several species of birds commonly found here in California.

Using a measuring tape (or a piece of string to then measure with a ruler), measure the distance from each student's fingertip on one hand to fingertip on the other hand when both arms are outstretched. Younger students may need assistance with this, but older students may break into pairs to work together.



BIRD SPECIES	WINGSPAN LENGTH
California Condor	108 inches (9 feet!)
Brown Pelican	84 inches
Golden Eagle	75-90 inches
Turkey Vulture	67-70 inches
Osprey	59-70 inches
Western Gull	58 inches
Great Horned Owl	40-57 inches
Double Crested Cormorant	45-48 inches
Snowy Egret	41 inches
Red Shouldered Hawk	37-42 inches
Peregrine Falcon	36-44 inches
Western Screech Owl	22-24 inches
American Kestrel	20-24 inches
Acorn Woodpecker	14-17 inches
California Quail	12-14 inches
Anna's Hummingbird	4-5 inches

Discussion Questions:

- Why do some birds have larger wingspans than others?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of having smaller or larger wings?
- What if the birds' bodies were much bigger or smaller than their wingspans?
- Why do you think the California Quail, Peregrine Falcon, and Brown Pelican not only have differently *sized* wings, but also very differently *shaped* wings?



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