Smithsonian Associates Presents: Backyard Birding Handout

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1. Quick guide to saving observations on the Merlin app

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/save-list-of-birds-merlin-app/

While eBird is the most recommended method to keeping track of your observations in the field, the free Merlin app is the go-to for assisting you with identifying species in the field you are not not familiar with. This article instructs you on how to get the most out of Merlin when it comes to saving your observations.

2. Intro to using field marks to ID birds

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/building-skills-the-4-keys-to-bird-identification/

This article is an excellent place to start when it comes to learning how to identify birds using field marks: physical characteristics of the bird's anatomy (plumage, bill shape, leg color, etc.). This skill is especially useful when dealing with birds that look very similar to other species.

3. Guide to using BirdNET

https://www.floridafamilynature.com/2021/04/identifying-bird-calls-with-the-birdnet-app.html

BirdNET is the #1 app used purely to identify birds by songs you are hearing in the field. It is fairly straightforward, but this article will help clear up any confusion on how to use it.

4. Complete guide to binoculars for birding

https://www.audubon.org/gear/binocular-guide

This is an incredible resource for finding a pair of binoculars that best fit your needs and budget. The best bang for your buck in my opinion are the Vortex Diamondback 8x42 magnification.

5. Best budget superzoom cameras for birding

https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-superzoom-camera/amp/ (Cameras)

These articles will help you select the best quality superzoom camera you can get on a budget. Note that the cameras are not cheap, but by having a built in zoom lens, you won't need to shell out more money for a telephoto lens. My personal combination is not a superzoom all-in-one, I use the Canon R5 with Canon 100-400mm lens.

6. Reminder of apps to download:

eBird (free)

Merlin (free)

BirdNET (free)

iNaturalist (free)

Sibley Guide

Audubon

Warbler Guide