



Lesson Plan: **Bird Watching**

How can field guides and technology aid in bird identification?

Alignment with STEM Framework

Investigator 

Overview

In this lesson, the facilitator shares the following link with youth: <https://birdwatchinghq.com/live-cameras/>. After reviewing the process involved when making observations, the facilitator gives the following instructions. For five minutes we are going to view the live stream of a bird set up in Ohio.

Practice Goals

- Creating methods for data collection
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating Information about backyard birds

Content Goals

- How do I use a field guide to identify birds?
- How do I use the Merlin app to identify birds?
- What characteristics of birds do I report in order to identify the birds correctly?
- What kinds of food are specific kinds of birds eating at the feeders

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to practice identification of backyard birds with youth. Youth are observing the same situation and this lesson provides opportunities for them to engage in scientific practices such as questioning, observing, predicting, and organizing for data collection.

Teacher Background Information

The facilitator should practice identifying common backyard birds with both field guides and the Merlin app so that they are prepared to help students use these identification tools.



Affinity Goals



I can act like an **Investigator** by looking for birds in a live feed online video and noticing their colors, size, beak size and shape, flight patterns, and calls. I can use my observations paired with a field guide or the Merlin app to identify the birds I see or hear.

Materials

- Binoculars
- Nature journals

Time Needed

45 Minutes



Instructional Sequence

Facilitator will:

- Guide students as they observe birds at a feeder in Ohio video.

Youth will:

- Watch the video for 5 minutes and practice writing down observations of birds they see at the feeders in their nature journal.
- Tally marks can be used to keep track of multiple birds of a type.
- Using their observations and field guides and the Merlin app, the group attempts to identify all of the birds that were seen in a five-minute time period.

Facilitator will:

- Ask questions that probe students to make more and more sophisticated observations.
- Encourage students to share their observations and characteristics of specific birds and to discuss with each other where their observations are similar and dissimilar.

Facilitator and Youth will:

- Go outside and apply their skills to watching for and identifying the birds at the feeders they designed.