



BACKYARD BIRDS

THE THINGS WITH FEATHERS

You may not have noticed recently - but birds are **EVERYWHERE!** In your backyard, your front yard, the trees on your morning walk, in the road, in the sky, on the river... As spring approaches, there are more and more birds **migrating** North every day and we are going to start seeing a lot of activity in the coming weeks! Birds are a great thing to observe because you can uniquely tell them apart based on their feathers (also known as **plumage**). There is so much diversity in the bird world, you can explore on this interactive map [HERE](#).



Image 1: This is an Osprey. They build nests and fish near water like the Umpqua River

In Oregon, bird watchers (known as **birders**) have identified over 540 different species of birds in our state! Here in Douglas County we have over 350 bird species recorded!

Watch this video for more great info about birds!



GETTING READY TO BIRD WATCH

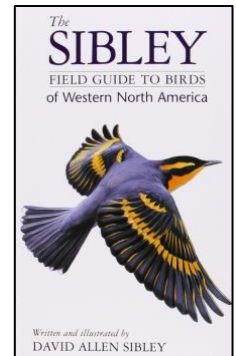
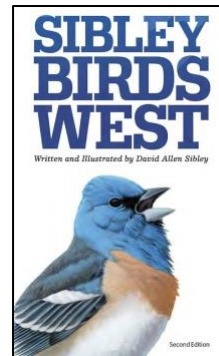
Before you go birding, you need the right tools. As a young scientist, now is a great time to gather your supplies and be prepared to conduct scientific studies.

Field Guide

The first thing you need is a field guide! This is a list of the birds in your area, usually accompanied by pictures and maps of where these birds can be found (distribution maps). The books on your right are 2 common bird guides for the West coast, including Oregon. Check with an adult at home to see if you already own one of these books. If you don't, no worries, here are a few links for online field guides to help you identify backyard birds from home.

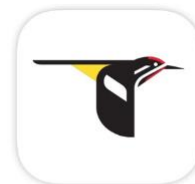
[Umpqua Birds Guide](#)

[Common Oregon Backyard Birds](#)



Identification Apps

Do you want an App that helps you identify a bird based on its size and colors? Ask an adult if they can help you download the Merlin [Bird ID app](#) and it will help you identify the bird based on location, size, color and behavior!



Merlin Bird ID
From the Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Binoculars

Binoculars can help, but are not necessary. If your household has a pair, get them out, give them a good clean and see what you can find!

Luckily birds range in lots of sizes and its easy to watch birds without binoculars.



EXPERIMENT 1: Test your bird knowledge

It may be a bit overwhelming to start thinking about identifying all of the birds out there. **BUT!** I bet you already know more than you think. I've created a small quiz for you to test your knowledge and recognize some of the local birds in Oregon.

Instructions:

1. Follow the link below and take the bird-identification quiz:

<https://forms.gle/URy72DifhwxT3E1w5>

2. When you are done make sure to check your score and see if you got them all right!
3. Use your observation journal (see the last @Home Explorer Activity) to write down some of the birds you already know and ones you didn't!



Image 2: This is an Anna's hummingbird. Its feathers are iridescent (meaning they shine brightly in the sun).

GAME 2: Bird BINGO!





We can learn a lot about birds from their Size, Shape, Color and Behavior! These are the key ways to identify them! Before we start identifying birds, let's get more familiar with them. See if you can Blackout this BINGO card and find every bird point!

You will need:

- Pencil and Paper
- Printer (optional)

Instructions:

1. You can print out this BINGO sheet by clicking [HERE](#) or You can copy down the BINGO board onto a piece of paper and bring it with you on your next walk.
2. Over the next week, take this sheet out with you and see if you can start checking off all of the boxes. You are starting to learn the fundamentals of birding!
3. You can find a printable version for younger birders in the family (ages 5-9) [HERE](#).

