



Lesson for Podcast 08: Be an Ornithologist!

Lesson Summary: Trek the Zilker Preserve. Look and listen to see how many different birds you can identify.

Lesson Description: An ornithologist is a person who studies birds and that is what you will be doing in this lesson. Trek to the Zilker Preserve. Use the entrance that is right off of Barton Springs road under the Mopac bridge. There are a few distinct areas in the preserve including a meadow and a wooded area. Different birds will live in different areas. Use the tips and audio provided on the iPod, and your help sheet to identify the birds. If you see or hear a bird that is not on the help sheet, make some notes in your journal and then try to look it up on the internet when you get home. The Cornell University website, listed below, is a great place to start.

Materials Needed:

I-pod, loaded with Zilker Trek and headphones
Journal
Colored Pencils
Binoculars
Help Sheet: Birds
Optional:
Bug Spray

Activity Discussion:

Austin is a great place for birders. According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife website, more than four hundred bird species have been recorded within a sixty-mile radius of Austin. The reason why Austin is such a great place to see a wide variety of birds is due to its unique geography. Austin is located in the Central Flyway, one of the four major bird migration routes across North America. Different species of birds pass through Austin almost year round. Another factor accounting for the wide diversity of bird species in Austin is its geologic setting along the

Zilker Trek

Balcones Fault. Because Austin is located along the fault, it has a Hill Country environment to the west and Blackland Prairie ecology to the east making for a very diverse bird population.

Additional Resources:

Web:

Learn more about birds at the Travis County Audubon site:

<http://www.travisaudubon.org/>

This site has a great database of bird images and calls.

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/>

Texas Parks and Wildlife—Birding in Austin

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/publications/pwdpubs/pwd_br_w7000_0328/

Notes:

Don't forget to upload your images and scans of your journal pages to our on-line gallery.