



Birding with Binoculars

Step-By-Step Instructions on How To Use Binoculars

Binoculars are a useful tool when it comes to watching and studying birds. These steps give a brief lesson on binocular basics:

1. Roll back the eyecups of the binoculars if you wear glasses.
2. Put the neck strap of the binoculars around your neck.
3. Find an object that is vertical or horizontal.
4. Look through the binoculars and bend them until you see only a single image.
5. Cover the right lens with your hand and move the focus wheel until the image is sharp.
6. Next, cover the left lens with your hand and move the focus wheel until the image is sharp.
7. Adjust the right eyepiece until the image is sharp.



Your binoculars should now be ready for some serious bird watching! Remember, it is easier to find birds with your eyes first, and then use the binoculars for a close-up view.

Tips for Successful Field Experiences

- Gather needed equipment—a field guide, binoculars (if possible), notebook, pencil, and possibly a list of local birds you might expect to see.
- Before beginning fieldwork, dress in comfortable clothing of dull colors, which helps the observer blend into the natural habitat being explored. Also, wearing sneakers enables the observer to move about quietly.
- Conduct field work in a natural habitat. To see the greatest variety of birds, try to visit a local wildlife sanctuary, state park, or federal refuge. Get landowners' permission to walk on private property.
- Try to search for birds during the times when birds are most active: within an hour or two after dawn or before dusk.
- If the bird's name is known, record it; otherwise, note its colors, distinguishing features, song or call, and observed behavior.
- Record the type of natural habitat where the bird is observed. Look at the surroundings carefully. Then, describe the physical environment, including the types of plants present, the time of year, and the weather. This information helps the observer understand the natural conditions each species needs in order to survive.
- Always remember: The natural environment comes first. Never harm or disturb an animal, plant, or nest. Also, never take an animal away from its habitat. No bird, or other creature, can exist for very long away from its own environment.