Find a bird house in someone's yard	Next time you watch a movie or show, see if you can spot a bird on screen	Find a bird with this shape 	Find a feather on the ground
Find a bird with this silhouette 	A bird eating something off of the ground.	A bird that is completely 1 color	Identify 2 different bird calls in the morning
A bird sitting on a roof	Find 2 or more birds flying together in a flock	Can you find a bird like this? 	Find an American robin
2 birds together in a tree	Find a soaring bird like this 	A bird with blue plumage	A bird sitting on a wire

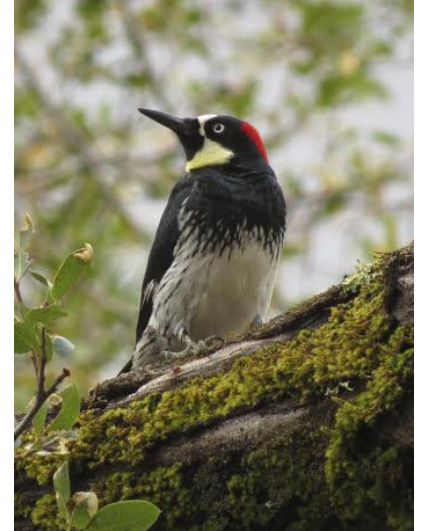


EXPERIMENT 3: Recording your data and becoming a citizen scientist!

OK! So, you're learning the bird basics and you are starting to identify birds in your backyard using your handy-dandy field guides! Now it's time to start getting serious 😊

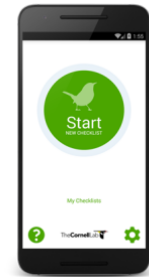
Birds are important to study and collect data on because they are **bioindicators**. That means that their presence or absence tells us about the health of an area. It's just like when your teacher would take attendance in the morning; if half the class is absent, that probably means that there is something unhealthy going around, and the class cannot function normally. Scientists collect a lot of data on birds to tell if different **ecosystems** (all of the living and nonliving things in an area) are healthy, but they can't do it alone! This is where we come in!

We have the chance to be **citizen scientists**, which means that we can help scientists protect birds by going birding and submitting our data on the internet. Check out this video with an adult to learn more and see if you can start collecting data in your yard or on your walks outside. Remember, every bird counts!



You will need:

- A Pencil
- A phone, tablet or computer
- Help from an adult
- Your observation journal or Data Sheet - *click [HERE](#) to download and print*



Instructions:

1. To collect citizen science data on birds and submit it online, you will need to have an adult help you create an eBird account. You can write down your bird sightings on paper and then enter them onto the computer or you can download the eBird app and enter the sighting directly into your phone or tablet.
2. When you are birding, the important things to write down are the date, the time you start birding, the time you stop, your location and whether you are moving (walking) or standing in 1 spot the entire time.
3. As you get used to identifying birds, start by birding in the same places at the same time. Maybe spend 10 minutes every morning looking outside while you eat breakfast, or go on the same walk every day at lunchtime. This will help you get familiar with what is there, and with the help of your field guide, you'll be identifying in no time!
4. Once you feel ready, you can start recording your data officially on eBird or on the data sheets. Every bird counts and you are making a difference towards protecting birds in the Umpqua Watershed!
5. If you need help identifying birds, you can email Ms. Robyn descriptions or pictures and she can help you!

@Home Observations

While you're at home, take a few minutes to watch live video footage from 2 different bird nests. These birds are also trying to practice "Stay Home. Save Lives" and can be seen spending a lot of time on their nest when they're not hunting for food! See if you can spot difference between the different bird species' behaviors, nest sites or even how they've built their nest. These cameras are on all the time to check in whenever you like!



A nesting Eagle pair in Iowa with a chick



Ollie and Olga the Osprey in Oregon

Thanks for conducting science with me for this Home Explorer activity from Umpqua Watersheds' Education Program. This week's activity was made in collaboration with the Umpqua Valley Audubon Society. Click on their logo below for more information about birding in this area!
Join me for new activities posted every week!

- Ms. Robyn

