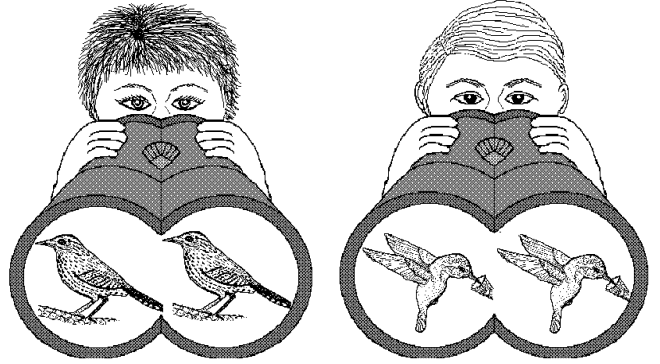


# BIRDING

## **ACTIVITY:**

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.

**Note:** Indoor bird activities are available in case of inclement weather.



## **LOCATION:**

CESC staff will inform you of the location of this activity.

During the bird walk portion of this activity, please stay on the roadway or established trails.

Walking off into the desert will:

- a) chase away the birds
- b) be a potential danger as children walk into cactus
- c) destroy desert habitat

## **EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE:**

10 binoculars  
Tape player and tape of common bird calls  
Visual aids  
Field guidebook  
Raptor pellets

## **EQUIPMENT BROUGHT FROM SCHOOL:**

Additional binoculars (optional)

## **ASSIGNMENT FOR GROUP LEADERS A FEW WEEKS PRIOR TO TRIP:**

The leader reads all the material about the center. The leader may wish to do more research about the common birds students will be learning about.

These are commonly seen and featured in this lesson:

cactus wren	Gila woodpecker	canyon towhee
curve-billed thrasher	mourning dove	phainopepla

Other fairly common birds the leader may wish to study:

Gambel's quail	house finch	mockingbird
red-tailed hawk	cardinal	turkey vulture (March - October)

## **DIRECTIONS FOR GROUP LEADERS ON TRIP DAY:**

Check the contents of the "Birding" activity kit.  
Remove binoculars from the cases. Place lens caps in cases.  
Practice adjusting the binoculars.  
Look over the illustrations.

## **THE LESSON:**

### **Bird identification (about 10 minutes).**

**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 play the tape recording of the bird's call. Pictures are in order to go along with the tape.

### **Using binoculars (about 10 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 0 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.

### **Birding with binoculars (about 20 minutes):**

5. 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.

6. Sharing discoveries (about 5 minutes):

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?

7. After of each center collect binoculars, rewind tape, rearrange illustrations for the next group.

## **CLEAN UP:**

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

Rewind the tape; leave it in the tape player.

Put all materials in the kit and return the activity center kit to the table in Biznaga cabin.