

## Life Science class

The advice I received from a bird-watching friend about squirrels not liking Vaseline petroleum jelly seems to be right. After putting Vaseline on the metal pole holding the bird feeder, I have not seen squirrels getting a free lunch. There are still squirrels on the fence and in surrounding trees, but they stay off the bird feeder. New data for bird sightings include: No additional birds were seen during the afternoon of March 24<sup>th</sup>. March 25<sup>th</sup> was not a busy day, as only a male cardinal and tufted titmouse visited the feeder. Things were a little busier on March 26<sup>th</sup> with sightings of a black-capped chickadee, female cardinal, mourning dove, and northern mocking bird. As of noon March 27<sup>th</sup> the birds include a female cardinal and chipping sparrow.

Did you find which bird has been conspicuously absent from our feeder? The last group of dark-eyed juncos we saw was on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Curiously we saw these birds everyday from March 6<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>, so what happened? If you look at a map showing the distribution of juncos, they winter in the south and then head north (Canada and Alaska) in the spring to breed. Since these are social birds and travel in groups, may be March 19<sup>th</sup> is when they flew north. This is something to keep in your minds over the next week or two.

Our garden plants have not had a growth spurt in the past few days. New data include: (tomato) T1 6.5 cm (no change); T2 6.4 cm; (watermelon) W1 5.1 cm (no change); W2 10.5 cm; and (basil) B 2 cm. No green bean seeds have sprouted yet. I will sit these out the next few days in the warmer temperatures and, hopefully, sunshine. After next week, I may plant everything in the garden plots outside the school (assuming there are not cold nights in the extended weather forecast). Please record all of these data in your notebooks.

Have you seen any new birds at your houses? One thing to look for is the color change that will soon occur in gold finches. Right now the males are still mostly brown with just patches of pale yellow. Do you remember why the color changes? Think about that for a while.