

Updated 12/7/2009

Bird Study Merit program @ Cub Run RECenter

Important information about how to prepare for a merit badge program at Cub Run RECenter!

Merit badges are also supposed to be done with the buddy system. *We highly recommend that you attend the program with your scout especially if he does not have a buddy*; the chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge, during the allotted time, increases dramatically when he is properly motivated. There is never a fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. Also our policy is that the program will not proceed if there are not 2 or more adults present for the program especially those containing hikes. We will attempt to enlist adult volunteers from our center but this is not always possible so *prepare for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout*. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the boys individually if necessary, while other adults keep the atmosphere calm and productive.

These programs are 3-5 hours long be sure to pack a snack and water for your scout and that he is dressed appropriately for being outdoors for some or all of the program time.

Merit Badges are in general not designed to be completed in an afternoon therefore in order to complete the badge there is some work the scouts need to do outside of the workshop. We call this pre-work. We suggest this is done prior to the badge program date but we realize this is not always practical or possible, in these cases we will if requested sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program of ask that your bring/ send back all the work and the card in order to sign off on the blue card all at once.

We will be outside for most of the class so dress for the weather. If you have binoculars or a field guide bring them with you. I have a few guides and binoculars to lend. You can buy folding travel binoculars here at the center for \$3.00 or \$6.50 depending on the type. You will need to bring something to write with and on in the field. I suggest a clipboard.

We will attempt to do all the requirements **except #8(see requirements below)** This is if the local birds cooperate. We need to find 20 species of birds. We have managed to do this each of the times I have taught this badge but we may have to run over 10 minutes or so. I you want to be able to leave early do requirement 4 at home before you come as it is the last thing we do.

Bird Study Requirements

1. Explain the need for bird study and why birds are useful indicators of the quality of the environment.
2. Show that you are familiar with the terms used to describe birds by sketching or tracing a perched bird and then labeling 15 different parts of the bird. Sketch or trace an extended wing and label types of wing feathers.
3. Demonstrate that you know how to properly use and care for binoculars.
 - a. Explain what the specification numbers on the binoculars mean.
 - b. Show how to adjust the eyepiece and how to focus for proper viewing.

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- c. Show how to properly care for and clean the lenses.
4. Demonstrate that you know how to use a bird field guide. Show your counselor that you are able to understand a range map by locating in the book and pointing out the wintering range, the breeding range, and/or the year-round range of one species of each of the following types of birds:
 - a. Seabird
 - b. Plover
 - c. Falcon or hawk
 - d. Warbler or vireo
 - e. Heron or egret
 - f. Sparrow
 - g. Nonnative bird (introduced to North America from a foreign country since 1800)
5. Observe and be able to identify at least 20 species of wild birds. Prepare a field notebook, making a separate entry for each species, and record the following information from your field observations and other references.
 - a. Note the date and time.
 - b. Note the location and habitat.
 - c. Describe the bird's main feeding habitat and list two types of food that the bird is likely to eat.
 - d. Note whether the bird is a migrant or a summer, winter, or year-round resident of your area.
6. Explain the function of a bird's song. Be able to identify five of the 20 species in your field notebook by song or call alone. For each of these five species enter a description of the song or call, and note the behavior of the bird making the sound. Note why you think the bird was making the call or song that you heard.
7. Do ONE of the following:
 - a. Go on a field trip with a local club or with others who are knowledgeable about birds in your area.
 1. Keep a list or fill out a checklist of all the birds your group observed during the field trip.
 2. Tell your counselor which birds your group saw and why some species were common and some were present in small numbers.
 3. Tell your counselor what makes the area you visited good for finding birds.
 - b. By using a public library or contacting the National Audubon Society, find the name and location of the Christmas Bird Count nearest your home and obtain the results of a recent count.

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1. Explain what kinds of information are collected during the annual event.
 2. Tell your counselor which species are most common, and explain why these birds are abundant.
 3. Tell your counselor which species are uncommon, and explain why these were present in small numbers. If the number of birds of these species is decreasing, explain why, and what, if anything, could be done to reverse their decline.
- 8. Do ONE of the following. For the option you choose, describe what birds you hope to attract, and why.**
- a. Build a bird feeder and put it in an appropriate place in your yard or another location.**
 - b. Build a birdbath and put it in an appropriate place.**
 - c. Build a backyard sanctuary for birds by planting trees and shrubs for food and cover.**