

Sacajawea's Bird Badge



Sacajawea was a Shoshone woman who traveled with the Lewis and Clark expedition. Her name means "Bird Woman." We did most of our work for this badge and our Bronze Award at Camp Sacajawea in Lynchburg. It seemed appropriate to name our bird badge for her.

From the Atlantic Ocean on Virginia's eastern boundary to Mount Rogers, the highest peak in Virginia, located in the southwestern part of the state, Virginia includes every bird habitat that occurs naturally between Maine and Florida. Within Virginia's 43,000 square miles of diverse natural habitat, you can find over 400 species of birds. From the pigeons roosting in downtown Lynchburg to the robins and cardinals in our yards to the eagles nesting at Camp Sacajawea, birds are a part of our lives. We hope that this badge will open up the world of birds to other Junior Girl Scouts.

Remember that when you are observing birds you are in their territory. Respect their privacy! Some ways to increase your chances of seeing and hearing a variety of birds include using binoculars to see birds from a distance, moving slowly and quietly to minimize disturbances, and not chasing birds, making loud noises, or wearing scented hand cream or perfume that could alert birds to your presence. Stay well away from nests so that the parents won't abandon their young. It is against the law to collect bird nests. Remember to bring your camera and field notebook to record the birds you see.

Complete six activities.

- 1.** Have Wings, Will Travel: Many birds have a summer home and a winter home. They travel, or migrate, many, many miles from one home to the other. What are some reasons that birds migrate? Make a map showing the summer and winter homes of at least three migratory birds that spend part of the year in your area. Try to choose one bird that spends part of the year south of your area and one bird that spends part of the year north of your area. (This information can be found in a bird field guide.) Show the hazards and obstacles that the birds have to go through while traveling from one home to another. Compare and contrast the habitats of their two homes. Share your map with your troop.
- 2.** Who's That Bird? Make your own bird field journal. Your journal should contain information on five to ten different birds that live in your area. Make a separate page for each type of bird. Include a picture of each bird to help you identify it. You can draw and color the birds yourself, or you can use computer graphics. Tell about each bird's range (the large area in which it lives), its habitat, what it looks like (its size, color, and any special markings), its favorite foods, what its nest and eggs look like (you can draw a picture), and its song. Also tell if the bird is a summer, winter, or year-round resident of your area. Put some blank pages in your book. Use these pages to keep a list of birds that you have seen and other information about birds.
- 3.** Why Study Birds? An ornithologist is a scientist who studies birds. Birds are pretty to look at and fun to listen to. Birds can also tell us how healthy our environment is. If you use your eyes and ears, you will be aware of birds everywhere you go. Make a list of ten ways that birds are useful to humans. Make a list of ten ways that humans are useful to birds.
- 4.** Whooooo, Whooooo! Learn about owls. How are owls different from other birds? What types of owls live in your area? What is an owl pellet? Dissect an owl pellet to see what the owl ate. Go on a night hike or sit quietly near the woods at night and listen for owls.

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- 5.** Fine Feathered Friends: Learn to identify at least five local birds by sight. Use a field guide or ask someone who knows about birds to help you.
- 6.** Bird Games: Play a game about birds. You can play one of these games or make up one of your own.

Bird Identification Game

Make two sets of flashcards with pictures of five to ten birds that live in your area. Divide your group into two teams. One person from each team moves 20 to 30 feet away from the rest of the team. This person holds the flashcards. On a signal, the flashcards are held up one by one. The teams can use binoculars and field guides to try to identify each bird. The team members can work as a group to identify the birds. As you become more familiar with the birds, you can take turns individually.

Fly Away Birdie

This game is played like Hangman. One person chooses a word or phrase that has to do with birds and makes a short line for each letter of the word on a piece of paper. The second person then tries to guess what the word is by choosing letters. Correct letters are placed on the correct lines. If the person guesses a letter that is not in the word, then parts are added to make a drawing of a bird. When the bird has a body, a head, eyes, a beak, a tail, and two wings, it “flies away.” The object of the game is for the person guessing the word to figure out what the word is before the bird “flies away.”

