



# Life Cycle Wheels: An Introduction for Beginners

## Overview

Young children make a very basic life cycle wheel for a bird.

## Recommended Ages

Ages 5-7 (grades K-2)

## Activity Time

15-30 minute

## Materials

- > Paper plates or poster board circular cut-outs (estimate 2/child)
- > Coloring pencils and pencils
- > Brass fasteners (split pins)
- > Copy of *An Egg is Quiet* by Dianna Aston
- > Copies of the eggs & birds illustrations in the book
- > Pictures of nests for common species

## Activity in Action

Send us your pictures and comments on this activity to [bday@birdday.org](mailto:bday@birdday.org).

## Introduction

All living things have life cycles. Life cycles are the changes living things go through from birth to adult. For example, a bird lays an egg, the egg hatches; the young bird grows into an adult; the adult bird makes a nest and lays eggs. This cycle is repeated over and over. What other animal life cycles can you think of? A frog, a butterfly, a plant, what else?

## Life Cycle Wheels: Keeping a Record

The reoccurrence of plant and animal life cycles depends on the seasons (amount of light) and weather. Consider it nature's calendar, and it is important for all plants and animals. For people, the regular timing of nature's cycles is important for planning our gardens, getting flu shots, going swimming or sledding, and looking out for bad weather.

Life cycle wheels are a way to keep a record of what is happening in nature, just like a calendar we use to keep track of events in our lives such as birthdays and holidays. The round shape of the wheels allow us to see the patterns of natural events more easily than on a month-to-month calendar.

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## Festival Make-N-Take Activity

### Preparation

- 1. Purchase a copy of the book *An Egg is Quiet* by Dianna Aston**
- 2. Make copies and laminate the illustrations of birds and eggs at the beginning and end of the book.**  
Gather any additional display items that your organization may already have such as pictures, nests, eggs, etc. We are not recommending to gather these items from the wild for this activity. *Remember to have nests and eggs you need to have the proper permits from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*
- 3. Cut-out circles from poster board.**  
Gather your supplies--poster board, brass fasteners, pencils, color pencils, etc.
- 4. Prepare your plates**  
We recommend preparing the plates for little ones. Divide your plates into two even groups.  
First Group: Use a black marker to divide the plates into four even sections. See pictures below.  
Second Group: On the other half of plates cut out a 1/4 section. Punch a hole for the brass fastener in the middle. Do not assemble the wheel yet.
- 5. Make a sample(s)**  
Use the pictures included with this activity to model cutting out your 2 types of circles roughly the size of a standard paper plate; one circle is complete, and cut a 1/4 section out of the other circle. Each person will get a complete circle and a circle with a 1/4 section missing.  
Next, on the circle that is complete divide it into four even sections. Choose a local native bird to highlight its life cycle. Consider including other details such as a nest, adult feeding a chick, and other details that would tell more of the life cycle story. Young kids may not be able to convey so much detail but it is good for them to see your example. Samples of wheels completed by second graders are included with this activity.



### Leading the Activity

- 1. Read or Display *An Egg is Quiet* by Dianna Aston.**  
Reading would be a good way to begin your activity if you are running it at set time during your festival. If not, then display the book and refer to it when talking about the activity or walk through it with visitors as they come to your activity.
- 2. Introduce the idea of life cycles to children.** Refer to the introductory information for this activity.
- 3. Show children the laminated pictures of the eggs and birds.**  
Explain they will make a life cycle of a bird. Show your models of life cycle wheels to the kids. Explain what is going on in each section of the wheel.
- 4. Children choose their egg/bird.**  
Show children some options for their egg/bird from the book or local options you have provided.
- 5. Assemble the wheel after children have finished.**

