

Finding out what's there



1.6 Do some birdwatching

Any time

Keeping safe



You may be able to look at birds in your garden. If you go elsewhere, make sure an adult knows where you are going, and when you'll be back.



What it's about

Watching birds closely to improve your identification skills.

What do I need?

- **Binoculars are useful, but not essential**
- **Paper and pencil**
- **A good bird identification guidebook (see further information)**

What do I do?

- 1 Find somewhere to do your birdwatching where you will see some unfamiliar birds. This might be your garden if you're a beginner, or a nature reserve or local wood. Stand or sit where you can see the birds without disturbing them. The less you disturb the birds, the better you will see them.
- 2 Look closely at each bird you want to identify. Drawing a sketch is an excellent way to make sure you really look at it all over. Try to note on your sketch as much detail as you can about all the different parts of the bird.

Look at:

- the size compared to other birds you know
- the shape of the bird – is it duck shaped, or sparrow shaped...
- the colour of all the different parts
- the size and shape of the beak
- the length and shape of the tail
- what it's doing
- where it is (wood, farm, lake, river or seashore, etc)

Be patient and keep at it. Every time you sketch a bird, you will be improving your identification skills.

- 3 Using your bird book, try to identify each bird.

What to send us

Send us your sketches and bird identification notes.

Further information

Suggested books to help you identify birds:

- Holden P and Cleaves T *RSPB Handbook of British Birds*
- Kightley C, Madge S and Nurney D *Pocket Guide to the birds of Britain and North-West Europe*
- 'Look sharp' leaflet that explains how you use binoculars is available on request from the RSPB. Call 01767 680551
- If you enjoy watching birds and sketching them, you could enter the Young birder of the year competition. You could choose to write an essay, do a bird project or a field notebook. For more information, contact us on 01767 680551 or visit www.rspb.org.uk/youth