

University of Wisconsin- Madison

BIRDS OF SOUTHERN WISCONSIN – ZOO/FWE 521 – 3 Credits

SPRING 2018

Course Designations & Attributes:

Breadth - Biological Sciences, counts toward the Natural Sciences requirement

Level - Intermediate

L&S Credit - Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

Graduate 50%

When and Where:

Noland Hall 321

One section meets each day T, W, Th, F

Lab (outside)

7:45-9:40 a.m. until March 23

7:00-9:40 a.m. after spring break

Discussion (indoors)

9:45-10:40 a.m. each week

Instructional Mode:

All face-to-face

Instructor:

Anna Pidgeon, apidgeon@wisc.edu

A143 Russell Labs

Office Hours: please email for appointment

Teaching

Assistants:

Tues Lab: *Maia Persche*

Office Hour: Tues 1-2, Russell Labs 120

Email: persche@wisc.edu

Weds Lab: *Isabel Rojas-Viada*

Office Hour: Weds 10:45-11:45, Noland 314

Email: rojasviada@wisc.edu

Thurs Lab: *Kristin Brunk*

Office Hour: Thurs 10:45-11:45, Noland 314

Email: kbrunk@wisc.edu

Fri Lab: *Colleen Miller*

Office Hour: Fri 10:45-11:45, Noland 314

Email: colleen.miller@wisc.edu

Course Description:

Outdoor and indoor labs/lectures emphasizing identification of Southern Wisconsin birds by sight and vocalization. Two required Saturday or Sunday field trips in Southern Wisconsin.

CANVAS URL: Section 001 (Tues) <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/89224>

Section 002 (Wed) <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/89225>

Section 003 (Thurs) <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/89226>

Section 004 (Friday) <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/89227>

Prerequisites:

Biology/Zoology 101 and 102 OR Biology/Botany/Zoology 152 OR Biocore 381 and 382 OR Graduate Student Standing or Consent of Instructor.

Learning Outcomes:

Birds of Southern Wisconsin is a field-intensive course. Active exploration, using as many senses as possible, is a key to success.

By the end of this course, students will be able to identify by sight 235 species and by vocalization 144 species, which is the majority of birds found in Southern Wisconsin.

Students will be able to compare and contrast habitat associations (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, oak woodlands, conifer forest, riparian) and some life history strategies (e.g., foraging guild, migratory guild) for the majority of species we cover.

Binoculars:

Binoculars are a key tool for success in this class. We do have Departmental binoculars for loan, and these will be checked out for you by your TA during class. Students who check out binoculars are responsible for binocular care and maintenance throughout the semester. If binoculars are lost, the student is liable for the cost of replacement. Small pocket binoculars will not be sufficient for this class. Binoculars that are 7-10 power (magnification) with a 35 – 50 mm objective (which determines your field of view and the amount of transmitted light) are best. The trade-off is that the greater these two numbers are, the heavier the binoculars are, making them harder to hold steady for some. If you wish to bring your own binoculars for use in class, we recommend bringing them in for your TA to inspect to be sure they will be sufficient for you to do well in class.

Course Text:

1. **Required:** **ONE** of the following [read this whole section before ordering a book]:

* The Sibley Guide to the Birds of Eastern North America by David Allen Sibley

or

* The Sibley Guide to Birds David Allen Sibley (includes eastern and western species)

or

* Peterson Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America by Roger Tory Peterson

or

* National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America by Dunn and Alderfer. The review of field guides on this website (listed below) may be helpful as you decide which field guide to purchase:

<http://www.wildlifesouth.com/Birding/BirdingFieldGuideReviews.html>

2. **Required:** National Geographic Birding Essentials by J. Alderfer and J.L. Dunn. 2007.

3. **Optional:** Sibley's Birding Basics. If you are new to birdwatching, this slim volume will provide practical knowledge and insights that will help you avoid common pitfalls. Even if you have considerable experience identifying birds, your skills will likely improve as a result of reading this book.

4. **Optional:** If you want to purchase a CD of bird songs, we recommend these:

* Bird Song Ear Training Guide: Who Cooks for Poor Sam Peabody? (John Feith)

* A Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region (Stokes).

* Birding by Ear: Eastern/Central *the benefit of this cd is that it helps you to distinguish, through guided compare-and-contrast discussion, the vocalizations of similar sounding species.

Please note that as part of the class, downloadable bird vocalizations will be made available. However, having multiple sources (not listening to only one recording of one bird) can be helpful, because just as humans' voices have a variety of qualities/tones/textures/dialects, bird's do as well. Additional sources of free online bird vocalizations will be made available in class.

