

BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS

Parents: While many birds migrate during the winter months, several species will hang around and tough it out. Binoculars can be used in this activity but are not necessary. Utilize bird guides if you have them available. Many cabins within the region may have a guide already handy for guest to use while they visit. Check the bookshelf in the cabin where you are staying. Free guides of local birds or frequently seen birds can sometimes be obtained from nature centers. There are also many great apps out there. While we do not recommend any certain app over another, do your research and choose an app that is best for you and your family. However, remember that online service can be sketchy here in the hills. This activity is fun to repeat on different days to compare weather conditions, number of birds and/or species of birds you can see.

Considerations: Review all Leave No Trace Principles before beginning any activity/lesson. This activity can also be done sitting by a window enjoying a hot chocolate after a long hike can be a relaxing activity. If heading outside, dress for the weather. This activity can be done in a 10 – 15-minute time span depending on the grade level of the student.

Before you begin:

It may be helpful to review the parts of a bird and what they are called so everyone can describe what they see more consistently. Usually a bird guidebook will have this somewhere in it. If not, The University of Cornell has excellent online resources for learning more about birds.

Let's Begin

Materials needed:

- Data sheet on the back of these activity instructions
- Pencil
- Field Guide (if you have one)
- Binoculars (not necessary, but helpful if you have them)

Before you begin your 10 – 15-minute observation, take a few minutes to fill out the weather conditions portion of the data sheet. Weather can change even while you are completing the activity. Make note of any changes that may occur. For best results, repeat this activity at a different location, a different habitat type (Forest, Wetland, Lake, Open Meadow, Successional Area, Even in a Urban Setting), different time of day, or the next day at the same time to compare your observations. BEWARE: This activity can become addicting 😊!

EXTENSION:

- Create a graph or pie chart utilizing the data you collected
- Draw, paint, or create an artwork piece of your favorite bird
- Write a poem or story about the birds you observed
- Create a journal and begin keeping track of the different species you can see over time. (We call this a Life List)