

Bird-Watching Project Planner

Bird watching is a very educational hobby that happens to be entertaining as well. You can watch birds in your own backyard, the park, or even on birding tours. Bird watching can develop skills of observation, categorization, journal writing, sketching, and patience.

What you will need:

- Life List – this is a record of every species of bird that you see.
- Journal – for sketching or making notes about the birds you see.
- Field Guide – a book with pictures to help you identify birds.
- Binoculars – birds are small and difficult to approach, so these can be very helpful.
- Camera – photographing birds can be tricky, but getting that perfect shot is worth the effort.
- Birds! – put feeders in your yard or go to a place that birds are plentiful.

Identifying Birds

When you see a bird that you cannot name, make notes about its size, shape, color, and any distinct markings. Draw a sketch or take a picture if possible. Then use your information to find the bird in your field guide. Knowing what birds are common in your area is most helpful. State parks or nature centers often have lists or field guides of native birds. Do your best to identify a bird as specifically as possible.

Observation

Bird watching offers more than just learning to identify birds. Watching birds as they go about their daily business can be very entertaining and enlightening. It can be great fun to watch a bird chase down an insect or build a nest. Listening to bird calls and matching the call to the bird is sometimes quite challenging. As you observe, make notes about the birds' behaviors, habits, calls and other details. Many surprises await you.

Be Kind

Always remember to be kind to birds and other animals. Sometimes it may be tempting to get involved by chasing the birds or throwing things at them; but it is better to observe without interfering. Let the birds tell you their stories.

Bird Watching Resources

Local Bird Watching Organizations or Groups:

Name

Address

Phone Number

Places to Watch Birds (parks, wildlife refuges, etc.):

Name

Address

Phone Number

Bird Watching Books and Field Guides

Title

Author

Internet Websites:

Bird Identification Tips

When you are trying to identify a bird, you will need to make note of details in the following areas:

- **Size** – Most songbirds are small, waterfowl tend to be a bit larger, and birds of prey can be very large.
- **Color** – Paying close attention to colors of specific parts of the bird will be an important key to identification. Remember that many male and female birds of the same species will have different coloring. Males are usually more colorful.
- **Body** – Study the overall shape of the body. Also, make note of any color patterns on the throat, breast, belly or back.
- **Bill** – The size, shape and color of a bird's bill can be a great clue. Doing some research in this area to learn the different types and uses of bills will be very helpful.
- **Feet** – Birds' feet come in many colors and have many uses, such as perching, swimming, or catching prey.
- **Head** – Pay special attention to coloring and whether or not the bird has a crest on top of its head.
- **Wings** – When the bird takes flight, look at the shape and color of the wings. The bird may have wing bars, which are like stripes across the wing.
- **Tail** – Look for the length of tail feathers, coloring, and the shape of the tail when the feathers are fanned.

