



DISCOVER BIRDS IN SAPSUCKER WOODS

Welcome to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology! This guide will help you discover the birds and their habitats in Sapsucker Woods. It will also give you the chance to learn bird identification and become a citizen scientist. Citizen scientists are people—like you!—who collect data for science.

Begin by looking at the map of Sapsucker Woods on the back page to get an idea of where you can explore. Then choose a path and get started.

Rules for the trails

- *Use soft voices* to be respectful of the animals and other people, and you'll see and hear more.
- *Stay on the trails* to protect the habitat and to **avoid poison ivy and ticks**.
- This is a nature sanctuary, so *take nothing with you, leave nothing behind*.

Getting oriented

Test your map skills with these questions:

1. What large feature is directly west of the main building? _____
2. Which direction is Timmy's Walk from the main building? _____
3. How about the Owens Platform? _____
4. What platform is at the west end of Sapsucker Woods Pond?

5. Which is the longest boardwalk? What habitat does it go through?
_____, _____
6. What road goes through the sanctuary, dividing it into two areas?

Answers: 1. Sapsucker Woods Pond 2. South 3. North 4. Sherwood Observation Platform 5. Woodleton Boardwalk, wetlands (swamp) 6. Sapsucker Woods Road

Explorer's Tip:

While you're out on the trails today, write down any questions you have on p. 10 so you can look for the answers later.

Did you know that a scientist is a kind of explorer? They search for new discoveries and ideas. You can be a scientist, too! Keep your ears and eyes open and record what you notice—you'll be practicing science skills. It's a great way to explore Sapsucker Woods.

Activity 1: Wake up your senses

Quiet Observations

Sit or stand without making a sound for three minutes, using all your senses to observe your surroundings. Close your eyes for the first two minutes, then open them but continue to watch and listen quietly for another minute. Fill in the box below with your observations.





<p>Sights: What do you see? (plants, animals, water, land shapes)</p>	<p>Sounds: How many different sounds do you hear?</p>
<p>Feelings: What textures can you find? How do you feel in these surroundings?</p>	<p>Smells: What smells do you notice?</p>

Activity 2: Habitat Hunt

A good habitat has everything a bird needs to survive. There are four main parts to a habitat.



Explore the habitat around you and see how many things you can find on this scavenger hunt.

Food	Water
Different birds eat different foods 	To drink, bathe, or forage 
Cover	Space
Protection from predators & weather 	Enough of the right habitat 

- Insect
- Spider or spider web
- Very young tree
- Place where a bird can hide
- Plant that is as tall as you
- Mammal—what kind? _____
- Leaf with pointy edges
- Animal making noise
- Something a bird can eat—what is it? _____
- Animal track—what kind? _____
- Bird nesting material (for example grasses, bark, fur)
- Place where animals can get water
- Plants growing in water

What was the most colorful thing you found? _____

What was your favorite thing you observed? _____

What would you call the habitat you are in? _____

Some possibilities are swamp, forest, pond, and marsh.

Activity 3: Bird Search

Look and listen for signs of birds as you walk along the trails. How many items can you find from the list below?

Variety of birds

- Two birds interacting
- Group of three or more birds
- Colorful bird
- Mostly black bird
- Bird with white on its body
- Bird with a long tail
- Bird with a short tail

Birds using habitat

- On a branch
- Flying
- On the ground
- Swimming
- Eating
- Drinking

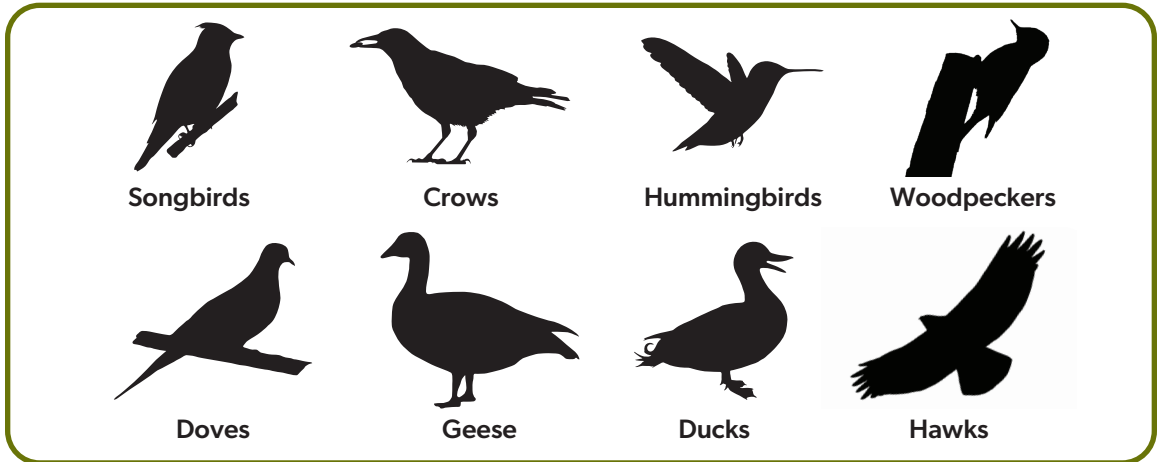
Bird evidence

- Feather
- Bird sounds
- Droppings
- Nest
- Hole in a tree (for nesting or feeding)

