

 Mass Audubon

April Vacation Virtual Camp

Tuesday – Spring is for the Birds!
Grades 6 to 8

BIRD BUDDIES

What you Need

Paper and Pencil

Clipboard/Something to write on

Observation Chart and Bird Guide

[Merlin Bird App](#) (Free phone app to identify birds)

Binoculars (Optional)

Staying Safe

Before downloading apps or going on recommended websites make sure to get permission from an adult.

Jump Start the Exploration

What do you know about birds?

What do you know about birds that live or visit Massachusetts?

How did you learn about birds?

Have you ever spent time observing birds?

Where do you look for them?

All sorts of creatures live around us; we just often don't notice them. This worksheet will help you to increase your expertise on the local birds and the best part: it will be your own observations! You don't need binoculars or any special gear, only a pencil and paper. Go outside for at least 20 to 30 minutes: it can be a walk in your neighborhood, a city park, your backyard or from your window.

DIRECTIONS

1. Decide where and how to observe birds the birds for your data sheet. Will you use binoculars? Will you create a “hide”—a barrier where you can see the birds but they cannot see you? Watch a bird feeder? Go for a hike or watch from your window?
2. Print out the chart at the end and fill out your observations for any species you encounter.
3. You can also copy the observation guidelines to a notebook and consult the illustrations directly on your phone.
4. Upload your data for scientists to use on [eBird](#). Scientists use the data people upload from all of the world to help with their research.
5. Repeat! Try to observe birds on different days or times. Like any type of training: repetition makes a difference! After several times observing your bird buddies, you will be amazed about the details you never noticed before.

Talk About Your Learning

Were there places you were more likely to see a bird? Why do you think that is?

Do some birds let you get closer than others?

What do you think will change if you look for birds at different times of day?

Are there places that both birds and people like?

Why do you think people study birds?

Additional Resources

Cornell Lab of Ornithology: [Inside Birding – Four Keys to Birding](#)

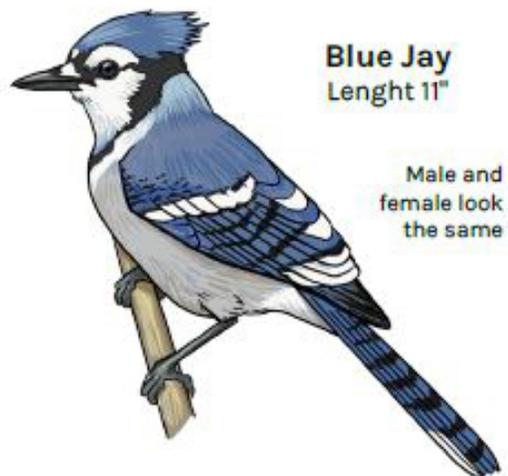
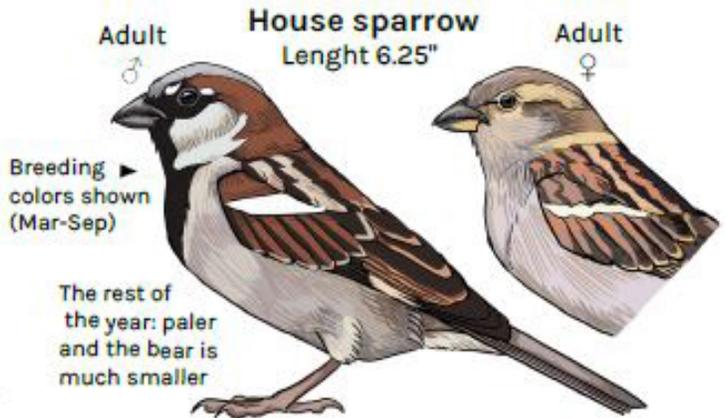
Mass Audubon: [Common Bird Species in Massachusetts](#)

Cornell Lab of Ornithology: [Celebrate Urban Birds Kit](#)

National Audubon: [How to Draw a Bird](#)

Discovering the birds in your neighborhood

These are six of the most common birds in Massachusetts. They frequent the same places, but all belong to different families and have important differences such as size, color, beak shape, behavior, etc. Some birds social, others are solitary and their habits and appearance might change seasonally or with age.



