

Bird Study Project Guidelines

Project Objectives

Project Goals

Beginning Bird Study

To observe and identify common birds.

To become familiar with a bird identification field guide.

Intermediate Bird Study

To continue to build on the knowledge gained from the Beginning level.

To observe birds in their natural habitat.

To learn the general characteristics of common birds and the vocabulary used to describe them (webbed, lobed, crest, talons, perching, seed-eater, etc.)

To pursue one or more particular areas of interest in a way that challenges you (barn owl, endangered species, decline of habitat, etc.).

Advanced Bird Study

To continue to build on the knowledge gained from the previous levels.

To challenge these members to go beyond the intermediate level of just learning more information, to reflect and then display the effect, influence, and/or relationship of birds in their own world (bird's effect on some aspect of our environment such as crops or mosquito population, the phenomenon of migration, detailed model of habitat requirements, etc.)

To use the members particular talents and resources to go beyond the expected and strive for the exceptional.

Note to all levels:

Each 4 H member has the option of remaining at any level of study until they feel ready to move to the next level.

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Project Guidelines

The bird study project should develop naturally as the 4 H member studies, observes and participates in bird related activities. For some members a notebook may be the best way to organize the material, for others a poster. Members may take photographs, collect pictures, construct a three dimensional project, make up a cross word puzzle, create a game, etc. Member should look over the choice of bird study classes to find a topic that interests them. They may also choose a creative topic and enter it in the "any related topic" class.

All members are encouraged to have their own field identification guide. They should learn how to use it and become very familiar with it. This will help to identify birds in their natural habitat. Many guide books have an index with a place to mark all the birds seen, or write the date of the first sighting next to the bird's picture.

Members are encouraged to complete a Goal Card for their project. A Goal Card is a 3x5 card which includes:

before the project starts:

a) Statement of goal for what you want to learn

after the project is complete:

b) Statement of what you did to try to accomplish your goal

c) Statement of what you learned

Members are also encouraged to complete a Project Record sheet for Bird Study to be included in their 4-H Personal Record book (green book) if they take a bird study project to fair.

Projects, whether a notebook, poster, 3-D exhibit, etc. should be educational and show what the member studied and learned about birds.

NO WILD BIRD FEATHERS, PARTS, NESTS OR EGGS ARE ALLOWED in any project or exhibit. A federal law, The Migratory Treaty Act, prohibits possessing these. The only exceptions to this law are: house sparrows, European starlings (non-native American birds), and legal game birds.

Notebook Guidelines

Project notebook may contain any of the following suggestions as appropriate to the topic being studied:

Bird Study Guide sheets, Beginning and Intermediate, are available (at 4 - H office) to direct members study of individual birds. Members may also create their own study guide sheets.

Bird coloring pages are also available to members. The "Fifty Favorite Birds" coloring book is available from the 4-H Office. Up to four pages may be copied and included in a project.

A Life List of birds seen by member (Available at 4 - H office).

Field notes taken while on bird observation outings.

Topography of a bird sheet, colored and filled out (Available at 4 - H office).

Newspaper or magazine clippings, or any other educational or interesting information relating to birds.

Photographs of birds, nests, habitats, etc. to match the birds or topic being studied.

Photographs of your back yard feeding station.

Materials from workshops or activities you attend that relate to birds.

The previous years work may be included in the back of the notebook, separated by a clearly marked divider.

Poster Guidelines

Poster should be 22"x28".

Poster should be designed to be read from a distance.

Member's name, age, and Community Club name should be written on the back of the poster.

Bird Study Exhibit Guidelines

1. Member's name, age, and community club name on exhibit.

2. Educational exhibits may be posters, three dimensional exhibits, hands-on displays, collections,

notebooks, photos, research, survey, or any other form of creative expression.

3. Exhibits will not be larger than 28" x 28" x 28".

4. Exhibits **will not** contain common wild bird feathers, parts, nests or eggs, except house sparrows,

European starling or legal game birds.

5. Exhibits may contain a Goal Card but it is not required.

Bird Study Exhibit Classes

Section A BIRD IDENTIFICATION

(Section A is intended primarily for Beginning Bird Study.)

