



Birding for beginners

Birding, or bird-watching, can be a great escape right in our own backyards. It is also an opportunity to learn even more about the natural world and contribute to global research and bird population preservation. And, with spring about to be in full bloom, birds are migrating north from their tropical winter homes, making now the perfect time for birding across North America.

What is birding?

Birding is the art of intentionally watching and listening to birds. It can be done nearly anywhere -- on an outdoor adventure, while walking your dog in the neighborhood, or even simply while lounging in your living room.

There are many health benefits for both humans and birds alike that go along with this hobby. Birds will make you laugh, they will fascinate you and they will make you wonder what it's like to see the land from a sky high view. It's even been [linked to lowering levels of depression and anxiety](#).

Birding also gives bird populations a better chance to persevere. The more we observe them, track where they are going and when they get there, the better we can protect them. This is essential when you consider that bird populations have declined by three billion in North America since 1970. In other words, in just 50 years, [more than one in four birds have disappeared from our skies](#).



Photo credit: staff. Before heading out into nature, make sure to follow your local, state and CDC guidelines before venturing out into neighborhoods, staying the recommended distance from others and wearing a face mask.

Resources for new birders

All you need to get started is to look and listen for birds in your backyard. A pair of binoculars can help you see birds up close. Keep a notepad handy to document what you see!

There are numerous resources online for new birders to get started. Citizen science projects, such as the [International Migratory Bird Day](#) and tools like [eBird](#), provide simple checklists that help you share data with scientists and researchers around the world.

To help new birders get started, we compiled a list of some of our favorite North American migratory birds. See if you can spot them in your neighborhood!

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