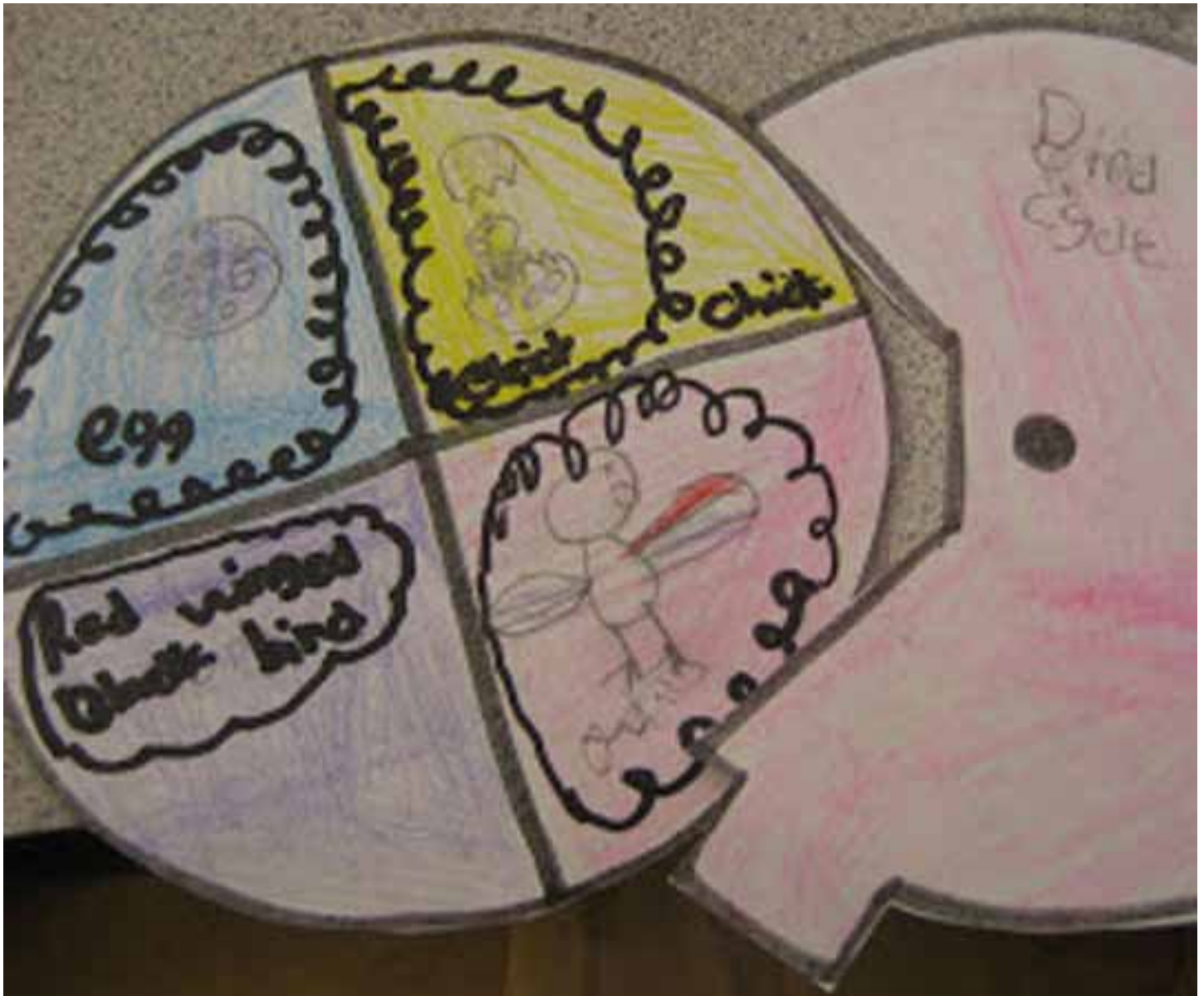
## Sample Life Cycle Wheels

Sample wheels are provided by 2nd grade teacher Laurie Foote from her blog Chickadee Jubilee <http://chickadeejubilee.blogspot.com/2012/04/bird-life-cycles.html>



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