Nature School

Nature Nova Scotia

Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists

Connecting youth with Nature through hands-on learning experiences.

education.outreach@naturens.ca

2026

Updated November 2026

About Us

Mission

Nature Nova Scotia (legally known as the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists) exist to aid in the communication and cooperation among naturalists, natural history societies, and other nature-focused groups in Nova Scotia. We profile and protect Nova Scotia's natural history by supporting new research, hosting educational events, and advocating for science-based conservation and responsible environmental management at local, regional, and national levels.

Our Approach to Environmental Education

Nature Nova Scotia believes that youth engagement and outdoor learning are essential to building a future rooted in environmental stewardship and community care. Through hands-on educational programming for schools, youth groups, and families, Nature Nova Scotia helps young people explore Nova Scotia's natural history in meaningful and accessible ways. Programs are designed to encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and deepen a connection to the natural world through active participation and exploration.

Program Overview

Program	Ages/Grade	Format	Length	Group Size	Cost
Program 1: Birds & Protected Areas - Bird Form & Function	Grade P-3	Indoor, outdoor, or hybrid	1-2 hours	10-30	$60/hr
Program 2: Birds & Protected Areas - Bird Habitats & Population Trends	Grade 4-6	Indoor, outdoor, or hybrid	1-2 hours	10-30	$60/hr
Program 3: Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids - Winter Bird Identification and Counting	Program can be adapted for different age groups	Outdoors Dec-Jan	1 hour	10-30	$60/hr
Program 4: Great Backyard Bird Count - Community Science & Bird Monitoring	Program can be adapted for different age groups	Outdoors February	1 hour	10-30	$60/hr
Program 5: Custom Nature School (for specific requests, please inquire)	Programs can be adapted for different age groups and topics	Indoor, outdoor, or hybrid	1-2 hours	10-30	Pricing varies depending on program scope

Email education.outreach@naturens.ca for inquiries.

Programs 1 and 2: Birds and Protected Areas

Description: Through hands-on activities, games, outdoor exploration, and inquiry-based learning, students will discover the fascinating world of birds, habitats, and protected areas in Nova Scotia. Participants will explore how birds are adapted to survive in different environments and learn how protected spaces help support healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Programs are designed to foster curiosity, observation skills, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world through engaging, age-appropriate experiences connected to local wildlife and conservation.

Format: The Program facilitator can adapt the program to deliver it indoors, outdoors, or hybrid.

Duration: Indoor and outdoor programming is 1 hour. A hybrid (Indoor and outdoor) program can be extended to 2 hours.

What Students Will Learn:

- How to observe and identify common birds in Nova Scotia
- Bird form and functions
- Bird population trends
- Key adaptations that enable birds to survive in their environment (beaks, feathers, flight, behaviours)
- The role of habitats in supporting healthy bird populations
- What protected areas are and why they matter
- How people can support birds and biodiversity at their homes and in their communities

Activities May Include:

- Interactive presentation
- Bird beak relay game
- Bird vocabulary matching
- Binocular how-to exercise
- Migration Madness
- Bird predator and prey tag
- Fly forward game
- Habitat matching
- Bird watching
- Bird call elimination activity
- Bird nest building

What We Provide:

- Class set of bird identification sheets
- Online lesson plans (P-3, 4-6)
- 1 bird activity book
- Class set of colouring sheets

Programs 3 and 4: Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids & the Great Backyard Bird Count

Description: Students will take part in community bird-count initiatives. Participants will practise identifying birds by sight and sound, observing bird behaviours, and recording the number and types of birds they encounter. Students will also explore the importance of community science, learning how observations collected by everyday people contribute to larger bird population monitoring efforts and conservation research. These programs encourage curiosity, careful observation, and an appreciation for local wildlife while allowing students to contribute to real-world conservation science

Format: These programs are delivered entirely outdoors and involve guided exploration of suitable natural areas and bird habitats (this could be on school grounds or at a nearby park. Location will influence the type and number of birds we may see). Christmas Bird Count 4 kids are held in December and January. The Great Backyard Bird Count is held in February.

