

Celebrating



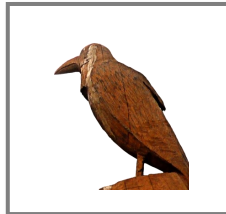
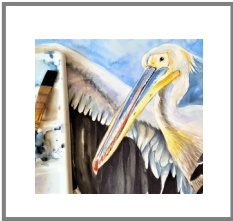
Birds in Berks



**through
Science and Art**



Program Guide



A community education program brought to you by Penn State University and Berks Nature and supported by a grant from the Penn State Sustainability Institute.

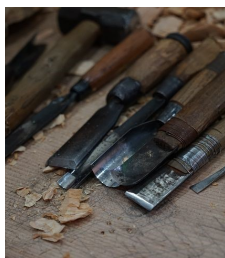
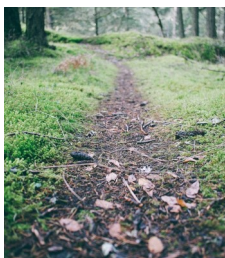


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Birds

show us the splendor of **biodiversity**—the range of amazing creatures living on earth—and invite us to learn more about them and the environments they inhabit.

In this project, you'll watch and listen to birds. Then, you'll make something to represent what you saw, thought about, and felt: pictures, poetry, anything that inspires. Throughout, **you'll connect with these fascinating animals and the world around you.**



The project has three stages:

- 1 Go outside and watch birds.** Keep track of the birds you see and hear. (If you haven't done this before, you'll learn how.)
- 2 Create something** that expresses your thoughts and feelings about birds and bird watching.
- 3 Write a reflection** that describes what you thought about as you watched the birds and what you created.

You don't need to do the steps all at once, and you can spend as much or as little time on the project as you want.

Bird Watching and Field Notes

In this first stage, you'll observe birds and describe them. Bird watching can be as simple as looking at and listening to the birds around you, but **if you also want to learn their names and a little more about them, see the Elementary Birding supplement.**



Go outside, look, and listen. Take a walk. Stand still for a bit. Look at a neighbor's bird feeder, or the ground, the sky, the trees. Listen for the birds' calls.



When you find a bird, note its appearance: colors, size, and other details. Are there stripes on its wings? Does it have a crest or a round head? What shape is its tail? How about its beak? **Observe its behavior.** What noise does it make? How does it fly, dive, crawl, or peck?



Document your observations in a set of field notes. Make sketches, take pictures, describe what you see and hear.

Keep a list of the birds you can identify or distinguish and where and when you saw or heard them. However, **please don't identify any people**, including yourself, in your notes!

Making Bird Art

This project is not only about watching birds, but about being **creative**, too. In this stage, you'll make something of your own—you'll make art!—while thinking about what you've seen and done so far.

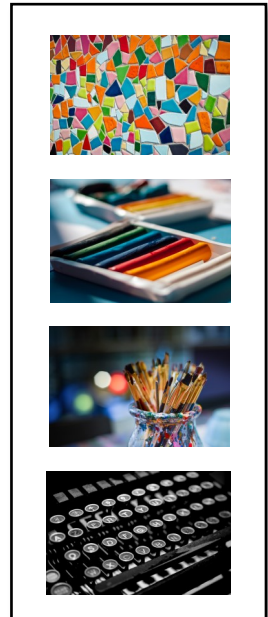
You can be an “**artist-advocate**”: make something that relates to the birds you saw and your birdwatching experience. Your art may encourage others to better appreciate birds and nature.

Create a piece of art that relates to birds and your birdwatching experience.

Please do not include pictures or anything that could allow someone to identify you or others in your artwork.

The art can be something that's meant to be **seen or touched or read**—from pictures to poetry to pottery, computer-generated art to crochet to collage.

Whether it's beautiful or strange, plain or complicated, what's important is that your art is **meaningful to you**.



Reflective Statements

Now **reflect on what you've seen and done** to gain a deeper perspective on it and further activate your creativity. Jot down notes as you **think and talk** about the birds you saw, and your experiences with birdwatching and making art.

