



Habitat Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Set up your Study Site for the Urban Bird Studies behavior projects: PigeonWatch, Crows Count, Dove Detectives, Gulls Galore

(You can use the same Study Site for any of the projects.)

1. Find a Study Site.

If you observe your study species in any location you can use this as a Study Site. For example, if you find pigeons and Mourning Doves in a church parking lot, this can be a Study Site for PigeonWatch or for Dove Detectives. And, if you later see gulls at the same location you can also use it for Gulls Galore.

2. Determine the edges of your Study Site.

Your Study Site should be about the size of one city block. If you want to estimate a city block, imagine the birds are at the center of a square and the edges of the Study Site are about 50 meters from the birds. Once you decide where the edges are, be sure to remember them. You can count any birds that are inside of the edges.

3. Fill out a Habitat Form (see back).

Complete the two sections of the form.

a. Fill in General Area Description.

Choose one selection that describes the area surrounding your Study Site:

- city (mostly buildings and cement surfaces)
- suburb (mix of houses and yards)
- suburb/rural mix (houses and open areas or forest)
- rural—open (no or few buildings and open area)
- rural—forest (no or few buildings and wooded)

Choose one selection for tallest building in your Study Site.

b. Check-mark all of the habitat characteristics in your Study Site (see back).

4. Conduct any of the behavior projects.

You can use your Study Site for any of the behavior projects:

- PigeonWatch
- Crows Count
- Dove Detectives
- Gulls Galore

DEFINITION

STUDY SITE

an area within 50 meters of the location of the birds you are observing; this is approximately one average-sized city block.



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Habitat Form

Group Name (optional) _____ Your Name _____

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

Study Site Number and Description: _____

Address and Zip Code of Study Site: _____

GENERAL AREA DESCRIPTION SURROUNDING YOUR STUDY SITE

My Study Site is in a (choose one):

- city
- suburb
- suburb/rural mix
- rural—open
- rural—forest

Tallest building (choose one):

- none
- 1 story
- 2–5 stories
- > 5 stories

HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS IN YOUR STUDY SITE (choose all that apply):

Ground cover:

- GRASS/VINES**—lawns, fields or areas of vines (not gardens or crops)
- GARDEN/CROP PLANTS** or cuttings/stubble left after harvest—gardens or fields
- CEMENT/PAVEMENT**—sidewalks, roads, parking lots, paved paths, and any other hard surfaces
- BARE SOIL**—open areas of soil or sand with no grass or plants
- LEAF LITTER**—areas with leaves or dead plants most of the year (don't include fall leaf piles that will be removed); for example, in a wooded area

Available water:

- PUDDLES/TEMPORARY WATER**—includes rain puddles, hydrant or hose floods, bird baths
- CREEK/RIVER**—flowing water
- POND/LAKE**—year round standing fresh water (including man-made pools, fountains, etc., if active year round)
- SEASONAL POOL/POND/LAKE**—standing water that is full throughout warm seasons but drained for winter (including man-made pools, fountains, etc.)
- MARSH**—fresh or saltwater with emergent vegetation (grasses, trees etc. sticking up out of water)
- OCEAN**—open saltwater bay or ocean

Types of trees: A tree is a plant at least 10 feet tall or one building story tall, not including vines that are growing up the side of a building.

- CONIFER**—needle-shaped leaves year round
- OTHER EVERGREEN**—trees with year round leaves that are wider and flatter than needles (such as live oak and American holly). (If you are not sure if the trees keep their leaves year round then record them as deciduous.)
- DECIDUOUS**—lose their leaves in winter (or in the dry season)
- NO TREES**—use this category if there are no trees or if all trees are shorter than one story tall (for example, where there are newly planted saplings)

Available food:

- GARBAGE/COMPOST/DUMPSTERS**—dumps, compost piles, garbage bags or cans, dumpsters, etc. on a regular basis
- BIRD FEEDERS**
- HANDOUTS**—people throwing food to the birds (for example, while they are eating lunch)
- NATURAL FOOD ON GROUND OR IN TREES**—insects, worms, fruits, nuts or flowers on the ground or in trees or shrubs (for example, fruit trees, food plants or if birds often look in the grass/dirt for natural food)
- NATURAL FOOD IN OR NEAR WATER**—some birds will eat fish, crabs, etc. that they find in or near water
- UNKNOWN**—if you are unsure about the availability of food at your Study Site check this and no other food category
- NONE**—no apparent available food source

Shrubs: A shrub is a woody plant shorter than 10 feet tall

- HEDGE ROWS/THICK PATCHES**—continuous group(s) or row(s) of at least 3 shrubs creating a border or thick patch
- SCATTERED SHRUBS**—one to several shrubs that are scattered through the study site (may be slightly grouped but don't form a thick patch)
- NO SHRUBS**—no short woody vegetation in the study site