

# Ornithological Orations

Location: RiverWalk Learning Station 7

Program Levels: All

**Objective:** Girls will listen to birdsongs and then apply their knowledge to identify local birds by listening to them and watching them.

## Materials Provided

- Birdsong Identifier units and cards
- Binoculars
- Bird Field Guides

## Materials Needed

- ❖ Paper (unlined)
- ❖ Pencils
- ❖ Crayons/markers/colored pencils



## Activity Steps

1. Begin the activity by talking about birds and bird watching with the girls. Use the discussion questions to help you get started.
2. Split the girls up into small groups of 3-4. Pass out the Identifier units and cards. Remind girls that these units need to be treated with care so they will work for the next group.
3. Have the girls spend 5-10 minutes listening to different bird calls on the Identifiers and familiarizing themselves with the different bird calls.
4. Remind them that to hear birds in the area, they will need to be VERY quiet! Have them sit quietly for 10-15 minutes and try to identify as many bird calls as they can. Have girls use the binoculars to try to find the birds they hear.
5. Encourage girls to draw pictures of the birds they see instead of just listing them on their paper.

## Discussion Questions

- **Name some birds common to this area.**  
Robin, Bluebird, Woodpecker, Cardinal, Brown-Headed Cowbird, Yellow Warbler, Chickadee, Eagle, Duck, Goldfinch, Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, Scarlet Tanager.
- **How can we identify birds?**  
By sight, by their call. Call can be easier because birds are often far away and camouflaged, as well as being scared of humans.
- **What are some good bird watching practices?**  
Be very quiet, try to blend into your surroundings, look through binoculars instead of approaching birds.
- **What types of places might be good for bird watching?**  
It depends on what type of bird you are looking for! Wooded areas are good for owls and woodpeckers, but you are more likely to see a great blue heron along the riverbank.

### Extensions

#### On the Trail

Once you have identified some birds around you, look them up in the field guides. These books can tell you a lot about the habits and behavior of different birds.

#### Beyond the Trail

Spend some time bird watching near your troop meeting space or home. Do you see the same types of birds as at Camp Potomac Woods?

Build birdhouses or birdfeeders to attract birds to your neighborhood, or contact your local animal protection agency (US Fish & Wildlife Service, EPA, etc) to see if you can volunteer to build birdhouses or work at a bird refuge.