



Birding

Location of activity provided by staff

Grades: (suggested) 4-8

Subject: Ornithology & Exploration

Activity Objective:

To have students learn how to use binoculars and how to look for and identify the common birds in the area, using habitat, field marks, shapes, and songs as clues.

Materials & Preparation:

PROVIDED:

- 10 binoculars
- Visual aids
- Field guidebook
- Raptor pellets

PREP: Look over the contents of the “birding” activity kit, remove binoculars from the cases, place lens caps in cases, practice adjusting binoculars, look over illustrations.

NOTE: Indoor bird activities are available in case of bad weather

Leader may wish to do more research about common birds students will be learning about:

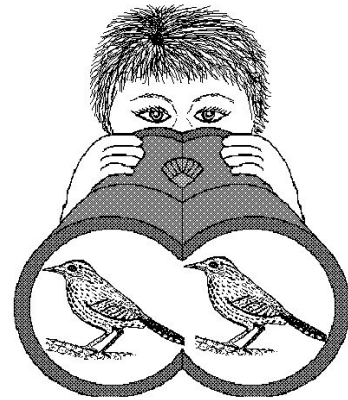
In this lesson:

Cactus Wren Mourning Dove
Curve-Billed Thrasher Canyon Towhee
Gila Woodpecker Phainopepla

Other birds leader may wish to study:

Gamel’s Quail Cardinal
Red-Tailed Hawk Mockingbird
House Finch Turkey Vulture

<u>Summary</u>
Intro: 10 mins
Activity: 10 mins
Conclusion/sharing: 5 mins



Key Vocabulary Terms: binoculars, optical, habitat, birds, identification

Intro Discussion: (10 mins)

Bird identification (about 5 minutes).

NOTE: *The bird species are listed on the first page of this lesson.*

1. Shapes of birds, field marks, and song or call:

Hold up the picture for each bird and briefly discuss the shape and field marks which help us to identify the bird. Helpful suggestions are included on each picture. With each picture look up the bird's call and play it on your phone.

Using binoculars (about 5 minutes):

2. Care of binoculars:

Pass out binoculars to students. Each student in the group should have his/her own pair.

Instruct students:

- Do not touch the lenses with fingers or any objects. Do not wipe lenses.
- Keep the strap around the neck at all times.
- Do not bump the binoculars against anything.

3. Adjusting binoculars:

- Set the diopter (right lens) so that the dot and o line up.
- Look at a distant object through the binoculars.
- Move the hinged sides until your eyes feel comfortable looking through both lenses.
- Close the right eye and focus the left eyepiece by turning the center focus wheel until the view is clear.
- Cover the left eyepiece and focus the right eye lens with the diopter.
- Now all you have to do is focus with the center wheel...no matter the distance of the object being viewed.

4. Viewing objects through the binoculars:

- Look at a distant object with your eyes (the top of a saguaro works well).
- Do not take your eyes from the object as you lift the binoculars to your eyes.

Activity: (10 mins)

Birding with binoculars

Birding walk:

Now it's time to go on a birding walk. A stroll along the roadway or one of the trails should give students an opportunity to see and hear at least a few of the common birds. Emphasize that birding walks are slow and quiet. If someone sees a bird, that person should whisper to the others to describe the location of the bird. Loud talking and pointing may cause the bird to fly away.

Conclusion: (5 mins)

Sharing discoveries:

Upon return from the walk, students may share their observations with one another. Which birds did they see? Were the birds observed perched on a cactus, in a tree, on the ground? Were they singing, perching, nesting, flying?

After each center collect binoculars and rearrange illustrations for the next group

Clean Up:

Place lens covers on the binoculars, and return binoculars to their cases.

Put all the materials in the kit and return the activity center kit to the table in “Biznaga” building.

