

Field Journal Guidelines:

Over the course of the semester, choose ten individual birds to observe. All ten must be different species. If you find and observe a species that is not on the California birds lab list, you will receive two extra points for each observation (note that this must be correctly identified – if you claim a rare bird and can't substantiate the sighting you will not receive the bonus points) Observe the bird in as much detail as you can (if possible, for at least 5 minutes), and take extensive notes. Sketches and photographs are encouraged. You may work on this journal whenever you like, including on field trips (though if the instructors are talking about something, you need to pay attention). Include everything you notice about the bird. Here are some helpful hints for things to look for:

Plumage details: What does the bird look like? Describe the color of the plumage, and whatever you can about how the bird looks. Is it a male or female? Adult or young bird? How do you know? Does it have any worn or broken feather? You can take a picture of the bird and work off the picture later, but you can NOT copy your description out of a field guide or describe what you see in your field guide – it must be the live bird.

Behavior: Is the bird alone or travelling in a flock? Is it foraging? What substrate (on the ground, on mud, in the water, in a tree) is it in? How is it interacting with that substrate? (Probing into it, perched on it, flying over it). If it is foraging, how is it foraging? Is it making short flights to catch insects? Or sitting and waiting for prey to come by? Or constantly probing for food?

Vocalizations: Is it making noise? If so, what does it sound like? Is it making the same noise over and over, or changing the noises it makes? What do you think the noises it is making are for? (ie breeding, locating a flock, alarm)

Habitat: What habitat is the bird in? Is this consistent with the expected habitat for the species?