

Field Trip Checklist

- _____ **1. Decide on Field Trip Objectives.** What do you want the students to learn and experience? How will you integrate this field trip with classroom activities?
- _____ **2. Contact a Resource Person.** Locate someone in your area who is knowledgeable about shorebirds to visit your classroom, suggest good shorebird viewing sites, dates and times, and even accompany your class on the field trip. Check with your city or state natural resource agencies, a nearby wildlife refuge, universities, environmental education centers, or bird-watching clubs.
- _____ **3. Select the Site and Date** for your trip (with alternates). The date you choose is especially important because at most stopover areas, shorebirds are only found in large numbers for a period of one to three weeks, with a peak period of about five days. Check the section Shorebird Migration Flyways for a list of important shorebird sites and peak migration dates in your area. A successful field trip depends on your students being able to see birds!
 - _____ Are you visiting an intertidal area? If so, check a tide table. One hour after high tide is often the best time to see shorebirds, but consult local experts to be sure.
 - _____ Obtain permission for your field trip if the site is on private property.
- _____ Visit the site yourself before taking your students there. Ask if fees could be waived or reduced for educational groups. Are there restrooms? Can the bus park nearby or will it have to drop the class off and return at a predetermined time? Is there a shelter or building in case of bad weather? Where will the students eat lunch (if necessary)?
- _____ **4. Arrange Transportation.** Ask the driver to park nearby in case of bad weather at sites that do not have a shelter building.
- _____ **5. Select Pre- Post- and On-site Activities.** This educator's guide has suggestions for all these types of activities.
- _____ **6. Prepare the Field Trip Schedule.** Scheduling suggestions are included in this chapter. Consider small group divisions, distribution and use of equipment, travel time, timing of activities, and rainy day alternate activities.
- _____ **7. Recruit Assistants.** Invite teacher aides and parents to your field trip so that you have one adult to every five students. If possible, take the adults to the site before the field trip. Be sure they understand their duties, and have a copy of the schedule, trip rules, and activity explanations before the trip day.
- _____ **8. Explain Your Expectation to Your Students.** Let the class know where it is going and the behavior that is expected of the students (see Field Trip Etiquette).
 - _____ Ask students what their expectations are for the trip.
 - _____ Discuss etiquette and safety with the students.
 - _____ Give the students a list of what they need to bring along, including how to dress for the terrain and weather.
- _____ **9. Collect Permission Slips.** Be sure to get emergency medical information for all students. If you will be shooting video, be sure you have a signed parental release form, which is included at the end of this section for each student.
- _____ **10. Gather and Make Field Equipment.** Directions for making and using some suggested field equipment are included in this activity guide. Some students will be able to bring binoculars and field guides from home. Use the pre-field trip activity Using a Field Guide and Binoculars with your students before the field trip. Make sure, before leaving the school, that all binoculars and books are clearly marked with the students' names.



----- **11. Research and Discuss Your Local Shorebirds.**

What species do you expect to see on this field trip? What are the key identification features of these shorebirds? Using the Shorebird Profiles in the Appendix, have students learn the natural history of at least one of the shorebirds they are likely to see. Conduct as many of the classroom activities provided in this curriculum as you have time for before the field trip.

----- **12. Assign Responsibilities.**

Assign all students (either individuals, small groups, or the class as a whole) particular responsibilities for the field trip. This will ensure that all the students participate.

----- **13. Photocopy and Assemble the Field Journals.** Make sure students understand how to use the field journals.

----- Create a field journal that students can use to record field observations and data. Begin by selecting from the data sheets included in this activity book. Photocopy them on waterproof paper (if available). A stack of five blank sheets can be stapled in the middle and folded to form a ten-page book.

----- Provide each student (or student team) with a clipboard and a pencil mounted with string and tape.

----- **14. Conduct a "Dry Run."**

Ask students to bring appropriate clothes and birdwatching gear to school the day before the field trip. Take your class outside to simulate the field trip. Give students a chance to practice using the equipment and journals.

