



# Exploring 4-H at Home



Science and  
Technology

- Pillar:** Science & Technology  
Environment & Healthy Living
- Project:** Bird Watching
- Activity:** Bird Journal  
Sketch a Bird  
Bird Habitats  
Find Your 4-H Wings



**Birdwatching**

Activity Guide

# Start a Bird Journal

**Time:** About 30 minutes to an hour

## **What you will learn:**

Many birdwatchers carry journals with them that they call “field journals,” in which they document all the birds they’ve seen, when and where, and what the birds were doing when they saw them. A field journal can be a valuable tool that will help a lot on your birdwatching journey. You will be able to write down important information and sketches while you’re out watching birds, and then bring it back to research online or tell your fellow club members. In your bird journal, you will organize your birding adventures according to date, what birds you saw and heard, and any observations you made about them.

## **What you need:**

A small or medium sized notebook, a pencil or pen, your binoculars, and some birds!

## **Instructions:**

Start by either finding or buying a small or medium-sized notebook. You don’t want a big one, something small will do. Find a size that would be comfortable carrying around with you as you birdwatch, maybe even fit in your pocket. If you can find one that is unlined, great, it will give you room to do bird sketches that will be helpful for identifying birds once you get home. You can decorate your bird journal however you’d like. You can paint or colour the cover, or put a big title on it like, “Jessica’s Bird Journal” so everyone knows whose it is. Be creative! This is your space to chronicle your birdwatching journey, and you might have it for a long time!

Start by writing about all the birds you have seen to date, and if you haven’t seen any, maybe now is the time to get outside and see what you can find! Make careful and neat notes so that you’ll be able to transfer them to your record book regularly.

## **Discussion:**

- Why do you think birdwatchers keep regular journals of what they’ve seen?
- Do you keep a journal of anything else (like your day-to-day life)? Does it help to put your thoughts on paper? Do you ever look back through them and are reminded of a time in your life?
- What are the first birds you’ve written down in your journal? Where did you see them? What were they doing? Share your discoveries with your club!

# Sketching Birds

**Time:** 1 – 2 hours

## **What you will learn:**

Now that you have your bird journal ready to go, it’s time to learn how to sketch birds! You never know when this skill might come in handy, if you ever need to describe a bird and words just don’t cut it, plus it’s super fun and artistic! In this activity, you will observe a bird, and using the handy diagram below, you will draw it out and point out its colour patterns. Pretty soon, you’ll be sketching birds like a pro!

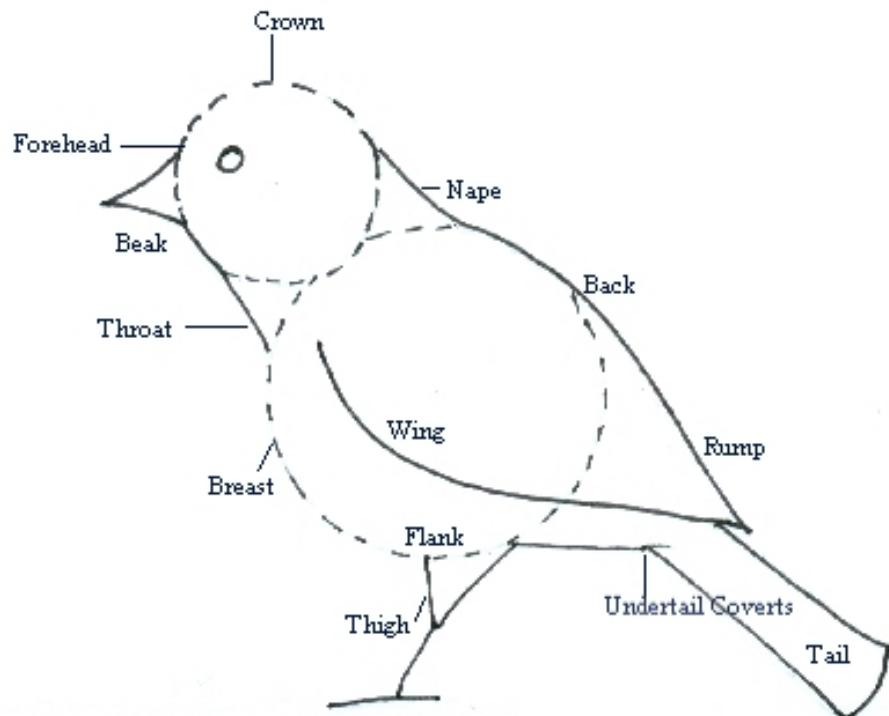
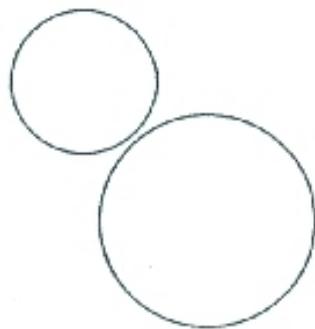
### **What you need:**

Your bird journal, binoculars, a pencil, birds, and some patience!

### **Instructions:**

Go out into your backyard or a local park and sit down in a comfortable place that's within view of some birds. It's probably best to start out with birds that you see often, like sparrows or robins. Observe the birds through your binoculars and make note of their shape and their colours. This is easiest to do if you can get a view of the bird in sunlight rather than shade. Put down your binoculars and open your bird journal. Begin sketching out the bird's shape using the diagram on the next page. Start with the two circles on the left, and then add more detail. Make sure to pay close attention to the size, tail, head, and bill of the bird.

Once you are happy with the way your outline looks, start to draw in the defining features and colours. Does the bird have a crest on its head (like a mohawk)? Does it have brightly coloured wing bars? Draw them in, or better yet, colour them in! Once you're happy with your bird sketch, write the bird's name (if you have identified it using your bird guidebook or the Internet) at the top of the page. Feel free to try another one. Don't forget, practice makes perfect!



# Bird Habitats

**Time:** An hour or two

**What you will learn:**

Birds are everywhere! In fact, there is almost always a type of bird that thrives in nearly every habitat on earth. How cool is that? In this activity, you will learn about different habitats and the birds that thrive there.

**What you need:**

Three different kinds of habitats accessible from your home, your binoculars, bird guidebook, and journal and pen.

**Instructions:**

Pick three different kinds of habitats that are accessible from your home. They could be woodlands and forests, open fields and farms, city parks and gardens, or lake and ocean beaches. Even your own backyard can work! Go out to several of these habitats for an hour or more and take your binoculars, bird notebook, and bird journal. Write down all the birds you see in the different places, making note of the environmental features that were in the area (pond, rocks, fence posts, etc.) Be sure to include if the birds were low to the ground, at eye level in the trees (if there are trees), or up high in the sky. Also make note of the types of trees, bushes, shrubs, grasses, and other vegetation the birds were in and around (or avoiding). When you get home, read over your notes and see if you have any overlap with species. Share your findings with your club at your next meeting.

**Discussion:**

- Was there any overlap in species? Did you see the same bird in more than one type of habitat? Why do you think that is?
- Did you see the same birds in the same habitat as some of your fellow club members?
- What do the birds you saw in the same habitat have in common? Think of other birds you've read about in your guidebook that you might see in these same habitats. Why would they belong there?

## Find Your 4-H Wings

Do you want to learn more about birds, including bird conservation? Make sure to check out 4-H Canada's Find Your 4-H Wings resources about birds. They have a lot of fun and learning activities to teach 4-H'ers about birds, their habitats and more!

Find these resources at <https://4-h-canada.ca/findyour4hwings>