How this Course Meets the UW Credit Hour Policy Standard

During spring semester this 3 credit class meets one 3-hour class period each week before spring break, and class time increases to 3 hours and 45 minutes each week after spring break. There is no class in week 15. This class carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, studying, practicing) for 3 OR MORE hours out of the classroom each week. Each week you will be assigned a set of birds, which you will need to learn by sight and habitat context. For a subset of these birds, you will also need to learn to recognize their vocalization, which is often the only indicator of a bird's presence that you will sense when in the field. It takes time to learn to recognize birds. Most of us are not nearly as accustomed to tuning in to sounds and habitat cues as we are to reading and visual identification. You should plan to spend 20-30 minutes, 4-5 times a week training your ear to recognize birds from sound recordings. Reading and regular journal writing assignments are also required. Perhaps most importantly, you are also expected to practice visually identifying birds in the field outside of class (it's great to do this with a buddy!), in addition to time spent on guided observations in class.

COURSE GRADE

The following is a summary of the point allocation:

Maximum points:	for:
20	field journal
50	weekly discussion quizzes
10	field quizzes
30	Birding Essentials quizzes
70	field exams
50	discussion exams
20	appropriate participation
(-10)	for each missed lab
(-20)	for each missed weekend trip below the two required
(-5)	for each "no show" on a field trip for which you are signed up

250 Total possible points

Explanation of categories:

Field Journal: In a bound book labeled with your name, keep a record of each birding outing, and notes on birds seen. Notes could include any/all of the following- Habitat, behavior, interactions, vocalizations. Sketches of key field i.d. characteristics encouraged. **More information on requirements for field journals will be given in the second week of class.**

Weekly quizzes: 5 points each. You will be tested by sight and sound on birds assigned for previous week. Eleven quizzes will be given and your lowest score will be dropped.

Field quizzes: 5 points each. These will be given during scheduled lab outings, before each of the two field exams.

Birding Essentials quizzes: 2 points per question. Five online quizzes on material covered in the book *Birding Essential* are to be taken on the CANVAS course website. Each quiz consist of 3-4 questions, worth 1-2 points each. You can use your book during the quiz, but you have only 8 minutes to complete each quiz. The due date for completing each quiz is noted on the sheet, 'Discussion and Lab Topics.'

Field exams: midterm-30 points, final-40 points. Identification of birds by sight and/or sound in the field.

Discussion exams: midterm-20, final-30. Identification of birds from slides, video, recorded songs, or specimens. Questions on taxonomic names, field marks, field techniques, and or concepts presented in indoor and outdoor labs.

Participation:

- A. 20 points total. Appropriate participation points are given for behavior that is conducive to learning about birds whenever you are in class, even (*in fact, especially*) when you are in the great outdoors on field trips. When birding in a group it can happen that socializing interferes with bird detection and identification. Quiet alert observation results in more birds detected than talking/jesting/jovial behavior that focus attention on humans in the group. These points are given for being an active on-task participant, for restricting your conversation with your TA and classmates to bird-related topics at hand, and otherwise being quiet, both in how you move and in refraining from conversation while birding in the field.
- B. A major expectation of this course is that you participate in your assigned laboratory and discussion section. There is not space to accommodate all students who would like to take the course and we expect that you will make the most of your time in the course. Therefore, each missed morning lab will result in **loss of 10 points** from your total course score. Excusable absences are always agreed on between you and your TA in advance of your laboratory/discussion section, and involve providing a doctor's note or similar. Excused absence for graduate school interviews requires providing proof of the interview. Because we want to provide an equal ratio of student to TA for all sections, and because of limited seating in vehicles and the university's strong desire to have you use university transportation rather than your own, there is no opportunity to attend a different lab or discussion section.
- C. Weekend field trips. You are required to attend two weekend field trips during the semester. These are offered on selected Saturdays and Sundays, and each lasts the entire day (6 or 7 am until 5 or 6 pm, or potentially later. Each missed field trip below the two required will result in the **loss of 20 points** from your total course score.

Grading Scale

Total possible Points = 220		
Letter Grade	Percent of points earned	Raw number of points
A	>90%	≥ 225
AB	85% - 89%	212-≥points ≥ 224.9
B	80% - 84%	200 ≥ points ≥ 211.9
BC	75% - 79%	187 ≥ points ≥ 199.9
C	68% - 74%	170 ≥ points ≥ 186.9
D	58% - 67%	145 ≥ points ≥ 169.9
F	Below 58%	Below 145

Religious conflict and Special Needs:

If you have a religious conflict please notify me and your TA in writing (email is fine) as soon as possible. If you have special needs, with regard to how content is provided, or testing situations, also let your TA and I know as soon as possible so that we can work to accommodate you as best I can.

Academic misconduct

When taking field quizzes and exams, students will be expected to make it blatantly obvious to their TA that they are not cheating. Notecards should be kept folded when students are not writing an answer, and students should not talk during field quizzes and exams. Phones should be put away during quiz/exam. Failure to follow this policy will result in a zero for the quiz or exam.

In general, violations of standards of academic honesty will not be tolerated. Punishment may include a lowering of the grade, no credit for dishonest work, expulsion from the course, a notation on your academic record, and/or other actions deemed appropriate by the instructor or deans. PLEASE NOTE THAT AS PER UNIVERSITY POLICY, ALMOST ANY PENALTY MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A LETTER, WHICH WILL BE DEPOSITED IN YOUR STUDENT FILE.

For more information, please see: <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>