



WINGIN' IT VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Hi everyone, it's me, Taylor Rabe with Conservation Nation Academy. Today, you'll step into the world of birding with Sam DeJarnett learning to observe birds using your senses. No fancy equipment needed, just your eyes, ears, and curiosity. In this lesson, you'll try out science and engineering practices like observing, collecting data, and analyzing patterns in nature. You'll use field methods to gather evidence of birds in and around your school or neighborhood, what they sound like how they move, and where they gather.

You'll be able to collect and analyze data about birds and their environment and use patterns and systems to connect how small clues, like an unusual shape or a brief song, reveal where birds are and how they behave. By the end, you'll understand that noticing nature is not just about seeing, it's about thinking like a scientist. So get ready to get outside, listen closely, and notice the natural world all around you. Have fun!

Have you ever seen one of these in your neighborhood? Or maybe you've heard this. Raise your hand if you've noticed something like this at your local park, a river, or a lake. I bet you've seen shapes like these before. Get ready because today with the Conservation Nation Academy, we're winging it.

Hi Conservation Nation Academy, I'm Sam DeJarnett. I really love birds and today I'm so excited to take you out on a walk and show you how you can become a birder. And what does that mean? All that means is that you just go outside and you notice birds and that makes you a birder. Also, if you're interested in learning more about wildlife and conservation, how to help your planet, or maybe even having a job or career in conservation like me, birding is a great way to get started. And here's the fun part. Birding is a big old game of I Spy. I'm going to show you four strategies today that will take your I Spy birding game to the next level by using your sense of sight and your sense of hearing. Are you ready?

Strategy number one is to know what to look for. Now birds are really, really good at camouflage and camouflage is an adaptation that allows them to stay safe from predators. And it means that they often can blend in really well with their surroundings and it makes it really difficult to be able to find them when you're out birding. So to be able to see birds, my advice is to look for three things. Shapes, movement and colors.



In terms of shapes, you want to look for outlines that don't really fit with the straight lines of a tree. Sometimes you want to look for things that are rounder, maybe tail feathers that are longer, wing feathers that are longer, and just generally don't fit with the straight branches of a tree. Now movement is another way that you can see birds, quite literally. So if the world around you is really still, plants don't walk around, plants don't fly, but birds do. So if you see any kind of flight movement, flight patterns, birds could be hopping around on the ground, but you might not be able to see them because they're camouflaged, but you can see their actual movement.

This is another great way and most important way to be able to see a bird. Let's practice. Are you ready?

How many crows do you see in this tree?

How many crows did you find?

Let's try one more. This one is even more tricky. Remember, some birds are very good at camouflage, so even if you don't see their colors, you can still look for their movements and shapes.

Now that we know what we're looking for, let's kick it up a notch. My second strategy is for you to use your ears. Now when you go outside to listen for birds, what should you focus on? I start with these two questions to guide my listening. First, how many different sounds can I hear? And second, how would I describe these sounds? Of course, not all sounds you hear outside are going to come from birds. You might hear from other animals like squirrels, your neighborhood cats, maybe even raccoons. Sometimes multiple sounds might even come from the one bird. When I identify a bird sound, I often refer to it as bird vocalization. Bird vocalizations can come in many styles and volumes, and there are many ways to describe these sounds. Some words that you might use are song, chirp, shrill, drumming, quacking, cooing, chattering.

For this next challenge, I want you to close your eyes or look down at the floor, whatever you're comfortable with, and focus on your sense of hearing. Pretend that you are out here in the forest with me. We don't see much right now in this spot, but we can hear a lot. Take a listen and hold a finger up for every different bird sound that you hear. Try and guess how many different birds are in this area right now.



Well, how many birds did you hear? I counted three. A crow, that makes this sound. A duck, which makes this sound. And this sound, that was a red-winged blackbird. You're doing a great job figuring out how to notice colors, shapes, and movements, and listen for all different kinds of bird calls. Now, for our third strategy, I'm going to show you how to use both your sense of hearing and your sight by making some very special drawings. There are two ways you can draw birds that have nothing to do with actually drawing a bird. Let me explain. The first way you can draw birds without actually drawing a bird is to pay attention to the shapes and patterns they make when they fly. For example, murmuration is similar to flocking, which is when birds travel and forage for food together in groups. They're aware of each other when they're flying and they don't bump into each other. Instead, they create these really big, beautiful, morphing shapes called murmurations. This beautiful movement of flight can be inspiring for people to draw, which is another fun way to bird too.

All we need is a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. If you want, you can also bring different colored pencils. What we are going to draw is a shape we see in the flock. It can look like this. I also like to draw the shape and the way that they fly without looking down at the paper. Another fun way to draw a bird without actually drawing the bird

is to draw what you hear. A lot of times we can't see the bird connected to the sound it makes, but that's okay. We can draw lines that move with the way the song is moving and it can be really fun. If the sound goes up and down, your line can go up and down.