Class Beginning Bird Study sheets with residency map in a notebook. (Available at 4-H office)

Class Drawn, colored or collected pictures of birds.

Class Observe and record birds seen for a designated period of time.

Class Any related topic.

Section B HABITAT

Class Wetlands

Class Residential

Class Vanishing Habitats

Class Any related topic

Section C DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Class Nests/ Eggs

Class Feeds

Class Intermediate Study Sheets and Residency Maps (available at 4-H office)

Class Topography of a Bird

Class Monitoring specific bird during nesting season.

Class Any related topic.

Section D AVIAN GROUPS

Class Study of 1 of 18 Avian Groups

Class In-depth study of specific birds

Class Any related topic.

Section E ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Class Food Chain

Class Effect of birds on their environment

Class Endangered species

Class Any related topic.

Section F TRAVEL

Class Migration

Class Residency

Class Bird Banding

Class Any related topic.

Project Activities

Use Field Guides or other bird books to fill out Bird Study Guide sheets for the birds that you see.

Learn to read and use the residency maps.

Keep a list of "Birds I've Seen" or Life List to remember all the new birds that you identify.

Learn about the avian groups and how the birds are divided by their feeding habits and body structure.

Put up bird feeders in your yard and observe and identify the birds that visit. Remember - once you have started winter feeding, don't stop until spring. Provide water also if you can.

Take a walk in your yard or the woods. Look for birds and bird nests in trees and shrubs. Watch the birds feed and care for their young, but DO NOT DISTURB them. Take field notes on your observations.

Visit local parks, including the Kalamazoo Nature Center and the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary.

Visit the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary to see Sandhill Crane migration. The sanctuary is on Seymour Rd, north of Jackson, MI. Cranes gather there during the fall migration, the best time is around the end of October to early November.

Build and maintain bird houses. Monitoring a bird nest box makes a great project and helps the cavity nesting birds that are losing nest locations to land development and non-native birds.

Learn the vocabulary used for nesting birds (incubation, clutch, brooding, fledge, etc.)

Join Citizen Scientist projects, such as The Great Backyard Bird Count, Project Feeder Watch or Nest Box Network sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. To learn more about bird biology and behavior on a broad scale, the scientific community needs help from citizen

monitors and amateur birders nationwide. Scientific study can be carried out by people of all ages. Citizen's who take part in these projects and submit their observations to scientists are contributing valuable information to an ever-expanding body of knowledge about our birds.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects all common wild birds found in the United States except the house sparrow, starling, feral pigeon, and resident game birds such as pheasant, grouse, quail, and wild turkeys. Resident game birds are managed separately by each State. The Bald Eagle Protection Act provides further protection to all Bald and Golden eagles. The Endangered Species Act further protects endangered species like the Peregrine falcon, the Northern spotted owl, and the Bald Eagle.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it **unlawful** for anyone to kill, capture, **collect, possess, buy, sell, trade, ship, import, or export any migratory bird**, including **feathers, parts, nests, or eggs**. The Bald Eagle Protection Act prohibits all commercial activities and some non-commercial activities involving Bald or Golden eagles, including their feathers or parts. The Endangered Species Act makes it illegal to sell, harm, harass, possess or remove protected animals from the wild.

Historically, the feathers from many migratory birds was highly desired by the clothing industry to the extent that the populations of some species were rapidly diminishing. More recently, with the popularity of Native American artifacts increasing, a lucrative market still exists for migratory bird feathers and eagle feathers to decorate many curios and art objects. Enforcement officers have no way to determine whether feathers used in art work were found on the ground in one's own backyard, or if the feathers came from a bird that was killed illegally. These prohibitions are therefore intended to eliminate any commercial market for the birds themselves, as well as their feathers and parts.

Violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Eagle Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act are considered criminal offenses and can result in significant fines and imprisonment. Exceptions to these laws are allowed for special permits, such as Scientific Collecting permit.

