

Discovering Outdoors Sheet

Junior Ranger

LET'S TRY BIRDWATCHING



Birdwatching is fun! It gives you the ability to identify wild birds in their homes (natural habitats), using what they look like, the sounds they make, as well as the way they behave. You don't have to be an expert so give it a go right now in your own backyard. Most of the birds you are likely to see will be common species, and there won't be too many species to confuse you. If you want to see more, why not take a trip out bush.

WHAT SHOULD I BE LOOKING FOR?

Here are some things you should look for when watching birds:

Colour - Have a look at the colour of the bird. What colour are their feathers, eyes or legs? Try to remember where the colours are on the birds bodies, such as around it's eyes, on top of the head etc.

Size - This might be hard without getting up close with a tape measure, but take a good guess!

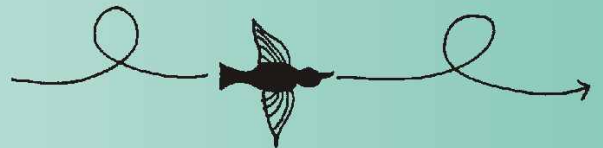
Flight - Think about the way the birds move. Do they fly near the ground or high in the air? Do they flap their wings rapidly or do they glide and soar?

Behaviour - What is the bird doing? What is it eating?

Straight flight
wings beating



Gliding



Birds can move in the air in different ways. A good way to record this is by doing a simple drawing.



Swoopy flight



You should try to choose and remember 2 or 3 things about each bird you see. You can write it down in a note book to refer to next time. Or if you get really keen and buy a bird book, you can tick them off as you see them.

WHAT DO I NEED?

No special equipment is needed to be a birdwatcher. However as you become more interested, you might want to get a pair of binoculars and a field guide to help with identification.

Binoculars are a useful item for birdwatchers, but they can cost a lot so first borrow a pair and spend some time testing and trying them out before you buy.

You can even have a go at making some yourself.

Do you have what it takes to be a Birdwatcher?

Be sun smart, wear a shady hat, sunscreen and drink lots of water.

A backpack to keep your things in and leave your hands free.

A notebook & pencil to record bird information.

DID YOU KNOW?

Birds are most active in the early morning, so that is the best time to spot them.



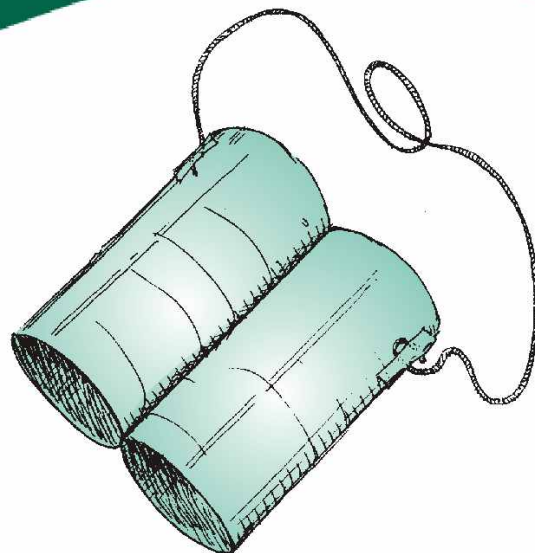
Northern Territory Government



HOMEMADE BINOCULARS

Homemade Binoculars are definitely not as good as real ones, but they are a good way of helping you to learn how to focus your sight on a bird.

1. Get two cardboard tubes of equal length (toilet rolls are ideal).
2. Paint them if you like, most binoculars are black or silver.
3. Join the tubes together side by side with glue or sticky tape.
4. Attach a string to the sides with sticky tape or a staple to use as a strap.
5. Try them out. It is best to look for the bird without your binoculars at first. Once you have seen one, lock it into your sight and move the binoculars into your line of vision without moving your head. Practice doing this and you'll be ready for real ones in no time.



TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BIRDWATCHING:



Be quiet - good bird watchers listen for the sounds that birds make, and they don't want to scare them away so talk in a quiet voice.

Stay still - birds are scared by fast movements, so try to stay still. If you move around, do it slowly.

Look carefully - birds are all around, so look up, look down and look carefully at trees and shrubs, especially those with fruit or blossoms.

Be a Bird Detective - keep your eyes open for bird clues like, nests, dropped feathers, droppings on the ground and damaged fruit or flowers.

TEST YOUR OBSERVATION SKILLS OUT BY TAKING THE BIRDWATCHING WORDFIND CHALLENGE

Find each of the following words

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| BACKPACK | HOBBY |
| BACKYARD | IDENTIFY |
| BEHAVIOUR | MORNING |
| BINOCULAR | NEST |
| COLOUR | NOTEBOOK |
| DROPPINGS | OBSERVATION |
| FEATHERS | PRACTICE |
| FIELD GUIDE | QUIET |
| FLIGHT | SIZE |
| | SOUND |
| | STILL |

O	B	S	E	R	V	A	T	I	O	N	B	X
P	K	D	F	X	T	Y	T	S	Y	I	E	D
R	U	C	P	I	B	H	R	S	N	U	H	R
A	N	X	A	B	E	E	G	O	E	K	A	A
C	E	O	O	P	H	L	C	I	O	N	V	Y
T	Z	H	T	T	K	U	D	M	L	T	I	K
I	I	V	A	E	L	C	O	G	N	F	O	C
C	S	E	V	A	B	R	A	S	U	D	U	A
E	F	G	R	U	N	O	R	B	O	I	R	B
A	S	G	N	I	P	P	O	R	D	U	D	L
I	D	E	N	T	I	F	Y	K	T	I	N	E
P	M	G	R	U	O	L	O	C	M	U	P	D
L	L	I	T	S	V	A	Z	Q	U	I	E	T

A great simple field guide for bird species is *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* by either *Simpson & Day* or the one by *Pizzey & Knight*.