Duration: 1 - 2 hours, depending on the location. (1 hour may work well on school grounds, whereas walks to nearby parks may last 2 hours).

What Students Will Learn:

- How to observe and identify common birds in Nova Scotia by sight and sound
- How to use binoculars and bird identification guides
- How to recognize common bird calls and listen for birds in their surroundings
- How to count birds and record observations accurately
- The basics of community science and citizen-led wildlife monitoring
- How bird observations contribute to larger datasets and scientific research
- How seasonal changes influence bird diversity, behaviour, and distribution

Activities May Include:

- Guided birdwatching
- Bird identification using field guides and binoculars
- Listening for and identifying birds
- Recording bird species, numbers and behaviours.

What We Provide:

- Class set of bird identification sheets
- Binoculars during the program
- Bird seed
- Tally Sheets
- Take-home information for app tools such as Merlin and eBird

Program 5: Custom Nature School

Description: Nature Nova Scotia program facilitators may be able to design and deliver a custom nature-based learning experience tailored to your group's interests, age range, and curriculum goals. These visits can be adapted to focus on specific themes or seasonal opportunities and may include hands-on activities such as owl pellet dissections, critter dipping, bird-focused investigations, or other inquiry-based outdoor learning experiences.

Format: The Program facilitator can adapt the program to deliver it indoors, outdoors, or hybrid.

Duration: 1-2 hours

Please reach out for specific inquiries at education.outreach@naturens.ca

Booking

Please reach out to us as soon as possible, as our schedules fill up fast.

If a school or group has to cancel the program, there are no associated cancellation fees, and we would work together to reschedule.

The program is currently prioritizing the Greater Halifax Area. Occasional funding may support further travel, so please inquire.

Schools that would like to book 3 programs in one day will be offered a $30 discount.

To book, please see our booking page: https://calendar.app.google/HGm7ALto4cpxe9H66 or email education@naturens.ca with details such as:

- Name of School and Location
- Preferred dates and times
- Group size
- Group age
- Preferred program format (indoors, outdoors, hybrid)
- Number of programs booked on chosen date

Payment

An invoice will be provided to the school, and a payment may be made within 2 weeks following the program delivery. Payments may be made via cheque or e-transfer.

FAQ

Q: My class/group is not located in the Greater Halifax Area; can I still book?

A: Currently, we are prioritizing Halifax and surrounding areas; however, please express your interest in an email to education.outreach@naturens.ca with the location, and we can try to accommodate. This information is also valuable for funding applications that may allow us to expand our current reach.

Q: Can I combine two classes for the program?
A: Yes, as long as the group size does not exceed 30 children.

Q: Do you come to the school, or do students travel to a site?
A: The NatureNS team can go to your school OR meet your class at a different site such as a local park

Q: Do you offer the program in French?
A: Not at this time.

Q: How long has your organization been offering youth programming?
A: Nature Nova Scotia has been offering public events since 1990, connecting people with local natural history and encouraging engagement in nature conservation and advocacy. While families have long been welcome at these events, the organization has increasingly focused on creating programs specifically designed for youth and families. Beginning in 2023, staff expanded this work by partnering with other organizations to deliver fun, hands-on nature experiences for young people. In September 2025, Nature Nova Scotia launched a Nature School Pilot Program, which continues to evolve through participant feedback and ongoing learning. During the 2025-2026 program year, Nature Nova Scotia delivered 15 youth programs, engaging nearly 300 young participants.

Q: How can my class get the program for free during fall 2026?

A: A class may receive a free program if the school is willing to be a window demonstration site to reduce bird collisions. To participate, NatureNS must receive written permission to install semi-permanent window tape on selected window(s), and school staff must conduct pre and post-installation surveys, monitoring for window collision evidence.