AVIAN GROUPS (Divided by feeding habits & body structure)

1. DIVING FISHERS

Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe

2. WADING FISHERS

Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron,
Great Egret, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Sandhill Crane

3. WATERFOWL

Swans Whistling Swan, Mute Swan

Geese Canada Goose, Snow Goose

Ducks Mallard, American Black Duck, Wood Duck, Common Pintail, American Wigeon,
Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Redhead, Canvasback, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal

4. BIRDS OF PREY

American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, Loggerhead Shrike, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle

Owls Common Screech Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl, Barred Owl,

Snowy Owl, Great Gray Owl, Saw-whet Owl

Soaring Hawks Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier

5. UPLAND GAME BIRDS

Common Bobwhite, Ruffed Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Prairie Chicken, Spruce Grouse, Wild Turkey

6. WADING AND SWIMMING INSECTIVORES

American Coot, Dowitcher, Dunlin, Common Gallinule, Killdeer, Northern Phalarope, Black-bellied Plover, Piping Plover, King Rail, Virginia Rail, Sanderling, Greater Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Common Snipe, Sora, Lesser Yellowlegs, American Woodcock

8. FLYING FISHERS

Bonaparte's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Black Tern, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Royal Tern

9. DOVES

Mourning Dove

10. SOARING INSECTIVORES

Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Chimney Swift, Common Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will

11. TREE TRUNK GLEANERS

Common Flicker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch

12. HUMMERS

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

13. FLYING INSECTIVORES

Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Pewee, Eastern Phoebe
Flycatchers Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher

14. SCAVENGER

Common Crow, Northern Raven, Turkey Vulture, Blue Jay, Gray Jay

15. SHRUB-FOLIAGE GLEANERS

American Redstart, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Northern Waterthrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, Ovenbird

Chickadees Black-capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, Carolina Chickadee, Vireos Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Solitary Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo

Warblers Blackburnian Warbler, Black & White Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Canada Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kirtland's Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler

Wrens Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Sedge Wren, Winter Wren

16. BERRY AND GROUND FEEDERS

Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Mockingbird, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, Veery, Cedar Waxwing

17. BLACKBIRDS

Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole, Brewer's Blackbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Bobolink, Brown-headed Cowbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Scarlet Tanager

18. SEED EATERS

Snow Bunting, Northern Cardinal, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Dickcissel, American Goldfinch, Common Redpoll, Rufous-sided Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco, Pine Grosbeak, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Horned Lark, House Finch, Purple Finch, Lapland Longspur, Pine Siskin

Sparrows American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Harris Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Leconte's Sparrow, Lincoln Sparrow, Savanna Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow,

19. INTRODUCED TO MICHIGAN BIRDS

House Sparrow, Starling, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rock Dove (Pigeon), European Starling, Gray Partridge

Resources

4-H PUBLICATIONS (these are free and may be picked up from the 4H office)

Bird Study Supplements: Feeding the Birds

Monitoring a Bird Nest Box

Bird Study Guide sheets: Beginning, Intermediate

Life List - list of birds to keep track of all birds seen and identified.

"Fifty Favorite Birds" Coloring Book (up to 4 pages may be copied and included in a project)

Instructions for building bird nest boxes, including: bluebird, wren, screech & saw-whet owl, barred owl, purple martin, ducks, Peterson bluebird houses, robin, swallow, and phoebe.

"Knowing Our Birds" Leader's Guide - Describes in more detail the 18 avian groups and what is unique to each.

BIRD STUDY RESOURCE KIT AT 4-H OFFICE

This resource kit contains lots of reference material. The kit may be checked out of the 4-H office for use by Bird Study Leaders and members. This Kit contains:

Books: Field Guide to Birds of North America

The Bird Feeder Book

Ornithology in Laboratory and Field

Reference note book with bird information clippings

many bird story books

Games: Bird Bingo, a vocabulary game

Concentration, an identification game

And much more

BOOKS

Field Guide to Birds of North America (Golden Press) (in 4-H resource box)

Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Birds (Roger Tory Peterson)
Peterson Field Guide to Bird's Nests (Hal H. Harrison)
The Bird Feeder Book (Donald & Lillian Stokes) (in 4-H resource box)
The Complete Birdhouse Book (Donald & Lillian Stokes)

MAGAZINES

Bird Watcher's Digest

Birds & Blooms

Living Bird (Cornell Lab)

COMPUTER PROGRAMS

Peterson Multimedia Guide to North American Birds (computer CD)

WEB SITES

Cornell Lab of Ornithology at: www.birds.cornell.edu

Federal Wildlife Services at: www.fws.gov