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[00:00:44] **Speaker 1** The Wisconsin School of the Air presents Robert S. Ellerson, University of Wisconsin Extension Specialist in Wildlife Management in The Wonderful World of Nature. This series of programs designed for in-school viewing by children in grades five through nine is televised each Monday afternoon at two o'clock by University of Wisconsin Television. Now Robert Ellerson and The Wonderful World of nature.

[00:01:11] **Speaker 2** Hi, boys and girls. Today, we're going to be talking about some of our winter birds. You'll recall that during the past several weeks, we've been talking about mammals and how important the habitat was to these mammals. By habitat, of course, we meant the place where the mammals lived or their environments, in other words, we used for habitat. Now, we are going to see today whether winter birds need special habitats too. I wonder if any of you have ever thought about the marvel of birds living in our very cold winter climate all winter long with us in temperatures down below zero in cold and sleet and snow. And these little feathered creatures, some of them weighing not more than just a couple pennies are able to live successfully in this winter climate that we have here. Wisconsin. Certainly this is one of the great wonders and marvels of nature. Now what birds do we have with us here in the wintertime? We all know that birds are not as numerous in Wisconsin in the Wintertime as they are in the summertime. Many of the common birds such as the Robin and the Bluebird and the Kildare and the Blackbirds all go south in the wintertime and they're not found here at this time of the year. But there are a certain number of birds which spend their winters with us. Now, what birds are these? Some of these birds are birds that we call permanent residents. In other words, they're birds that live here in Wisconsin the year around. Things like the blue jay, the crow, the chickadee, nuthatch are all birds which live in Wisconsin, the year round. Some of the birds that have here in the winter time are birds we call winter. residents. In other words, they're birds that are found here only in the wintertime. Mostly they are birds that make their summer homes in the lands lying north of Wisconsin and come down and spend their winters with us. Now this brings us to one of the very important differences between birds and mammals. Most mammals do not have the ability to travel very or very fast. Birds on the other hand have the power of flight. and so are much more mobile creatures than are mammals. And you recall that certain mammal ranges, mammals such as the pocket gopher and the mole, and even the cottontail rabbit had very small home ranges. The cottontale has a home range of just a couple of acres. And the home range even of a mammal like the Mole may not be more than 75 or 100 yards across at the very most. Now, any bird can fly across an area of this size in a matter of a fraction of a second, of a fraction of minute. But does this great mobility make any difference as far as the bird's habitat is concerned? Let's take a look at some of the places Thank you. where birds are found in the wintertime. One of the places, one of the habitats of winterbirds are the woodlands or the marshland areas. And in this picture, we can see a winter scene with shrubs and trees in the background. In the foreground, the snowy foreground, is actually a lake shore. And the picture was taken from out on the ice. But you see in the wintertime There is really no such thing as a wetland habitat because these areas are all frozen over. As far as birds are concerned, really there are only two types of habitat in the wintertime. There is the areas that are covered with brush or with trees, in other words the wooded habitats, and those areas which lack brush or trees or the open areas. Now let's get back to our woodlands. and take a look at some of the birds which are commonly found in the woodlands. In the picture that you will see, we have a number of common winter birds. Up at the top of the picture, the two birds that are being pointed at now, two now, are chickadees. These black-capped chickadee are some of our very common winter birds. They are permanent residents, found here the year around. And I'm sure that any of you that are familiar with this bird are familiar, with its cheery little song, the little chickadee dee de, chickadeedee dee, the little song that gives the bird its name, Chickadee. Now, immediately below the Chickadees are two other birds, which are very common winter birds. These are nuthatches. They, too, are permanent residence. they have a kind of a nasal yank. yank, yank call, and we see them upside down and crawling around, hopping around on the tree branches, finding the eggs of insect and the dormant insects that they use as food. Over on the left of the picture are two little red-breasted nuthatches. These birds are not very common in Wisconsin in the wintertime, although we occasionally do see them. In the winter time, birds are mostly rather sociable creatures, and we find flocks of them traveling about the countryside. As a matter of fact, sometimes we find mixed flocks in these birds in the woodland, flocks made up of chickadees, nuthatches, and some of the wood land woodpeckers. And, of course, all woodpeckers are more or less closely associated with wood. And here in Wisconsin, we have two woodpeckers that are very common in the wintertime. And this picture shows these common winter woodpecker. Over on the right are two rather small little