Bird Song Game

Make two sets of cards with different bird songs on them. (This information can be found in books.) Each bird song should be on two cards. Give each girl a card. The girls then sing the songs on their cards to attract their mates. Each girl must find her partner by song only. When everyone has a mate, the girls try to identify the birds whose songs they have been singing. Everyone then forms a circle, and each pair sings their song and tells what bird they represent.

Duck, Duck, Goose

In this game, the girls sit down in a circle facing each other. One girl is “it” and walks around the circle. As she walks, she taps each girl’s head and says whether the girl is a “duck” or a “goose.” Once someone is chosen as the “goose,” she stands up and chases “it” around the circle. The goal is to tag “it” before she is able to sit down in the “goose’s” spot. If the “goose” cannot do this, then she becomes “it” for the next round and play continues. If she does tag “it,” then “it” must sit in the center of the circle and the “goose” becomes “it” for the next round. The girl in the center of the circle can’t leave until another girl is tagged and she is replaced.

Crossword or Word Search

Make a crossword or word search puzzle using bird words. Trade puzzles with your friends.

- 7.** Build a Birdhouse: Look on the Internet or in books from the library or consult a local bird expert to get directions for building a birdhouse. With an adult’s help, build a birdhouse and put it up in an appropriate place. Different birds have different housing and habitat needs. Try to place your birdhouse in a place that will attract the type of bird for which the house was built. Carefully observe your birdhouse to watch for birds nesting in it. Try to identify the birds if possible. Remember to give them privacy. Only observe from a distance.

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- 8.** Feed the Birds: Look on the Internet or in the library for “recipes” for bird food. Make at least two types of bird food and put them outside. Observe what birds come to eat the food.

OR

Make a birdfeeder from recycled materials and use it to feed the birds.

- 9.** Bird Songs: Learn the difference between bird songs and bird calls. Listen to a tape or CD of bird songs or have a bird expert come to your troop meeting to teach you some common bird songs. Listen to the songs of birds that you are likely to hear in your area. Learn to identify at least five birds by their songs.
- 10.** Birds as Symbols: What is your state bird? Why was it chosen? Do any other states also have this bird as their state bird? What is the national bird of the United States? Tell about each of these birds. Can you list other symbols that use birds?
- 11.** What Makes a Bird a Bird? Draw and label the parts of a bird. Include common markings used to help identify birds. This information can be included in your field journal.

- 12.** Field Trip: Go on a field trip with a local bird club or with someone who is knowledgeable about the birds in your area. Keep a list of the birds you see and hear. Add these birds to your field journal.

OR

Have someone come to your troop meeting to talk with you about birds.

- 13.** Beaks and Feet: Draw or form out of clay the eight different types of feet and ten different types of beaks that birds have. How are the feet and beak of each bird suited to its habitat, food, and way of life? If you choose to draw the beaks and feet, you can add the drawings to your field journal. Share what you have learned with your troop.
- 14.** Bird Feathers: Draw a diagram of three different types of bird feathers. If you have a bird feather, examine it closely with a magnifying glass and draw what you see. Either put this information on a poster and share it with your troop or add it to your field journal.
- 15.** Reading About Birds: Read a book or watch a movie about birds. Some ideas are the movie *Fly Away Home* and the books *The Trumpet of the Swan* by E.B. White, *Flute's Journey* by Lynne Cherry, and *Frightful's Mountain* and *There's an Owl in the Shower* by Jean Craighead George. Your librarian can help you find other books.
- 16.** Eating Like a Bird: Plan and carry out a “Blue Bird Banquet” for your awards ceremony when you complete this badge or for a special troop meeting. All of the foods that you serve should have a bird theme. Some ideas are listed below. Can you think of others?

- Peanut Birder and Berry Sandwiches: Cut peanut butter and jelly sandwiches into bird shapes with a cookie cutter.
- Birdseed (trail mix including fruits and nuts)
- Bird Nest Salad: Make a nest of shredded lettuce and place small red grapes in the nest to represent eggs.
- Hummingbird Nectar (red fruit punch)

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- Bird Wings (chicken nuggets)
- Candy Bird Nests: Melt one package of chocolate chips with one package of butterscotch chips. Stir in two bags of chow mein noodles. Drop in nest shapes on a cookie sheet lined with wax paper. Place jellybean eggs in the nests. Cool and serve.

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Developed by: Junior Girl Scout Troop 676 as part of their Bronze Award project
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