

BIRD SCAVENGER HUNT: LIBRARY FACILITATION GUIDE



NOTES

AGE GROUP:

Pre-K - 3rd grade

TYPE OF PROGRAM:

Facilitated hands-on experience; Take-home activity

ACTIVITY TIME:

45 minutes to an hour

Participants learn about common local bird species by engaging in a scavenger hunt on a walk around the library grounds. This can be done as a facilitated program or provided as a handout for families to take home.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

- Evidence of birds can be found anywhere! Even if you can't see the birds, you can look for nests, feathers, birdfeeders, or listen very carefully to hear bird calls.
- Understanding what birds need to survive (the type of food they eat, shelters they build, and sources of water) can help you hone your birdwatching skills.
- Exploring different tools for bird identification, such as field guides, apps, Bird ID cards, and even the Scavenger Hunt Card, will help you become more familiar with birds in your region.
- These birds may be important local pollinators and seed dispersers, eat your arch-nemesis (mosquitoes), or just have a beautiful call you'll want to hear!

MATERIALS:

- [Scavenger Hunt Cards](#) (one for each participant or family group) page 4
- (Optional) Book, *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers
- (Optional) Tools for identifying birds, such as field guides, smart device apps such as [Merlin Bird ID](#), [eBird](#) by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and [Seek](#) by iNaturalist.
- (Optional) Binoculars and Spotting Scopes for viewing birds outside.

PREPARATION:

For take-home activity:

- Print and laminate Scavenger Hunt Cards.
- Select location for distribution (main circulation desk; children's area; etc.).
- Consider setting up a book display near the distribution area for families to learn more about birds.

For facilitated program:

- Print and laminate the Scavenger Hunt Cards

- Choose a suitable outdoor location for the Scavenger Hunt, such as a nearby park, nature reserve, or simply the block around the library. If going outdoors is not an option, find a large window in the library to observe from or consider placing photos of birds, nests, and other bird-related items around the building for an “Indoor Scavenger Hunt.”
- Gather materials, including:
 - Binoculars
 - Field guides or bird identification apps
 - A first aid kit and water for the group
- Check the weather and dress appropriately. Inform participants to wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes when promoting the program.

ACTIVITY:

STEP 1: Welcome visitors and families to the program. As an icebreaker, invite participants to share their favorite bird or favorite thing about nature.

STEP 2: Read *The Listening Walk*.

- Explain that today we will be going on a walk outside to look for birds so we will need to speak softly and avoid loud noises to not scare birds away. Don’t forget to listen hard – even if you can’t see any birds, maybe you can hear them!
- Ask the group: what are different things we might see on our walk that could be evidence of birds?
 - Answers include nests, birdfeeders, bird baths, bird poop, or food that might attract birds (nuts, berries, insects, etc.)
- Gather participants and provide basic birding tips, including:
 - How to use the identification tools
 - How to use the viewing equipment (binoculars, spotting scopes, etc)
 - The importance of being quiet and patient
 - Staying on designated paths
 - Respecting wildlife and keeping a safe distance from nests

STEP 3: Take the group on a walk around the library (or park, school, or other outreach location) to find as many things as possible from the Scavenger Hunt Card!

- As you’re leading the walk, be prepared to:
 - Make frequent stops to pause and observe birds
 - Encourage participation by discussing the birds seen (or evidence of birds!), Inviting patrons to share their observations and interesting

facts, and allowing participants to ask questions

- Be patient and flexible
- If a patron sees a bird but is having trouble identifying it, encourage them to focus on key characteristics like size, shape, color patterns, and bill shape. Use a field guide or bird ID app to narrow down possibilities based on location and season.
- Wrapping up the walk:
 - Invite participants to share their favorite sightings and experiences
 - Provide resources, such as future programming at the library or other local birding clubs for continued learning. Encourage them to check out HHMI Tangled Bank Studios' *Building For Birds* episode to learn more about solutions to window strikes: <https://www.wildhope.tv/episode/building-for-birds/>
 - Ask the group, "What dangers or obstacles do birds face in the wild?" Explain that window strikes are responsible for approximately 1 billion bird deaths per year in the United States alone, but there are things we can do to make our communities safer for birds. Window decals spaced 2 inches apart or bird-safe window tape can make windows more visible to birds, and turning lights off after dark during peak migration seasons in the fall and spring can help keep birds from striking windows.
 - Thank everyone for joining

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Consider inviting a bird expert (from your local Audubon Society Chapter, community college, or other organization) to lead the outdoor exploration.
- Practice using the bird identification field guides and apps prior to running the program.
- Remember: you don't have to be an expert to facilitate a great experience. Use the bird identification tools along with your participants and learn together!
- Consider offering repeated bird watching sessions over the course of the year.
- Consider keeping a large chart on the wall near the circulation desk where patrons can keep a tally count of which birds they've seen since their last library visit!

EXTENSIONS:

- Keep track of the different bird species you observed during the Scavenger Hunt and record them in a Citizen Science project, such as iNaturalist or eBird.
- For older/multigenerational audiences, consider incorporating a [BioBlitz](#) along with the Scavenger Hunt!

BIRD SCAVENGER HUNT



You can find birds outside no matter where you are! Some are year-round “resident” birds, some are just visiting as they migrate through, and others stay for an entire season.

Go on a bird scavenger hunt and see if you can find everything on this list! If you don’t see any birds, maybe you can find clues that they’re around. Don’t forget to listen hard – maybe you can hear them!

