



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

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SURVEY GIVES TIPS ON HOW TO BECOME EXPERT ON BIRDS

Now is a good time of year for would-be amateur ornithologists to begin learning their bird lore, officials of the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of the Interior, said today. In winter and early spring, the conservationists explained, there is less to confuse the beginner. Most of the birds found at this time are resident species, and the trees have little foliage to hide them.

Studying birds in the field is a pastime that interests both urban and rural folk. It is seldom necessary to go far afield to find at least a few birds. City dwellers may find them in small city parks, while the suburban or rural residents find the birds almost at their door-steps.

Little equipment is needed to gather more than ordinary knowledge about the feathered creatures. A notebook, a pencil, small opera or field glasses, and keen interest are all the amateur needs.

To identify the birds he sees, the amateur should consult standard manuals or color guides and State and local lists that give a description of the various birds, details of their occurrence, and accounts of their habits. In many localities, amateur bird students have formed clubs to exchange notes on field trips and to enjoy their common interest in the outdoors.

It is not necessary, as many people believe, to arise at dawn to see birds. The best observations can be made early in the morning or late in the afternoon, when the birds are active. Even in summer, the birds are usually active until about 11 a.m. and again during the two hours before sunset.

The A, B, C's of becoming an amateur ornithologist are so frequently asked for by correspondents of the Biological Survey that this subject has been discussed in a mimeographed leaflet recently written by May Thacher Cooke, a biologist of the Bureau's Section of Distribution and Migration of Birds, Division of Wildlife Research. The leaflet, BS-150, entitled "Suggestions for Bird Field Study," is available upon request.

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