

Shorebird Field Study

Grade Level: all levels

Duration: throughout the field trip

Skills: application, comparison, observation, collection and interpretation of data, discussion, evaluation, and using technology

Subjects: science, math, language arts, and technology; fine arts (depending on the Shorebird Journal Sheets selected)

Concepts

- Bridge the classroom and the local environment.
- Gain firsthand knowledge through an outdoor experience.
- Discover the ecosystem through multisensory experiences.
- View shorebirds, their habitats, and what they eat.

Vocabulary

- field marks
- binoculars
- spotting scope
- bird field guide

Overview

Using a Shorebird Journal, students collect an assortment of shorebird data and site information while on a field trip.

Objectives

After this activity, students will be able to:

- Record shorebird data as it applies to the journal sheets selected for this activity.
- Draw a shorebird seen in the field, noting key markings, physical characteristics, and coloration.

Materials

- **Shorebird Journals** (assembled as described in Activity Preparation)
- Pencils
- Binoculars
- Bird field guides

Optional

Spotting scope

Introduction

There is no introductory information for this activity.

Activity Preparation

1. Select an age-appropriate Shorebird Journal master at the end of this section. Make photocopies for each student or student team. Ask a parent volunteer to assemble and staple the booklets as described. Let students complete the pre-field trip pages a day or two before the trip.
2. Use the **Using Field Guides and Binoculars** pre-activity (found earlier in this section) to ensure your students are able to use their binoculars before observing shorebirds in the field.

Procedure

1. Pass out field journals to your students as they board the bus. Ask them to review the pages during the bus ride so they understand what types of information they are to collect on-site. Review the field journals when you reach the field site and discuss any questions they have.
2. Back in the classroom, have students share their observations and data. Refer to the post-activities, Sharing Circle and Data Analysis, for ideas on how to analyze the information or data they collected.
3. Post your field trip observations on the Shorebird Sister Schools Program Website <http://sssp.fws.gov>. Go to Tracking page.

Additional Activities

Field Study Task Cards

For younger students, especially pre-readers, create a set of field study task cards to use in place of data worksheets. To do this, make a copy of the Field Study Task Cards found at the end of this activity. Cut out and laminate the cards. Divide your class into teams of twos or threes. Read each card out loud and then give it to a team. Explain to each student that the card is his or her specific assignment and that each one of them will report on what he or she found after the field trip.

Back in classroom, use the **Sharing Circle** post-activity found later in this section to let each team explain its assigned task and what it discovered on the trip.



Field Study Task Cards

(Make one photocopy.)

Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 1: Take a quick look around the habitats. How many birds do you see?</p>	<p>Task 2: Do you hear any sounds? Are any of these sounds birdsongs or calls? How many different sounds and birds do you hear?</p>
Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 3: Use the binoculars or spotting scope. Can you see shorebirds? Describe them.</p>	<p>Task 4: Look for other signs of birds like feathers, tracks, or places birds probed in the mud.</p>
Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 5: Watch the first bird that flushes when a shorebird flock takes off. Does that bird stay in the lead the whole time?</p>	<p>Task 6: Watch a shorebird probe in the mud. Can you tell when it finds food?</p>



Field Study Task Cards

(Make one photocopy.)

Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 7: Make a map of the habitat showing where you saw the shorebirds or the signs of their presence.</p>	<p>Task 8: Write your own.</p>
Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 9: Write your own.</p>	<p>Task 10: Write your own.</p>
Field Study Task	Field Study Task
<p>Task 11: Write your own.</p>	<p>Task 12: Write your own.</p>

