
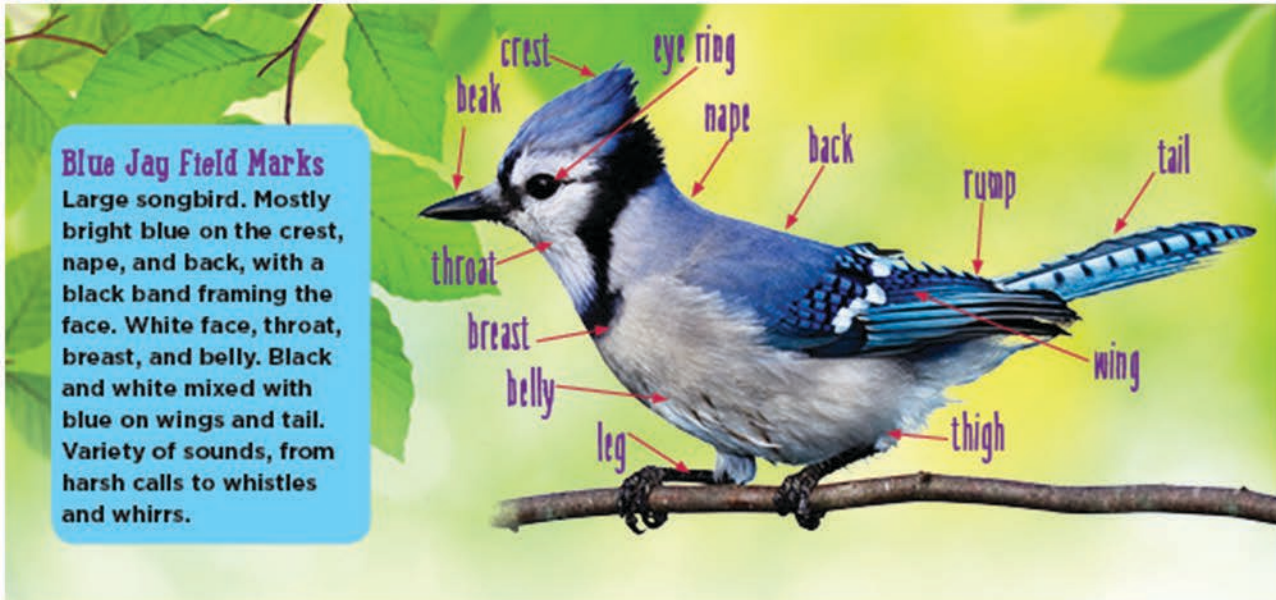


Looking for Field Marks

 Teacher-Led Field/Classroom Activity
Science/Research

How do you figure out what kind of bird you're seeing?



Objective:

Students learn to observe birds, recognize and record field marks, and use field guides and other resources to identify the birds' species.

Students will need:

- Naturalists' Journals
- "Field Mark Clues" reproducible, at least two for each student
- Binoculars (optional)
- Pencils
- Resources for identify birds, including local and regional field guides

Suggested time:

Twenty minutes in class to review field marks; one class period for a field trip; one class period or homework time to identify birds.

What to do:

1. Make plans ahead of time for a trip to an area where birds can be spotted.
2. Have a class discussion about how to tell one kind of bird from another. Review "Who's That Bird" on page 3 of the "Wild About Birds" student newspaper, found here: [linkTK]. Discuss birds' field marks—characteristics such as size, color and patterns, crests, beak shape, tail shape, and so on.
3. Look through field guides and have students identify field marks of birds shown in pictures.
4. Distribute copies of the "Field Mark Clues" duplicating master. Have multiple copies available for each student.
5. In the field, students observe and record the field marks for as many different perching bird species as possible, using the duplicating masters as well as their Naturalists' Journals.
6. Back in the classroom, students can use field guides and other resources to identify the species of the birds they saw in the field.

Follow-up/Extension

Have students create silhouettes to record the field marks of other kinds of birds, such as wading birds, swimming birds, woodpeckers, and birds of prey such as hawks and owls.