Birdwatcher: Observe, Investigate, Share

Badge overview:

Students and teachers become more familiar with our urban birds and appreciate their lives

Badge goals:

By the end of this activity, students will

1. Observe wild birds systematically
2. Record and compare observations
3. Become familiar with common urban birds
4. Identify patterns and ask questions
5. Use observations as evidence when considering possible explanations
6. Communicate their findings to others

When & Where to use this badge:

Teacher Tip

This activity can link with

· Science (observation, evidence and investigation)

· Environmental Studies (local biodiversity)

· Mathematics (counting and representing observations)

· Languages (writing and presenting findings)

· ICT / Media (digital communication)

Flexibility

· Students can join the activity at different break-club sessions, so each observation session should work on its own while contributing to a shared school record.

· Teachers can adapt the number and length of observation sessions, locations and recording methods depending on their school context.

Steps to complete:

1 Step 1 Look & Think

Teacher Instructions

· Optional digital starter: Watch 2–3 short bird videos from the provided BirdLife's **Bird Reel Links** to help students recognise some birds they might encounter.

· Use the **Nature Identification Sheet 1** to introduce students to some common birds they may encounter around the school. Explain that Malta is visited by resident, migratory and wintering birds, so the birds they see may vary according to the time of year.

· Explain that breaktime is a busy period, so students will mainly use visual observation rather than relying on bird calls but they should listen for calls at other times of the day.

· Discuss how to observe wildlife without disturbing it: watch from a distance and do not chase or approach birds.

Step 2 Observe (15–20 minutes)

Teacher Instructions

· Choose one or more suitable observation points around the school, such as a courtyard, garden, sports area, tree, classroom window or other vantage point.

· Consider use different locations during different break-club sessions.

· Students observe birds without approaching or disturbing them.

Students record

1. What species they see: are some birds seen more often than others?
2. Number of birds
3. Where they are (e.g. roofs, window ledges, trees, grounds, etc.)
4. What they are doing: do birds behave differently in different areas?
5. Date and time
6. Weather conditions

Step 3 Investigate

· Repeat observations during different break-club sessions and, where possible, from different locations or under different weather conditions.

· Students compare their records and look for patterns.

Step 4 Tell the Story

Students use their observations to create a simple piece of communication about what they discovered.

They could

· Create a “Birds of Our School” display

· Make an infographic

· Write a short article for the school newsletter

· Produce a short video or podcast

· Present their findings at assembly

· Create a “Did you know?” awareness message

· Students should include what they observed, what they discovered, and maybe questions they still have.