

# Backyard Birding

*Raccoon Creek Explorers Activity #8*

## Supplies:

- Notebook
- Pen or Pencil
- Birds of Ohio Checklist
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources Bird Guide
- Binoculars (optional)

Note: Always bring a parent or guardian with you when you go looking for birds. Never go alone.

Link to Birds of Ohio Checklist: <https://ohiodnr.gov/static/documents/wildlife/backyard-wildlife/Birds%20of%20Ohio%20Field%20Checklist%20pub363.pdf>

Link to ODNR field guides: <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-odnr/wildlife/documents-publications/backyard-wildlife-documents>

**Time: 60 minutes**

## Vocabulary:

Migration: Seasonal movement of animals from one region to another.

Raptor: A bird of prey. Examples include hawks, eagles, and falcons.

Songbird: A bird with a musical sound. Examples include warblers.

Waterfowl: Birds that live near water. Examples include geese, duck, and grebe.

Flock: A group of birds of one kind that travel, feed, and rest together.



## **Background:**

Birdwatching, or “birding,” is important because it gives people a personal connection to the environment around them and it fosters an appreciation of nature and its inhabitants. It encourages people to explore and discover new things. Birdwatching has rapidly increased in popularity in recent years. Why has birdwatching become so popular though?

Birdwatching helps improve mental health because of its benefits of using the outdoors and nature to boost your mood. Birdwatching helps scientists study bird behavior. Birds use migration to travel to different parts of the world depending on the temperature and the food that is available. Birdwatching can help study bird migration by seeing where different types of birds are depending on what season it is. Some birds prefer to stay in large groups called flocks, while others prefer to be alone. Birds, such as songbirds, prefer to stay in large groups to stay protected from predators. Some birds, such as raptors, prefer to be alone and hunt for food. Raptors look for small birds and mammals that are away from the flock to hunt. Waterfowl stay close to the water and stay in flocks when they migrate when the water freezes in the winter. They migrate to places that are warmer in the winter.

In this activity you will be exploring an area near you and looking for the different types of birds that live in your backyard! You might be surprised by how many you might find!

## **Let's get started:**

- 1.) Look at the Ohio Bird Field Guide and see what type of birds you might be able to find near you. The guide will have a map next to each bird to show you what part of Ohio they live in. Remember some birds do not stay in the same place all year because they migrate.
- 2.) Pick a location near you where you can birdwatch. Make sure to bring an adult with you and that the spot you pick is safe.
- 3.) Write down a list of birds you think you will see in your notebook. List at least 5 different birds.



4.) Bring your notebook, field guide, and binoculars.

5.) Write down the time, date, and location in your notebook so you remember where and when you birdwatched.

6.) Spend 30 minutes to 60 minutes outside looking for birds. The best way to look for them is by being quiet and patient. If you do not see birds in one spot you are looking at, try a different spot. Listen for where birds are in trees and remember some birds like being near water!

7.) Write down all the birds you find in your notebook.

8.) Return home when you are done and compare the list of birds you found with the list of birds you thought you would find.

**Reflect:**

What birds did you guess you would see and why?

What birds did you guess you would find but did not find? Why?

What is a bird you want to see in the future?

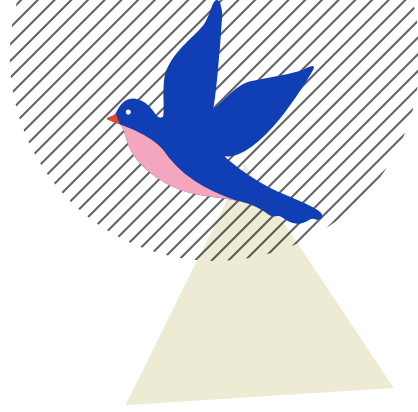
**Apply:**

Why do you only see some birds during certain times of the year?

Why are some birds colorful?

Do you think you will find more birds in the woods or in the city?





## Wrap Up:

You just completed your first bird-watching adventure! You can now say that you are a birder!! I hope you enjoyed it and decide to do it again in the future. You can always look for birds at the same location during a different season to see if you can find different birds in the same spot. Bird watching is a great way to enjoy nature and discover new things around you.

Next time you go for a walk take a minute to look around you and listen to see what kind of birds, or other animals, are around you. There is so much out there waiting to be discovered by a Raccoon Creek Explorer like you!

*Thanks everyone for exploring with us! We would love to see photos of any of the birds you found or where you went to look for birds while doing this activity. You can send them to us at [raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:raccooncreekpartnership@gmail.com). Keep on exploring!*