Other:

Activity 4: ID Clues—Bird Group Silhouettes

Many different types of birds can be grouped by their shape. Species in each group have similar shapes. Look for these bird groups as you walk along the trails:



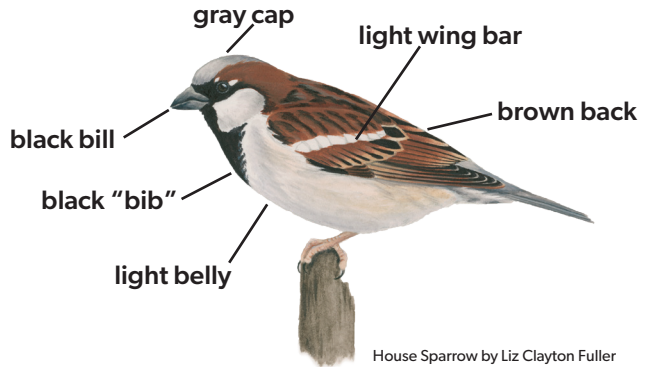
How many birds can you find? Use this table to keep track.

Group Name (Ex. Duck)	Where You Saw It (Ex. Pond)

Activity 5: ID Clues—Field Marks

Birders use many clues to identify birds. For example, the relative shape, size, and color pattern of a bird, along with where and when you saw it.

Those distinctive markings that help you identify a bird are called “field marks.”



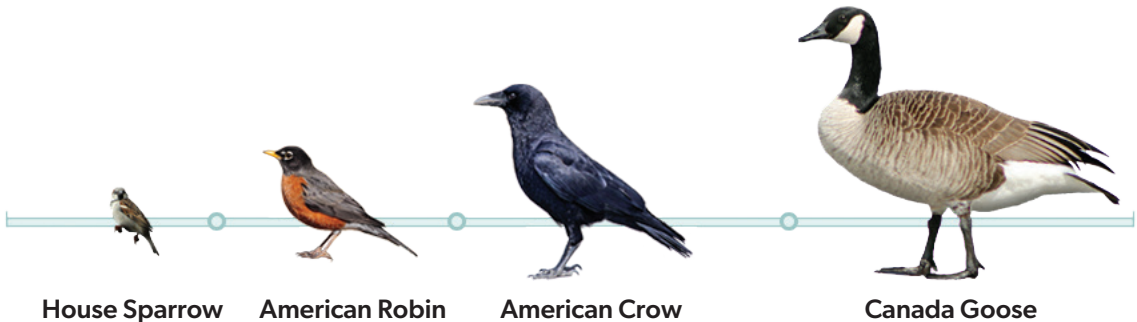
Find a bird and gather information about it!

Time:

Date:

Habitat: Forest ___ Swamp ___ Marsh ___ Pond ___ Parking lot ___

What size was the bird? Put a star on the line closest to the size of the bird you saw.



Circle the three main colors you saw:

Red

Orange

Yellow

Green

Blue

Black

Gray

White

Brown

Now take some time to draw the bird.

Did you notice any interesting patterns or field marks on the bird? Were there stripes on the head or wings? Sketch or make notes about any patterns you observed.



With this information, you have a good chance of identifying your bird. You can use a field guide to help you. Or, if you have a smartphone or tablet, use the free Merlin Bird ID app to identify your bird: [merlin.allaboutbirds.org](https://www.merlin.allaboutbirds.org)

Activity 6: Count Birds and Become a Citizen Scientist

You've learned a lot about habitat and the birds around you. Let's use all your new skills to count birds and become citizen scientists!

Find a good spot to look for birds and carefully keep track of the species and numbers of birds during a 5–10 minute bird count. If you don't know the name of a bird, make a sketch or notes describing it and look it up later.

Location:

Start Time:

Date:

How long was your count?

Circle one:

Stationary Count
(Did you stay in one place?)

Traveling Count
(Did you move from one place to another?)

Species	Number Seen

With the help of an adult, enter your data at eBird.org to help scientists learn about the birds you saw.

I Wonder!

You've done a great job exploring Sapsucker Woods. Did you discover anything that you want to learn more about? Write down your questions so you can explore these topics later.

I WONDER . . . ?

WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Let us know what you liked about this guide and how we can make it even better.

What did you like best?

What would you change or add?

Thanks so much for your feedback and for helping to make this resource even better!

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Use the map to make notes about where you went and what you saw as you walked the trails.



Map by Jillian Ditner

Fun facts about Sapsucker Woods

- 425 acres of preserved land
- at least five distinct habitat types
- more than 230 bird species seen or heard in all
- five miles of trails
- open every day, dawn to dusk