woodpeccers that are called downy woodpeccer. They have very tiny, thin little beaks. On the left is a larger woodpegger that colored almost identically with the downy peckers and this larger woodpecker. is called a hairy woodpecker. We have here a mounted specimen of a hairy woodpeckers and you can see that this bird has rather a large bill for a bird of its size and the males of both the downy and the hairy wood pecker have a little red cap on the back of their head. The females lack this red coloration. These birds of course feed on the insects and other life that they find beneath the bark of trees. uh... Another very common woodland bird is this large hawk that I have right here. This is a Cooper's hawk. It is a bird which is more or less restricted to woodlands. In the wintertime we see some hawks out in the open, but most frequently we find the Cooper's Hawk right in the forest. The Cooper's Hawk is a very fast-flying hawk. And its food consists largely of other birds. Along with the Cooper's hawk in the woodlands, we also find certain owls, the barred owl and the horned owl, the screech owl, and occasionally the tiny little saw-whet owl. Now, these are just a few of the birds, which are dependent on woodlands for their habitat. Now, what about the other types of habitat that are available to birds in the wintertime? The next type of habitat that we'd like to talk about are the open fields. And here we see a picture of a Wisconsin countryside in the wintertime. showing the open, snow-covered fields with a farmstead in the background. Notice that there is very little cover in this picture, woody cover. There are really very, very few birds to be found in these open farmland, open field types of situations. As a matter of fact, sometimes you can drive for many miles through the countryside in the wintertime without seeing birds of any kind. However, there is one bird. which is always found in this open country. It is a bird that winters in Wisconsin occasionally. There's a bird we call the horned lark. And this picture shows a group of these horned Larks. You notice that they have little tiny horns on their heads, their feathers of course. And these birds are found only in the open country, just the other week I drove into Milwaukee and both on the way in and coming back. I saw over 50 of these little birds along the roadsides in small flocks. There is still another type of bird which is not associated with any particular type of habitat here in Wisconsin in the wintertime, and this group of birds I call the wandering birds. We're apt to see them in quite a variety of situations. We may see them out in the open, we may see along the edges of woods, or sometimes right in the woods themselves. Two of the very common birds in this group are the tree sparrow and the slate-colored junko. The tree sparrel here is shown on the left and the junkos on the right of this picture. The junko is a little slate- colored bird with the white outer tail feathers, which I'm sure many of you are familiar with. The tree sparrows has a little reddish cap and a black spot right in the middle of an otherwise clear gray breast. very easy birds to identify. These birds are always found in little flocks, both of these birds are winter residents. In other words, they make their homes north of Wisconsin in the summertime and just come down and spend their winters with us. They both belong to the sparrow family and their food consists largely of the seeds of weeds. Still another bird which we had could classify as a wanderer is the common crow and I'm sure that all of you have seen crows out around in open fields feeding on crop residues and certainly all of have seen Crows in trees and in the woods. So it too is a bird that is not confined to any particular type of habitat in the wintertime. Now there is our last group of birds are the birds which are more or less closely associated with man and man's buildings. And two birds which I know, all of you know that belong to this group, are the common starling and the English sparrow. These two birds, neither of them are native Wisconsin birds. Both of them are European birds that were introduced here. And wherever we see them, we can always be sure that we're near some works of man. If we're out in the country, we commonly see them around farm buildings, and we commonly see them in around cities. Now one of our native birds, which is very common around cities, particularly in the winter time, is the cardinal. And this picture. And this picture of the cardinal here shows this very beautiful bird with the bright red color, the bright-red beak, the crest on its head. And the cardinals is one of the very first birds to start singing in the spring of the year. As a matter of fact, they usually their song in the latter part of January. And by February, you can hear Cardinal singing almost every day. So we can see that, have seen that birds do have definite habitat preferences. They, some birds prefer woodlands. while other birds prefer the open fields. And still others are wandering birds which use both the woody cover and the open field. Now next week, boys and girls, we're going to be talking about some of the adaptations of birds. And birds are particularly adapted to feeding on particular types of food. And the things that have been adapted, as far as the birds are concerned, the adaptations are to be found largely in the bills and in the feet of birds. So next week, we'll talk about these adaptations to particular food habits. So until then, so long.

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