



Birding Basics

How to Use this Outline: This outline was originally made to accompany a program bin with education conducted by a classroom teacher or environmental educator. In uncertain times we become flexible and adaptable; insert at-home lesson plans. Starting with the pre-activities you (the amazing at-home-educator) can get some background on the topic and learn some helpful websites for teaching the subject. The procedure section is designed to be hands-on and interactive and student driven. The post-activities are a fun way to insert art, crafts, snacks and other resources to review content and have fun with the subject matter. Please reach out if you have any concerns or issues jenny.ammon@marionswcd.net

Level: 1 -5 grades

Time: 45 minutes

Objectives:

1. Students will learn how to identify and categorize birds through observation.
2. Students will learn how the characteristics of birds tell us about where they make their habitat.
3. Students will learn how to use binoculars and look for local bird life.

Materials:

- Binoculars (If you don't have them, observation skills will work!)
- Bird ID <https://myodfv.com/wildlife-viewing/species/birds>

Pre-Activities:

Observing bird's beaks and feet can tell us where they live, what they eat and provide clues about its lifestyle. The link below has great beginning birder tips on identifying beaks, feet and overall bird shape, enjoy!
<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/teaching-bird-id/>

Beginning Birding Videos: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/inside-birding/>

Becoming familiar with how to categorize birds is critical for teaching this lesson. Follow the five steps to encourage students to become a bird expert.

1. Have students make a list of all the birds they can think of, help them sort them into hawks, songbirds, shorebirds, owls, etc.
2. Give the student one specific bird to focus on and study.
3. Observe, go outside and scout for bird, draw, or look through field guides/websites.
4. Keep learning! Check out the [Merlin app](#).
5. Report your sightings on [eBird](#) or [project feederwatch](#)

Learning to use binoculars is a fun and scientific way to engage students in birdwatching. Learning the basics of how to adjust binoculars, keeping the bird in sight is a lifelong skill.

<https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/explore/optics/how-to-use-binoculars.php>

Procedure:

1. Using inquiry, ask the students what makes a bird a bird? **Feathers, hollow bones, hard-shelled eggs**, beaks, two wings, warm-blooded. Discuss how bird adaptations help them to survive in their habitats. Feathers: flight, mating & thermoregulation, Hollow bones: light weight for flight, Songs: warning to others, mating, feeding calls.
2. Ornithologists (Scientists who study birds) use size and shape, beaks and feet, color and habitat to help identify one bird from the next. Use the pictures provided to have students make hypothesis on where the birds live (wading bird, bird of prey, woodpecker, perching bird, upland game bird, duck).
3. Teach the students how to be safe with the binoculars.
 - a. Only use the binoculars when you are standing still. Keep the binoculars strapped to your body.
 - b. Keep your eyes on the bird and bring the binoculars to your eyes, do not take your eyes off of your target.
 - c. Find an object in the distance to focus on, close right eye, adjust center focus until image is clear, open right eye and close left eye, adjust right eyepiece diopter until image is in clear focus.
4. Now we are ready to go on a bird hike. If your feet are moving your mouth is closed. Respect the habitat, birds and teacher while we hike. Try [the fox walk](#) if you want to be super quiet and see lots of wildlife.

Post-Activities & Resources:

1. Have students draw their favorite birds in a bird book.
2. Make a bird feeder with an adults help https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1_axmwoMQk
3. Have students write how bird shapes help them to fly. What form of transportation was designed after the shape of birds?
4. Make edible bird nests (this recipe contains peanut butter)
<https://www.aheadofthyme.com/2016/03/no-bake-butterscotch-and-peanut-butter-birds-nest-cookies/>
5. **Birding Quizlet:** <https://quizlet.com/521179648/birding-vocab-marion-swcd-flash-cards/>

<https://www.education.com/worksheet/article/owl-color-by-number/>

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/inside-birding/>