

# Bird Watching

## Outdoor Activities



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### WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

Birdwatching is a great way to study nature at home and in the wild. You can observe birds by watching with your eyes, or you can use tools, such as binoculars or telescopes to discover the wonderful world of birds. Birdwatching is an outdoor observation activity for young and old alike.

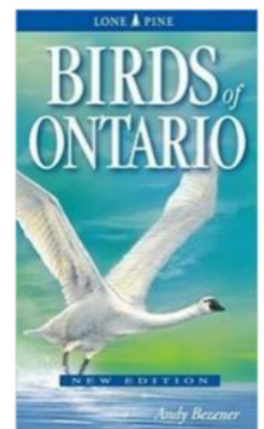
### TIME

This activity can take as long or as little as you'd like.

### MATERIALS

All the below materials are optional to purchase and are not required to participate in this activity.

- Binoculars (\$30.00 +)
- Telescope (\$100.00+)
- Notebook to write or draw observations (\$5.00+)
- Camera to capture birds (\$75.00+)
- Birdwatching Manual for Ontario Birds (\$24.70), Birds Ontario (\$28.66) -both books available on Amazon



### INSTRUCTIONS

- Plan a day/time for this activity to take place, include the length of time
- Invite friends, family or acquaintances (see Party Planning for idea's on making invitations)
- Prepare for your activity by planning the route you will take, transportation if needed or choosing a local park in your community)
- Plan for the weather (sun-bring sunscreen, wet, wear raincoat and boots), bring snacks and public transit funds if needed



## RESOURCES

Outdoor Safety Tips  
Discover birds with your kids  
Article Best Birding in Toronto and the GTA  
Ontario Park Locator

## SUPPORTS NEEDED

This activity can be done alone, in pairs or with a group.

## OTHER THINGS TO NOTE:

Some tips from bird watchers, to see more birds:

1. **Be quiet.** Birds are easily startled by loud noises and will flee to cover. It is almost impossible to sneak up on a bird, because birds hear much better than human beings do.
2. **Avoid sudden movements.** Just as loud noises startle birds, so does sudden movement. Getting close to a bird means stalking it, moving slowly and deliberately. Sudden, jerky movement, even when swinging your binoculars up to your eyes, can make a bird nervous enough to fly away. The closer you are to a bird, the more slowly and quietly you should move.
3. **Follow the crowd.** In the nonbreeding season (the winter months in most of North America) many small songbirds join flocks of mixed species both for protection and to make finding food easier.. Following a solitary chick-a-dee-dee call may lead you to a mixed flock of chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, kinglets, and woodpeckers.
4. **Study habitat.** Each bird is specially adapted to a particular habitat. Meadowlarks prefer large open fields, woodpeckers need trees, sparrows favor thickets. What you see will depend in large part on where you look.
5. **Work the flocks.** Your chance of finding an unusual bird is far greater in a flock, just because you have more birds to look at.
6. **Be patient.** A sparrow hopping around in a bush will eventually move into a spot where you can get a good look. Bird watching is often about being patient and waiting for the birds to show themselves.
7. **Get the sun at your back.** It is not always possible, but moving around so that the sun is behind you will make it much easier to see and identify birds. When the bird is between you and the sun, color disappears, and the bird you are trying to identify may be just a black silhouette.
8. **Try pishing.** Sometimes, no matter how patient you are, no matter how slowly and quietly you move, you just cannot get a good look at the bird. When this happens, bird watchers try a technique called pishing. Here's how to pish: Clench your teeth, open your lips and whisper the word pish.
9. **Avoid brightly colored clothes.** Many birds have poor color vision, but bright clothes, like whites, will contrast with the surrounding environment and enhance the appearance of movement. Wear darker colors or earth tones to blend into the background.
10. **Look around.** Many bird watchers, focused on the flock in the thicket, forget to look at the other habitats around them. In particular, they forget to look up and thus miss the flock of geese or the soaring hawk. Or, while studying the ducks on the lake, unaware bird watchers may ignore the flock of kinglets in the trees behind them and miss seeing a new bird.