

# Activity 3

## Learning Local Birds










# Learning Local Birds

## Activity 3

### Objective:

To help students learn more about the resident and migrant birds of Marin and to become aware of the status of these birds.

### Materials:

-  List of local birds in Marin County (worksheet 2)
-  Activity #2: Field Observations
-  Field notebook, pencils, colored pencils
-  Field Guide
-  Binoculars

### Background

Writing bird reports is a great way for students to learn more about specific species and their requirements for living (e.g., food, habitat, etc.). An excellent way for students to begin learning about birds is to study the birds native to their area, otherwise known as “local birds”. Research can be done using the internet and library as well as through field observations. Through field observations students will form a connection with their focus bird, learning its behavior, habitat usage and preference, and what type of food it eats. This type of research can be much more rewarding and leave a greater impression than just reading about a bird in a book or on the internet. In addition to learning about the requirements of these local birds, students will become familiar with the threats they are facing and the status of these species in their area.

### Procedure:

1. Have students pick a species from the list of local birds (worksheet 2).
2. Assign students to research their species. The final report should include the answers to the questions on worksheet 1. In addition they should also observe their species in the field a minimum of 3 times following the protocol outlined in Activity #2. Students should turn in with their reports 3 copies of the observation sheet from Activity #2.



## Worksheet #1: Common birds of Marin and Sonoma

Songbird reports should include answers to the following questions:

1. What group/family does the bird belongs to (e.g., sparrow, woodpecker, hummingbird, warbler, raptor).
2. Describe what your bird looks like (e.g., body size, color(s), bill shape and size, what it's feet look like, etc.).
3. Is the bird a resident of California (one that lives here all year round), or is it a migrant?
4. What is the birds range (all the areas it is found) in California?
5. If the bird is a migrant, where does it migrate to? Some birds migrate to this area for the winter and fly back to northern Canada or Alaska to breed in the spring and summer. Other birds called "Neotropical migrants" fly to Mexico, or Central and South America for the winter return to North America to breed.
6. What habitat does the bird live in on both the wintering and breeding grounds (e.g., coastal scrub, mixed forest, oak woodlands, etc.)?
7. What part of the habitat does the bird use (e.g., understory, midstory, or canopy-refer to the nesting worksheets in Activity 4)?
8. What type of nest does the bird build (cavity, cup, pendulum, platform, or sphere)?
9. Where does the bird build its nest (e.g., on the ground, in shrubs, or in trees)?
10. What is the bird's clutch size (how many eggs does it lay in its nest)?
11. What type of food makes up the majority of the bird's diet (e.g., seeds, insects, nectar, etc.)?



## Worksheet #2: Common birds of Marin and Sonoma

### YEAR ROUND

Turkey Vulture

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Cooper's Hawk

Osprey

Red-shouldered Hawk

Red-tailed Hawk

Acorn Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker

Hairy Woodpecker

Anna's Hummingbird

Black Phoebe

Steller's Jay

Western Scrub-jay

American Crow

Common Raven

Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Bushtit

Wrentit

Bewick's Wren

Winter Wren

American Robin

Western Bluebird

Spotted Towhee

California Towhee

Golden-crowned Kinglet

Oregon Junco

Song Sparrow

White-crowned Sparrow

Purple Finch

House Finch

### FALL/WINTER

Red-breasted Sapsucker

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Rufous Hummingbird

Hermit Thrush

Fox Sparrow

Golden-crowned Sparrow

### SPRING/SUMMER

Allen's Hummingbird

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Western Wood-Pewee

Pacific-slope Flycatcher

Warbling Vireo

Tree Swallow

Barn Swallow

Cliff Swallow

Swainson's Thrush

Orange-crowned Warbler

Wilson's Warbler

Black-headed Grosbeak

American Goldfinch