

# Nature Journaling Challenge 7



Spring is for the birds! As the ice begins to melt, soon we'll say "hello again" to songbirds and waterbirds. In the fall, some birds must **migrate** to find the food, water and shelter they need to survive. As the weather warms up, these birds come back to either make their nests here continue flying north. Many of the wetland birds we see at this time of year are migrating back, while many of the backyard birds we see in spring will stay here all year round.

Learning to identify birds can take patience, but this month we challenge you to be **adventurous!** Being adventurous means being willing to try new things. It also means being brave in our sometimes wet and chilly spring weather! Spring is a great season to learn about birds... it's easier to see them when there aren't many leaves on the trees!

[Why care about birds? Birds shape our environment by helping seeds travel. Birds eat seeds and those seeds are deposited after leaving their bodies! These seeds grow into grasses, trees, and flowers that help clean our air, provide us with food and building materials, and add beauty to our lives. Birds also eat insects and other animals we might consider pests – like worms, spiders, ticks and more! Birds also help us understand our world; for example, scientists continue to learn new things about how birds use the earth's magnetic field to figure out their migration routes. Plus, some of them are pretty colors and are just enjoyable to watch!]

As naturalists, it can be helpful to bring some tools with you as you explore. Bird **field guides** have pictures of birds and information about the bird to help you decide which kind of bird you're looking at. We've included a simple **field guide to backyard birds** and a simple **field guide to wetland birds**. Check out our **Tips to for Birding** to help you learn too! If you're feeling really adventurous, we also have suggestions for where to go look for birds on the refuge and in the La Crosse area. A pair of **binoculars** is helpful to have, but there are lots of clues we can look for about a bird without seeing all of it up close.

**Before you go outside**, take a moment to set-up your nature journal. **After that**, head outside to **record the weather data!**

**Then**, see what you can find for spring birds!! You can record your observations in your nature journal as you go or can record them after you come back inside. You might even be able to see birds right outside your windows!