Start and end your line with however long the song is. Of course, when you're done, it won't look anything like a bird, but it is a unique work of art shared between you and that bird that you found. Drawing birds is also fun to do with friends, and you don't even need paper and pencil to draw bird sounds. You can use your finger and draw what you hear like this.

[Bird calls]

I see my friend Tykee over there doing what he does best, being a wildlife detective. And this is one of the best strategies for learning about birds in your environment. Look for clues about them. Anytime we're outside, whether we see or hear birds or not, we can still be looking for clues about the birds that live around us. Let's ask Tykee for his advice.

Hi Sam.



Hey Tykee.

And hello Conservation Nation Academy. I would like to think of this next strategy as a top 10 in the forensic files of our feathered friends, also known as things you can notice when you can't see or hear any birds. Let me show you. The case of the rippling waters.

Elementary, my dear Watson. Disturbed water surfaces might just be our feathered friends taking a dip. Mystery of the marked bark. Scratches on tree trunks. A clear sign that our avian species have been up to some foraging mischief. Footprints in the sand or mud. Tiny tracks are telltale signs of birds of all kinds. Observing them from afar makes sure more people can witness the evidence. Seeing seeds. Seed holes in fruit remains. They left us one of their calling cards. A study in tree holes. These cavities could be secret hideouts or evidence of woodpecker shenanigans. The plot thickens. The adventure of the broken eggshells. Keep your eyes peeled for these fragments. They're crucial pieces of our nesting puzzle. The sound of beating wings. Listen closely for the sound of flapping wings. Our suspects might be making a hasty retreat. They rest in the nest. Nest in trees, bushes, or building ledges. We've stumbled upon their secret lairs for shelter and protection. The sign of feathers. Fallen feathers are like breadcrumbs leading us to our bird buddies. Follow the trail. Bird dropping. It's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it. This evidence can be very fresh, so look with your eyes, not your hands. Remember, a good bird detective uses their senses and takes their time to slow down and observe their surroundings carefully.

Thank you so much, Tykee. Have so much fun birding out there. Thanks so much, Sam. I'll see you around. I love that we didn't need any special equipment to pay attention and just notice all these things around us. You might notice that when we're out birding, we have some other tools with us. And if you really, really enjoy looking for birds and want a little bit of extra help, one thing I recommend is this tool, binoculars.

All right, so binoculars 101. How do we use them? It's really easy. There's not much to it. First thing you're going to do, if you're wearing glasses, these are eye cups. You keep them down. If you don't wear glasses, you'll keep them up. And then the next thing you do, you're just going to bring them to your face and can focus on whatever you're looking at. And you want to move these in and out like this until you don't see any black crescent moon shape right in your focus there. Once that's gone, you're not going to touch your eye cups or these anymore for the rest of the day, but you are going to use your focus knob right here a lot.



This is the thing that's going to make your bird and your vision either very blurry or very clear. Obviously, we want it very clear, so you'll just move it until the image is clear. And that's it. That's all you need to use binoculars.

Now, Conservation Nation Academy, it's your turn. Your teacher is going to give you a journal page that you can use to go outside and notice nature. There's a space on that page where you can write down your observations, draw bird movements and the sounds like I did earlier. And there's even a scavenger hunt for bird clues that you can check off as you go. There's also plenty of space to write down your questions. Remember, you don't need to know anything about birds to start noticing them.

All right, guys, have fun out there and keep asking questions and learning with the Conservation Nation Academy. Now it's time for me to go see what that bird is over there. Great work out there, Nature Champions. By observing bird activity in your schoolyard or neighborhood, you've practiced real scientific thinking, asking questions, gathering data, and noticing patterns in the natural world. Remember, your observations help build a picture of how ecosystems work, even in your own backyard. Small clues matter. Even one bird song or flutter can tell you about the food source, habitat, and community interconnections. That's systems thinking in action. Keep this up, build a habit of noticing. The more you pay attention, the more you'll discover how nature communicates and how we all fit within it.

Thanks for joining me today. I can't wait to see where your observations take you.

More About Sam

Here are five facts about me. I live in Oregon all the way on the west coast. But today, I'm on the east coast near Washington, D.C., watching birds with my friends at Conservation Nation. When I'm at home, my favorite things to do are to hang out with my dog, Pipa, and my cat, Otter. I also love to go to the beach with my friends. When I moved to Oregon, I got a job training birds that were too sick to go back out into the wild, but they were healthy enough to stay with us for education programming. My job was to teach them how to accept being around humans. One of my favorite birds to train was the great horned owl. It



was so much fun to work really close with this bird and get to really experience how beautiful she was and really get a good look at her big feet and her talons.