Then, **write about it**. Your “reflective statement” could be as few as 50 words long or as many as 500. Again, please don't include information that could allow someone to identify you or others in your statement.



Questions to help you get started:

- What did you think about as you watched the birds and wrote your field notes?
- What did you create and how did you create it?
- What were your intentions in making your artwork? Are you happy with it? What do you wish you had been able to do but couldn't?

Submitting Your Work

Once you're satisfied with your project, submit your field notes, artwork, and written statement at

<https://tinyurl.com/berks-bird-survey>

Please make sure there is no identifying information in the files you submit.

You will also complete a short questionnaire about your experiences.

The submission deadline is March 31, 2022.

Thank you for participating in our program!

<https://tinyurl.com/berks-bird-survey>





American Robin



American Crow



Mourning Dove



Northern Cardinal



Blue Jay



Red-winged Blackbird



Downy Woodpecker



European Starling



Canada Goose



Wood Duck



Mallard



Turkey Vulture



Red-Tailed Hawk



Bald Eagle



Elementary Birding

A Supplement to Celebrating Birds in Berks

Tips and techniques for watching and listening to birds, identifying the birds around you, and documenting your observations.



Finding Birds to Watch

Go outside and look around. You'll probably see birds before too long. To see more birds, be quiet and avoid sudden movements. Be patient. And look *all* around: after seeing the ducks in a pond, scan the surrounding trees. Take a break from the sparrows in a thicket to look up at the sky.



Observing and Describing Birds

After you find a bird, watch it! Then describe it in words and pictures. Try using some of the tips below and the example on the next page as a guide for watching and keeping field notes.

- Note the **date, time, and location** of your sighting.
- Describe the **habitat and the bird's behavior**: is it paddling in the creek? Perched in a tree? Hopping underneath a shrub?
- Look at the bird's **size**. Is it larger than a robin? How about a crow?
- Sketch an outline of the bird (really, just a sketch) and use labels to indicate its **shape** and the shape of its head, bill, wing, tail.
- What **colors and patterns** do you see on the bird? If it has a white belly and breast, indicate that on your sketch. If there are stripes under the wings, note that.
- **How does the bird fly?** If straight, draw a straight arrow. If it swoops up and down, draw a wavy line.

An Example of Field Notes

Below is an example of field notes that a bird watcher might jot down while observing a pileated woodpecker.

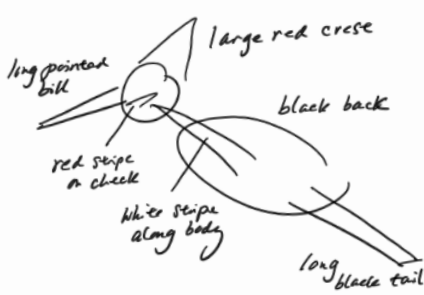
Date: Mar. 16 Time: 9:05 AM Weather: Sunny, low 60s

Location: Gring's Mill Rec. Area near Red Bridge

Habitat: trees b/w walking path and Tulpehocken creek


Size: almost crow-sized, much larger than a robin

Shape, Colors, Behavior:



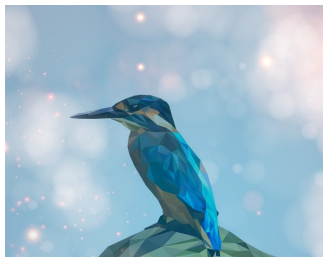
Clinging to side of tree trunk, making loud drumming noise.

Swooping flight pattern



Birdwatching Wizardry

Merlin ID is an app for your smartphone to identify birds by sight and sound. (What it does can seem like magic!) The app was developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for the general public—no experience necessary!



Go to <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/> to find out more. Then install the Merlin ID app by Cornell Lab onto your phone.

Other Tips and Tools



Binoculars will let you get a closer view. Look at the bird without the binoculars and then, without lowering your head, raise the binoculars to your eyes.



Hang a **birdfeeder**, or watch one at a neighbor's house or a local nature center. Feeders bring birds to you and keep them still. Different foods may attract different birds.



A **bird book** like the *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America* will point out distinctive markings to narrow down identification and contain range maps showing which birds are in our area.