



**Environment
for the Americas**
Conserving Birds by Connecting People

Go Birding Geocache

Objective

Participants will observe and describe birds and their habitats.

Overview

Participants will use a GPS unit to find a geocache site and the hidden nature activity cache.

Recommended Ages

- > Families
- > Children in upper elementary and above

Activity Time

Approximately 10 minutes

Items

- > GPS
- > Small air tight container(s)
- > Binoculars
- > Make-n-Take Journal
- > Descriptions provided
- > Index cards laminated
- > Pencils
- > Prizes

Activity in Action

Send your comments on this activity and pictures of the activity in action to bday@birdday.org.

Geocaching (pronounced geo-cashing) is a fun way to get visitors outside and exploring nature. Consider it a high tech treasure hunt! Geocaching involves finding a hidden cache using a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit. In this activity, participants will find the cache then follow the directions for observing the habitat. Use this activity to get geocaching started at your site!

Activity Directions

- 1. Review the geocache descriptions provided.** We have provided descriptions for you to edit or others that are ready-to-go. Determine which one(s) you can use at your site. You may choose to do a single geocache or plan multiple geocaches along a trail.
- 2. Identify locations for the geocache(s) at your site.**
- 3. Copy and laminate the description(s).**
- 4. Place your airtight container with the corresponding geocache description at each location.** You can put them in plain view or use the idea for riddles (see #5) to make finding the cache more challenging.

Get Involved! Discover easy, fun ways to learn and connect with others while spreading bird conservation awareness—[join the EFTA Flock at BirdDay.org](http://jointheEFTAflock.com)

Find free educational materials (and much more) at BirdDay.org

Have you registered your IMBD event? It's quick, easy, free, and helps measure the success of IMBD each year. Register at birdday.org or send your event information to bday@birdday.org.

Activity Directions

- 5. Record the GPS coordinates at each geocache location you choose.** Write the GPS coordinates for each site on an index card and laminate. For fun, add a riddle on the card. Once participants have found the site using the GPS coordinates, they must solve the riddle to find where the cache is hidden at the site. Here are several sample riddles:
 - Perching like a hawk, I look down on you. (Hang geocache from a tree.)
 - I am hidden under what will become soil far in the future. (Place cache under rocks.)
 - This place for nestlings is cozy and quiet. (Place on an unused bird box.)
 - Though dead, I still provide habitat for many. (Place on a dead tree.)
- 6. Identify where you will set-up your geocahce activity station.** At the station, prepare how you will provide instructions on how to use the GPS units and do the activity. Also, when participants have completed the activity, you will need to have staff/volunteers that can review each participant's journal and give out prizes. If one of the journal activities is having participants observe a bird, make time to talk about the bird the participant saw and help them identify it. Allow the participant to keep their journal.
- 7. Copy the Make-n-Take journal** on heavy stock paper so participants can record their observations without a clipboard or provide a clipboard. Choose to prepare journals before your IMBD event or allow participants to cut out their own journal, staple, and write their name.

Geocaching Resources

- Geocaching: Geocaching.com
- Geocaching with Kids: <http://eduscapes.com/geocaching/kids.htm>
- Geocaching and Wildlife Refuges: <http://www.refugewatch.org/2009/04/16/geocaching-and-wildlife-refuges/>

Choosing a GPS Unit

There are many GPS units to choose from. If you are choosing units that will be used by kids and visitors who may not have experience using one, choose simple models. A quick query on the Internet will display numerous junior GPS models for under \$100. Another option is to download an application to a phone, iPad, or other device. Just make sure that if you choose to add an application to your phone or hand held computer, that it can get the accuracy you need to find the geocache. For example, some applications can only get you within 20 feet of the geocache. That still leaves a lot of ground to cover to find the geocache and that may frustrate your visitors.

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Geocache descriptions for editing. Make these specific to your site.