Art by C.Montero (Mass Audubon - 2020)

Observations Chart

Name _____ Date _____

Weather _____ Location _____

SOUNDS: Are your bird buddies making any sounds? Short calls or long melodies? Could you try describe the sounds? (E.g. Species X = Series of shorts “tweep, tweep”. Then a long “woooeoo!”)

COUNTING: How many individual birds can you estimate you saw today?

American robins _____ European starlings _____

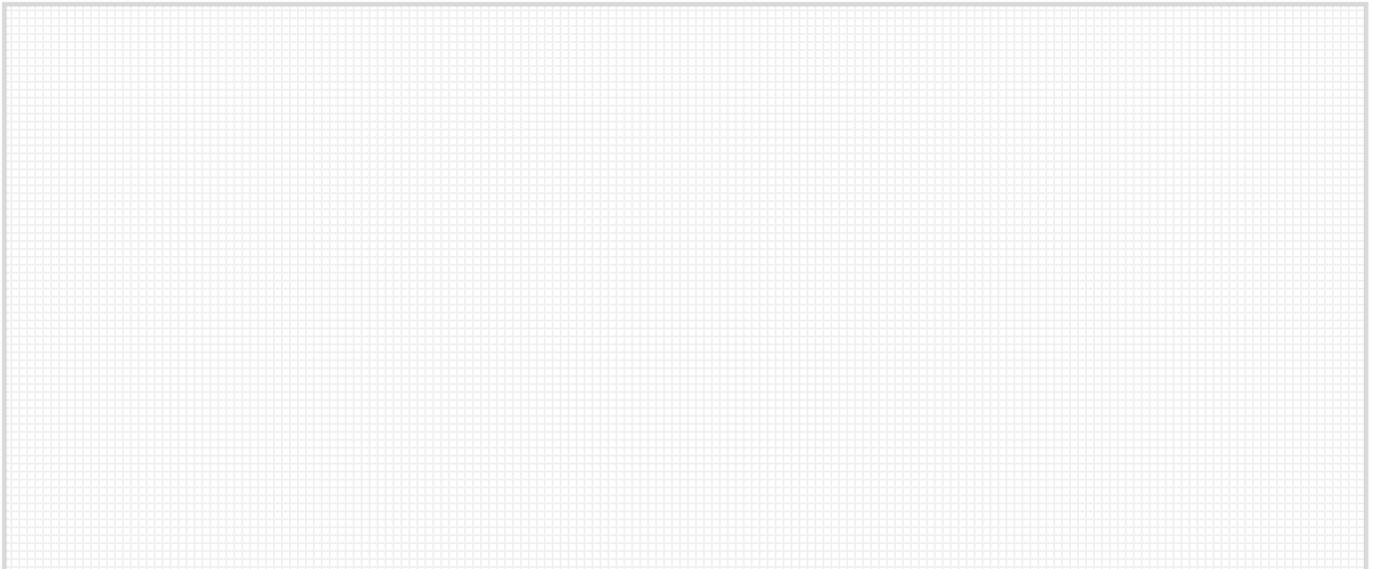
Black-capped chickadees _____ House sparrows _____

Blue Jays _____ Northern cardinals _____

Any new species? _____

BEHAVIOR: Are any of the birds eating? If so, what are they eating? Do they not notice your presence? Are they building a nest? Are they fighting? Record anything you notice!

DRAW: If you see a species that you can't identify, draw it here with notes that can help you to identify it later. Record color, size, shape, shape of bill, and markings. Draw what you can, you can always add more when given the opportunity.



QUESTIONS: Is there anything you are curious and want to know more about? Write it down as a question below to ask someone or research online: