

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article Canada's National Bird
Issue December 2016



Lesson details: Grade level: 6-9

Purpose:

- Students will read *Canadian Geographic's* Canada's National Bird feature, review the Great Canadian National Bird Debate and write a persuasive letter to support or oppose Can Geo's recommendation of the grey jay for National Bird of Canada.

Critical inquiry:

- What are Canada's national symbols?
- What defines a Canadian?
- What needs to be considered when selecting a national symbol?
- Do you think it is important for Canada to have a national bird? Why or why not?

Materials:

- December 2016 issue of *Canadian Geographic*
- Copies of The Great Canadian National Bird Debate worksheet (attached; one for each student or pair of students)
- Letter template (attached)
- Writing utensils and paper
- Ability to project/view the online video of the Great Canadian National Bird Debate (youtu.be/cH90ZVZOXN8) (optional)

Lesson activity:

- Review the Great Canadian National Bird Debate held in Ottawa at the Canadian Museum of Nature on September 19, 2016 (youtu.be/cH90ZVZOXN8, or pages 40-41 in the December 2016 issue of *Canadian Geographic*). Tell students that they will decide whether they think Can Geo made the right choice in recommending the grey jay as the National Bird of Canada.
- Divide students into small groups. Distribute one copy of *Can Geo's* feature story and The Great Canadian National Bird Debate worksheet to each group. Have students review the main points made during the debate and record them on the worksheet.
- Discuss the main arguments as a class and hold a vote on which bird students would choose as Canada's national bird. If possible, hold your own mock debate using key points outlined in the feature story and the debate.
- Review how to write a persuasive letter with your students. Individually, have students write a letter to Can Geo's editor indicating whether they agree or disagree with the recommendation of the grey jay as Canada's national bird and why. Share students' letters with info@cangeoeducation.ca or on Twitter ([@CanGeo](https://twitter.com/CanGeo)).

Extend your geographical thinking:

Have students use Canadian Geographic Education's [blank map of Canada](#) to illustrate the grey jay's range. Using their map as a guide, have students reflect on the grey jay's habitat, its physical and behavioral adaptations and where Canadians can see the species. Determine other animals that may be found in the grey jay's habitat and discuss the similarities and differences of each species.






CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article Canada's National Bird
Issue December 2016



The Great Canadian National Bird Debate worksheet

On September 19, 2016, five experts met to debate which species should hold the title of National Bird of Canada. Review their arguments (youtu.be/cH90ZVZOXN8, or pages 40-41 in the December 2016 issue of *Canadian Geographic*) and complete the chart below.

Birds	Main arguments for and against
Loon 	
Snowy owl 	
Grey jay 	
Canada goose 	
Black-capped chickadee 	

CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article Canada's National Bird
Issue December 2016



Which bird should be selected as Canada's national bird? Why?

Which bird should **not** be selected as Canada's national bird? Why?



CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC IN THE CLASSROOM

Article Canada's National Bird
Issue December 2016



Canadian Geographic
1155 Lola Street, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario
K1K 4C1

Dear Editor of *Canadian Geographic*,

Sincerely,