<p>Bird Identification</p> <p>Birds bring beauty and song to our world. They are important in the environment for controlling insects, pollinating plants and spreading seeds. Use your binoculars to find and observe a bird. Draw and/or describe the bird in your journal.</p>	<p>Bird Identification</p> <p>Birds have adapted many ways to find food. The shape and size of their bill is a clue as to what a bird eats. Look at the pictures of each bird's bill. Can you figure out which bill made these horizontal holes in the tree? Sapsucker, duck, hawk</p>
<p>Healthy Habitat</p> <p>Every living thing needs a healthy habitat(s). A habitat provides the food, water, shelter, and space animals need to survive. Look at the habitat you are standing in. Describe and/or draw what this habitat provides for birds. Hint: what type or shelter would a bird find here? What might it eat? Where might it get water?</p>	<p>Bird Identification</p> <p>Birds using mudflats and shallow wetlands have some features in common to help them catch food. Observe the birds in this wetland. Circle the physical characteristic(s) they have in common.</p>
<p>Special Places</p> <p>Every living thing needs a place to raise its young. Can you find the special place a bird has made to raise its young? Draw it in your journal. <i>Please keep your distance from the special place.</i></p>	<p>Bird Identification</p> <p>Look at the tree before you. What bird could have made that large hole? Read the clues below and use the process of elimination to figure out which bird it is. (Optional choices: hawk, duck, pileated woodpecker.)</p>
<p>Helpful Humans</p> <p>Humans may make changes to habitat that are good for wildlife. Observe the habitat around you. What signs do you see that humans are helping the habitat? Draw or describe what you see.</p>	<p>Special Places</p> <p>Every living thing needs a place to raise its young. Can you find a human-made structure that birds are using to raise their young? Draw it in your journal. Please keep your distance!.</p>
<p>Helpful Humans</p> <p>Conservation is actions we can take to protect our natural world. There are many positive actions we can each take to help conserve birds and their habitat. Visit the exhibits at the IMBD event and record in your journal one idea you can do at home.</p>	<p>Helpful Humans</p> <p>Conservation is actions we can take to protect our natural world. You are standing at the site of a conservation project that will benefit birds and other wildlife. Read the sign and record in your journal what the benefit of this project will be for birds.</p>

Ready-to-Go Geocache Descriptions

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Bird Identification

Some birds are well adapted to living in mudflats and shallow wetlands. Observe the birds in this wetland. Can you figure out what features these birds have adapted to walk in the wet muddy habitat and find their food. *Choose from the choices below and write or draw them in your journal.*

Bill

1. Hooked bill for tearing
2. Small short bill for opening seeds
3. Long stout bill for probing and spearing

Feet

1. Long pointy toes for walking on soft ground
2. Foot with talons for grabbing
3. Webbed foot for swimming and diving



Bird Identification

Birds bring beauty and song to our world. They are important in the environment for controlling insects and pollinating and spreading seeds for plants. Use your binoculars to observe a bird. *Draw and/or describe the bird in your journal noting these features.*

Feet:

Beak:

Body shape/size:

Tail shape/length:

Color:

Behavior:

Habitat:

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Bird Identification

Birds have adapted many ways to find food. The shape and size of their bill is a clue as to what a bird eats. Look at the pictures of each bird. Can you figure out which bird made these horizontal holes in the tree and why? Use your binoculars to investigate the tiny holes and what the bird may have been eating. *Record your answers in your journal.*

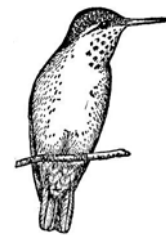
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker



American Goldfinch



Ruby-throated Hummingbird



Bird Identification

Find the tree with the large hole in its trunk? Read the clues below to figure out which bird made the hole. *Record the answer in your journal.*



Great Blue Heron

- feet for walking on soft surfaces
- beak for spearing.



Chipping Sparrow

- feet for perching
- beak for cracking open seeds



Pileated Woodpecker

- feet for climbing
- bill for chiseling.

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Special Places

Every living thing needs a place to raise its young. Can you find a human-made structure that birds are using to raise their young? *Draw it in your journal.*

Please keep your distance!



Special Places

Every living thing needs a place to raise its young. Can you find a human-made structure that birds are using to raise their young? *Draw it in your journal.*

Please keep your distance!



Healthy Habitat

Every living thing needs healthy habitats. A habitat provides the food, water, shelter and space animals need to survive. Look at the habitat you are standing in. *Describe and/or draw what this habitat provides for birds.*

Hint: what type of shelter would a bird find here? What might it eat? Where might it get water?



Healthy Habitat

Every living thing needs healthy habitats. A habitat provides the food, water, shelter, and space animals need to survive. Look at the habitat you are standing in. *Describe, draw, or list what types of cover you see for wildlife?*



Helpful Humans

Humans may make changes to habitat that is good for wildlife. Observe the habitat around you. *Record the signs you see that humans are helping here.*



Helpful Humans

Conservation is actions we can take to protect our natural world. You are standing at the site of a conservation project that will benefit birds and other wildlife. *Read the sign and record in your journal what the benefit of this project will be for wildlife.*



Helpful Humans

Conservation is actions we can take to protect our natural world. There are many positive actions we can each take to help conserve birds and their habitat. *Visit the exhibits at the IMBD event and record in your journal one idea you can do at home to help conserve birds.*



Helpful Humans

Conservation is actions we can take to protect our natural world. At this site we have removed invasive pest plants that take habitat away from native plants and wildlife. *Help us restore this habitat with native plants for native wildlife by following the activity instruction at this site.*

Make-n-Take Geocache Journal



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International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal

Name: _____



International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal - Site #1

Make-n-Take Geocache Journal



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International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal - Site #2

International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal - Site #3

Make-n-Take Geocache Journal



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International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal - Site #4

International Migratory Bird Day
Geocache Journal - Site #5

Make-n-Take Geocache Journal

