

# Avian Adventures

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Grades: Middle and Highschool (6-12)

## Key Words and Definitions

**COMMUNITY SCIENCE** A type of science in which everyday people collect and share data with a larger community, including scientists.

## Pre-Field Trip Activity: Community Science Bird Count

*One 20-minute session; pre-visit*

### Learning Objective

Students will sharpen their observational skills as they participate in a nationwide community science project.




### Materials

- Bird count data form
- Local bird images
- eBird App
- Pencils
- Clipboards
- Counter (if available)

### Procedure

1. Create an account for your class on eBird.com or by downloading the eBird app. Share with students that before going on a bird search on the field trip at Wave Hill, they will study and protect birds by participating in something called community science. Take a moment to define this term. Add that one way to participate in community science is to observe birds in their habitat, count them and share that information. This helps scientists keep track of birds and protect them!
2. Before going out to count, go over the best practices for finding birds (i.e. slow and quiet movement—open ears and eyes). Discuss common bird behaviors like preening, perching, flying, hunting prey and hiding from predators. Being aware of such behaviors helps prepare your students to find birds.
3. Lastly, show some images of local bird species (i.e. American crow, American robin, blue jay, grackle, European starling, house sparrow, rock dove/pigeon, mourning dove). Bring students outside (schoolyard, nearby park or surrounding neighborhood) for a bird walk. Students can identify and record the birds that they see using either the eBird app or the provided data collection form. Note: Students can count birds all year long.
4. This can be a daily or weekly outing to see if there is a difference in the number/kinds of birds in different seasons. Listed in the resources section is a data form for The Great Backyard Bird Count that occurs each February. Students can use the form as a guideline, and you can adjust it as needed for younger grades. The most important sections to keep are species, estimated number, time of day and location. The class can then submit the data online, and continue to count birds once they get to Wave Hill!

### Sources

-  [Get to Know These 20 Common Birds | Audubon](#)
-  [“Great Backyard Bird Count.” Gbbc, Cornell University, 2014, http://gbbc.birdcount.org/](http://gbbc.birdcount.org/)
-  [“eBird.” eBird, The Cornell Lab, 2018, http://ebird.org/home](http://ebird.org/home)

# Post-Field Trip Activity: “Anti-Strike” Decals

One 20-minute session; post-visit

## Learning Objective

Students will identify a specific way to protect birds in the local environment from coming to harm as a result of human influence. Collaborating as a class, they will use what they’ve learned to make the classroom safe for birds.


## Procedure

1. Begin by asking students to share some memories from their field trip to Wave Hill. What kind of birds did they see? Why do birds like living at Wave Hill? Then ask: why might a city like New York also be a dangerous place for birds?
2. Identify window strikes as a serious threat to birds. It is very difficult for birds to see windows as they fly; they actually see the reflection of the outdoors in the window and think they are flying through more open air. As a result, birds can fly into windows, causing them very serious injuries. Each year, more than one billion birds are injured by flying into windows! Let the class know that you are going to make your classroom windows bird-safe.
3. Show students that by drawing on colorful contact paper and sticking it onto the inside of your classroom windows, they can alert birds to the presence of the windows and keep them safe. Give students time to trace templates, cut out their decals and decorate them. Then, peel and place them on classroom windows. Decals work best when spaced a few inches apart, covering as much of the window as possible.

## Materials

- Colored contact paper
- Markers/other decorating materials
- Safety scissors
- Bird templates

## Sources

 [Printable Bird Templates.” Printable Shield Template, http://patternuniverse.com/ category/bird/page/2/](http://patternuniverse.com/category/bird/page/2/)



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