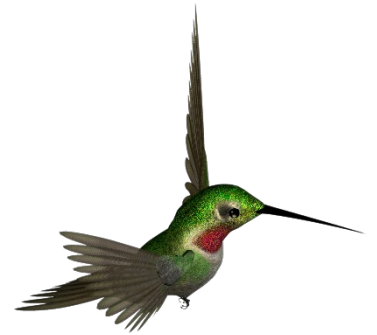




Ranger Paula's Nature Journaling

My nature journal is my most prized possession. It's where I record my curiosities, observations, and sometimes I even sketch and write poetry. To get started, you can learn how to [Make Your Own Nature Journal](#) from my friends Jeff & Paige and Miguel from Thorne Nature Experience.

The best thing about a nature journal is that there are NO RULES! You can put whatever you like in there. You can draw in it, make a list, or even press flowers and colorful leaves you find. Just remember, plants and flowers you see on Open Space are food and habitat for me and my wild friends, so please only pick flowers that are right outside your door and leave enough for the rest of us.



If you need ideas for what to write in your journal, here are a few suggestions to get started:

- Write a story from the perspective of a bird that can see the entire world from above.
- What is your favorite season? Why?
- Choose something in nature you can see through your window. Describe how it looks and moves and sounds (if you can hear it) or imagine how it might sound, feel, and smell.
- If you could have any bird superpower, what would it be? Write or draw a story about that.

Challenge yourself!

Use your nature journal to keep a bird count. Record the date that each species arrives and next spring you can see if it is the same. Share your neighborhood bird sightings with Cornell's [Project FeederWatch](#) and help scientists track long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Here's what my bird count journal looks like:





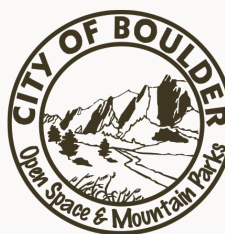
- *Black-capped Chickadee (3/12 – pairs)*
- *Dark Eyed-junco (3/12 – small flock)*
- *House Finch (3/12 lots of pairs)*
- *Song Sparrow (4/1 – single individual)*
- *Cassin’s Finch (4/13 – a flock of 50!)*

- Listen and practice identifying birds by their songs too. I know the song of the Canadian Goose.

Make Nature Art!

Sometimes creating art helps me better understand and connect to the natural world. Here are some ideas for bird art projects!

- Go on a photo hunt to capture the birds on your checklist.
- Take a video of birds on your daily adventures.
- Draw or paint one of the birds you saw today. You can use crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, or anything else you can find around your house.





Keep Exploring!

Now that you have some ideas for getting started with birding, keep looking for activities and resources to help deepen your understanding of the nature around you. Here are some of my favorite links:

- [Bird Feeders: How to protect songbirds from predators](#)
- [Be a Habitat Hero](#) - Boulder County Audubon Society
- [National Geographic Kids - Birds](#)
- Learn Bird Songs – Kids and adults can play Cornell Lab's [Bird Song Hero](#) online game
- [K-12 Bird Sleuth activities](#) from Cornell Lab to hook young birders

Learn More with a Ranger Paula Passport to Wild Adventure!

You can pick up a Passport booklet at the [Chautauqua Ranger Cottage](#) or [download a copy here to print at home](#). Participants are asked to go on four hikes on OSMP, join two [free educational nature programs](#), eat some locally grown food and sit quietly on a rock. Once completed, the Passport booklet can be redeemed for a stylish Ranger Paula sew-on patch.

