



Birds in the City

HABITAT FORM INSTRUCTIONS

What birds live in your city?

Prepare to conduct *Birds in the City* by learning to identify one or more species of urban birds, and finding a Study Site for your Transect locations.

Set up your Transect.

1. Mark two spots on a printed or hand-drawn map.

- a point where you will begin your Transect: this is your “start” point
- a point where you will end your Transect: this is your “stop” point

The start and stop points should be at least one but not more than five city blocks apart. If you do not have street intersections each “block” should be a section about 55 yards (50 meters) long. The total length of your Transect should be about 55–275 yards long (50–250 meters).

2. On the map, draw a line connecting your start and stop points.

Try to make the line as straight as possible. The line will be the center of your Transect. You will count the birds you see to the left and right as you walk along this center line.

Measure your Transect.

1. Determine the length of each block from the start point to the stop point.

You can do this by pacing or using a tape measure. On the Habitat Form, record the length of each block (or section) of your Transect. Be sure to note the total number of blocks in your Transect.

2. Learn the width of the Transect.

You will count birds that are within 50 feet (15 meters) to each side of the center line. An easy way to estimate 50 feet is to imagine the lengths of 1 ½ city buses or 3 cars. You don’t need to measure the width exactly but try to find some features that you know are about 50 feet from the line. For example, you may see trees, buildings or fences that are about 50 feet from the line. Measure some of these by pacing or using a measuring tape. Remember the features to help you when you are counting your birds. Birds that are within 50 feet of the line are “in” your Transect. Birds beyond the 50 feet are “outside” the Transect. It is important that you get a “feel” for the width of your Transect.

Fill out and submit a Habitat Form

For each Transect you only need to complete one Habitat Form. You can measure the length of your Transect and record the habitat data on the same day that you begin counting birds or you can complete them ahead of time. You only need to record the length and habitat information once. You may count birds along the same Transect as many times as you wish.

Submit your Habitat Form to

Urban Bird Studies / Birds in the City
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, NY 14850

MATERIALS NEEDED

- a Habitat Form printed from the web site for recording your data.
- pen or pencil and clipboard or other hard surface

Optional:

- measuring tape

You may include any questions, comments and concerns in the same envelope.
Send only one Habitat Form per Transect—you can send many Tally Sheets for each Transect.



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Group Name (optional) _____ Your Name _____

Email address (optional) _____ ID Number (optional) _____

Study Site Number and Description: _____

Address and Zip Code of Study Site: _____

Area Description: city suburb suburb/rural mix
 rural—open rural—forest

Total number of blocks in Transect:

BLOCK NUMBER

HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

1	2	3	4	5	LENGTH OF BLOCK (if no street intersections, record for every 55 yards [50 m])	
					measured in (select one): <input type="radio"/> feet <input type="radio"/> meters	
1	2	3	4	5	GENERAL (select all that apply for each block of Transect)	
					industrial/shopping/downtown (businesses, parking, mall/shopping center)	
					residential (apartment buildings, multi-family homes, single-family homes)	
					pond, lake, ocean, marsh	
					park, lawn, agriculture	
1	2	3	4	5	TALLEST BUILDING (select one for each block of transect)	
					none	Hint: Count the number of windows in a straight line from the ground floor to the top of the building. If the rooftop is more than 5 windows up, stop counting!
					1–2 stories	
					3–5 stories	
					> 5 stories	
1	2	3	4	5	WIDTH OF ROAD (select one for each block of transect)	
					no road	Count the number of driving or parking lanes in your Transect, if a road is present.
					1 lane	
					2–3 lanes	
					> 3 lanes	
1	2	3	4	5	GROUND COVER AND SHRUBS (select all that apply for each block of Transect)	
					grass/vines (lawns, fields or areas of vines that are not gardens or crops)	
					shrubs (plants with wood stems shorter than 6 feet tall)	
					gardens/crops (plants that were (or are being) raised for food or flower gardens)	
					cement/pavement (sidewalk, road, parking lot, paved path, other hard surface)	
					bare soil (open areas of soil or sand with no leaf litter, grass or other plants)	
					leaf litter (piles of leaves or other dead plants through most of the year (don't include fall leaf piles that will be removed); for example, in a wooded area)	
1	2	3	4	5	TYPES OF TREES (select all that apply for each block of Transect)	
					no trees (definition of tree below)	
					conifer (needle-shaped leaves year round)	
					other evergreen (year-round leaves wider and flatter than needles)	
					deciduous (trees that lose their leaves in winter or dry season)	
1	2	3	4	5	NUMBER OF TREES (select one for each block of Transect)	
					none	Definition: TREE —woody plant taller than 6 feet tall (don't include vines that are growing up buildings or other structures)
					1–3	
					3–10	
					> 10	
1	2	3	4	5	TREE CANOPY (select one for each block of Transect)	
					no canopy	Definition: CANOPY —at least 3 trees are large enough that their branches overlap creating a cover or shade.
					less than half of block has canopy	
					more than half of block has canopy	