

INV. 1 ACTIVITY—OBSERVING BIRDS (Page 1 of 2)

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Introduction

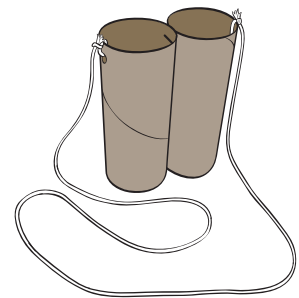
If your child was learning this module at school, they would have welcomed goldfish into their classroom. They would have learned about the structures of goldfish, how to care for them, and about their behaviors. After getting to know the goldfish a second very similar animal would have been introduced—guppies. Having a second organism to compare to the first helps children better observe and learn about both of them.

In this first investigation, students also study schoolyard birds. Today, you and your child will begin a long-term investigation of your neighborhood birds.

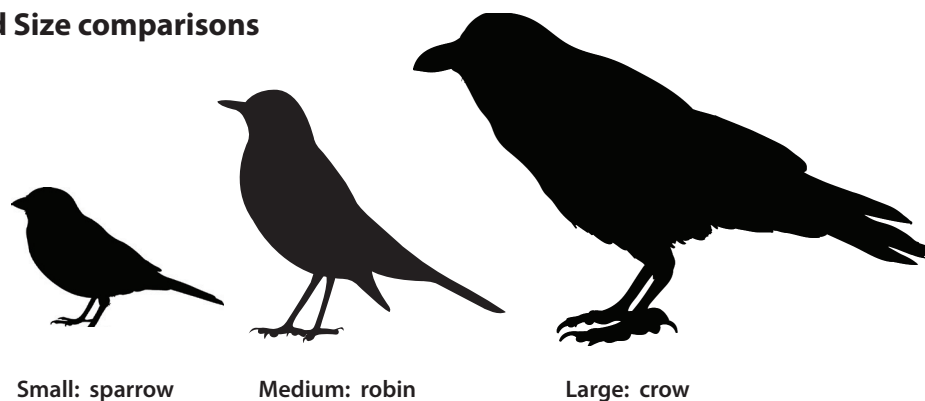
Exploration (Go outside four different times to observe birds)

Focus question: What types of birds can we see around my home?

1. Ask your child if they have seen any birds lately. If so, where were they? Record these locations on a piece of paper.
2. Explain that you are going to go outside to look for birds. You can use real binoculars if you have them or make some out of toilet paper tubes that you staple or tape together and then staple a string to either side.
3. As you go outside it is not necessary to know the names of all of the birds, but you can talk about their size, their colors, how they fly, their behavior, their structures, how they communicate, and where you see them.
4. You can talk about the relative size. Are they small like a house sparrow? More of a medium size like a robin? Or large like a crow?



Bird Size comparisons



(continued on the next page)

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5. Create a t-chart for collecting bird counts in a notebook or on a piece of paper. Something like this (leave more rows), grown ups can do the writing:

Bird size	Tally mark (for each time you see that bird)
1. sparrow, small	III
2. hawk large	I
3. jay, medium	IIII

6. Try and go outside four times to observe the birds. After each exploration have your child draw one of the birds they saw in their notebook. You can fold a few pieces of standard 8.5 by 11" paper in half and staple them together to make a notebook. You can support your child by writing any words they would like to record about the bird they are drawing.
7. Have fun observing birds. You will likely see the most birds earlier in the day or at the end of the day. Repeat steps 3-6 each time you go outside.

Possible follow up explorations:

- Make a bird feeder out of containers from the recycling bin, perhaps a clear plastic juice container. Look online for good ideas.
- Go online and explore the resources at The Cornell Lab of Ornithology to try and identify birds. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search#>
- Merlin is a simple bird ID tool created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for use on mobile devices. You can also use the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website to get help on bird identification

Extension activity with fish:

If you have an aquarium at home, have your child interact with the fish in the aquarium. Can they train the fish to come to them at feeding time? What happens if they put an object in the tank? How do the fish interact with the object? If you don't have pet fish, but have other pets, see if your child can interact with them in a similar way.