



Justine McKeen and the Bird Nerd

Sigmund Brouwer

illustrated by Dave Whamond

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About the Book

When a small bird is injured after flying into the school window, the students are shocked and upset. But they are even more shocked when school bully Jimmy Blatzo rescues the bird and nurses it back to health. Blatzo may have saved one bird, but the problem is much bigger and not confined to the school grounds. Birds are flying into the windows at the town hall too. With the help of Justine, green activist extraordinaire, Blatzo gets the courage he needs to approach town council. Getting over his fear of public speaking will be one challenge. Getting used to his new nickname, “Bird Nerd,” will be another matter entirely.

About the Author

Bestselling author of many novels and several series of childrens' titles, and with over 3 million books in print in five different languages, **Sigmund Brouwer's** *Absolute Pressure* was a Junior Library Guild selection. Among Sigmund's titles are eight on the Canadian Children's Book Centre Best Books for Kids & Teens.

About the Writing

I was the original Bird Nerd. When I was in elementary school, I wanted to be a forest ranger, and I spent hours ticking off a list of birds that I'd seen. During the research for *Bird Nerd*, I learned what I felt were two important things. One, lots—I mean LOTS of birds are killed by flying into man-made structures, and two, there are simple steps that we can take to save those birds, so simple that kids can make a big difference if they choose. Naturally, Justine and her friends want to help..

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

- Discuss the various natural dangers that birds face as they look for food, raise baby birds and as they migrate.
- Spend some time in the classroom discussing and identifying the types of birds students see in their daily lives.

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. With so many birds around us, why do we rarely find dead birds on the ground?
2. Can you think of how humans accidentally hurt birds?
3. Can you think of how humans can take steps to protect all sorts of birds?

Suggested Activities

1. Research where local birds spend summers and winters.
2. Find out how many eggs are in the nest of local birds, and how many baby birds perish if the mother bird flies into a window.
3. Make some decals for the classroom windows to scare birds from flying into the windows.
4. Make a list of ideas to email to parents on how to make windows at home safer for birds.
5. For each of the identified species found in the Prereading Idea above, find out if the birds are migratory, and what is their average speed of flying.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

1. *National Geographic Backyard Guide to the Birds of North America* (National Geographic Backyard Guides, 2011) by Jonathan Alderfer and Paul Hess.
2. www.almanac.com/topics/birding-fishing/bird-sounds
3. bird song app at iTunes: Chirp! Bird Song USA+ by iSpiny.

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

- Justine McKeen, Queen of Green* (Orca Echoes)
Justine McKeen, Walk the Talk (Orca Echoes)
Justine McKeen, Pooper Scooper (Orca Echoes)
Justine McKeen, Eat Your Beets (Orca Echoes)