
Appendix D

Glossary

Adaptation: A modification, or change, by which a species improves its condition in relationship to its environment over generations.

Adjustable Eyepiece: One of the two focusing devices used to form a clear image through binoculars. Usually located on the right eyepiece on binoculars and reads “+ 0 –.”

Aperture: The diameter of each objectives lens on a pair of binoculars. The larger the aperture, the brighter the image.

Bird Banding: A method of bird monitoring to track bird population and demographic trends (characteristics of the population) over time.

Back Brooding: The time when chicks are on a parent birds’ back.

Barb: A tiny needle-like structure attached to each side of the feather rachis and points upward to form the contour of the feather.

Barbule: A needle-like structure attached to each barb usually having hooklets to keep the feather vane interlocked.

Bract: A modified or specialized leaf, associated with reproductive structures.

Binoculars: A tool used for birding (or birdwatching) and studying birds to enhance one’s ability to see birds. They are essentially two identical telescopes mounted side by side and aligned to point in the same direction.

Biodiversity: A term referring to the diversity of biological species.

Bioregion: An area constituting a natural ecological community with characteristic plants and animals and environmental conditions, bounded by natural rather than artificial borders.

Birding trail: A network of nature sites chosen to help conserve and enhance bird habitat through birdwatching.

Breeding Season: The time of year when a certain species is breeding (mating and raising young).

Brood: The group of chicks of a bird.

Brood Rearing: The time when adult birds are raising (feeding and protecting) their chicks.

Calamus: The part of the central shaft (rachis) of a feather which extends below the vane.

Call: A vocal communication used by birds that is typically short, simple, and produced by both sexes throughout the year.

Calyx: The outermost whorl of flower parts below the true petals.

Central Focus: One of two focusing devices used to form a clear image through binoculars. Located on the hinge on a pair of binoculars.

Citizen Science: A partnership between the public and professional scientists. People across the continent to better understand and conserve birds.

Conifer Forest: A dense growth of conifer trees (cone bearing trees in the pine family), plants, and underbrush. Typically found at higher elevations in Modoc County.

Contour Feathers: Basic vaned feathers of a bird's body and wings. They coat the body, giving it a streamlined shape, and are highly specialized for bird flight and display.

Dichotomous Key: A tool that allows the user to determine the identity of items in the natural world such as birds. Keys consist of a series of choices that lead the user to the correct name of a given item. In a dichotomous key there are always two choices given.

Down Feather: Lacking barbules located under the contour feathers. They are fluffy and keep birds insulated.

Economics: The production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Eyepiece Lens: An external component of binoculars where the image is retrieved by the eye.

Field Guide: A tool birders and biologists use to identify organisms such as birds when outdoors or in the field. Typically includes information about bird species found in a particular area such as habitat, nesting, feeding, and sound.

Field Journal: A scientific tool birders and biologists use to collect information and/or record field observations such as animal observations and vegetative characteristics.

Field Marks: Physical characteristics that make one bird species different from another. Examples include coloration, size, and shape.

Flank: Bird body part located on the sides of the bird's body.

Free- swimming: When young chicks are able to swim on their own.

Glume: Pair of bracts at the base of a grass spikelet.

Grassland: An area covered with grasses and/or low growing herbs.

Habitat: The arrangement of food, water, shelter, and space suitable to an animal or plant's needs.

Inflorescence: An entire cluster of flowers and associated bracts.

Lemma: In the grass family, the lower two bracts usually enclosing a flower or seed.

Macroinvertebrate: Tiny animals without backbones that can be seen with the naked eye.

Magnification: The “power” of binoculars represented by the first number on a pair of binoculars. For example, the seven in a pair of 7x 35 binoculars represents the magnification and means an object is seen seven times closer than with the naked eye.

Migration: Traveling from one place to another, usually to find food, shelter, or a mate and to place a nest.

Mist net: A fine, soft net used for capturing birds.

Mnemonic Device: A device used to remember bird songs or calls. This system translates songs into word phrases so they are easier to remember.

Nape: Bird body part located on the back of the head.

Non-native: A species not found naturally in an area or has been introduced after the 1800s.

Objectives Lens: An external component of binoculars located at the far end of the barrel. The image first enters the objective lens, is magnified, and formed into a visual image.

Ornithologist: A scientist who studies birds.

Ovary: Female structure in flowering plants that encloses the seed and develops the fruit.

Perennial: A plant that lives more than two years.

Pistil: Female structure of the flower. Consists of an ovary at the base, a style, and a stigma at the top.

Plumage: The external coat of feathers on a bird that give it its coloration and may differ with season (e.g. breeding or age).

Rachis (*ray-kiss*): The part of the central shaft of a feather to which the vane is connected.

Raptor: A term used by ornithologists for eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls. Also known as birds of prey, raptors are among the fastest and strongest of all flying birds.

Range map: A color-code system included in a field guide indicating the range and migration pathways of birds.

Riparian: The natural banks along a flowing body of water (e.g. river, creek, or stream).

Rump: A bird body part located on the upper part of a bird's tail.

Rushing Ceremony: A pair of grebes run on the surface of the water side by side flapping their wings, and finally diving head first into the water. A mating display.

Sagebrush Steppe: A dry environment characterized by sagebrush, shrubs, and bunchgrasses.

Service-learning: A learning and teaching strategy that integrates some level of community service into the learning experience.

Snags: Dead trees that have the potential to support a number of living organisms.

Song: A vocal communication used by birds that is typically long, complex, and almost exclusively produced by male birds during breeding season.

Species: A population of individuals able to breed and produce fertile offspring under natural conditions.

Stamen: Male structure of a flower. Consists of a filament (or stalk) and pollen producing anthers at the top.

Steppe: A vast semiarid grass covered plain, as found in southeast Europe, Siberia, and central North America.

Vane: The part of a feather composed of thin, needle like structures, which attach to the rachis.

Waterbird: Any bird that utilizes an aquatic habitat.

Weed Ceremony: A pair of grebes will gather vegetation from below the water bringing it back up to the surface to display to their mate. A mating display.

Wetland: Lowland area where there is an excess of water such as marsh or swamp.