

Birding Basics

You can bird watch in
a chair,
You can bird watch
anywhere!
Outside, inside, all
will do.
Anywhere you have a
view!



And even if you don't plan to bird,
Take your backpack wherever you go.
That way you'll be at the ready
Whenever a cool bird decides to show.

Never used binoculars before? Learning to use binoculars is easy, and you can practice with your binoculars by first looking at something that doesn't move, like a street sign, or fence post.

To get started, do you see how on one end of your binoculars the plastic cover is flatter, while on the other end the glasses are smaller and there is a plastic knob between them? Put the smaller glasses-and-knob-end of your binoculars up against your own eyes (or up against your own eyeglasses if you wear eyeglasses).

Second, experiment with making the binoculars best fit your own face and eyes by making them a little wider or a little narrower. How do you do this? By bending the binoculars a little bit in and out, and at the same time, a little bit up and down.

Third, keep your eyes on the street sign or fence post you are focusing on for practice. Then, without moving your eyes or head, bring the binoculars up to your eyes. (You can use this very same move later, when you want to use your binoculars to look more closely at a bird that you first spotted with your own eyes).

Fourth, while you are looking through the binoculars at the street sign or fence post, use your thumb and one of your other fingers to turn the knob just a little bit to the right and a little bit to the left. You do this until you find the spot where the letters on the street sign or the edges of the fence post are the most crisp and clear for you. That's it! Now you are ready to go look at a bird, or to go look for birds, and use these very same moves when you do. You got this!



How do you look for birds? One way to spot fun birds is to listen for them, and then search the spot or area where you hear the bird sound coming from. You can use your eyes, or your binoculars, to search the place you think the sound is coming from.

Another way you can search for birds is by scanning the edges of a lawn, playground, or parking lot. You can also search a meadow, marsh, pond, beach, or clearing, and the edges around them.

When you scan and search, look low, middle, and high. You may find different birds on the ground, in low bushes, in the trees, and in the sky!

Searching for birds can be so much fun! So is watching, or observing, just one bird, or a group of birds. Do you feel a little bit like a detective, searching for clues? You can ask yourself questions as you observe, like:

“What is my bird doing?”

“What do I notice about this bird?”

“What am I wondering about as I watch and listen to this bird?”

“What does watching this bird remind me of?”

“Would I like to draw or sketch this bird, or this bird and its surroundings?”



If you would like to draw or sketch this bird or group of birds, you can ask yourself a few more questions: “Would I want to use a regular pencil, colored pencils, crayons, watercolors?”

“How could I get the drawing supplies I would like to use? If I don’t know the answer, who could I ask for help in getting the supplies I would like?”